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## Sorrett Avenue Precinct



Sorrett Avenue



SORRETT AVE LOOKING EAST

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### Location

2-5 and 2-16 SORRETT AVENUE, MALVERN, STONNINGTON CITY

### Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

### Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO396

### Heritage Listing

Stonnington City

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

#### What is significant?

The Sorrett Avenue precinct is a Victorian-era residential area comprising houses built between 1888 and c.1892 on what was originally the carriage drive leading to the Sorrett Mansion (now demolished). Key attributes that contribute to the significance of the precinct are:

- The consistency of scale (one or two storey), siting (modest front and side setbacks) and detailing (brick or render walls with hip slate roofs with cast iron verandahs) of houses within the precinct.
- the detached form of housing.
- the relatively high degree of integrity of most houses, which typically survive with their presentation to the street largely intact;
- The high integrity of the south side of the street to the original period of development.
- The mature street trees (*Platanus sp.*), which provide a unifying element.

On this basis the following elements contribute to the significance of the precinct:

- The houses, constructed c.1888-c.1892, at 1\*, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12 & 16.
- The former stables at No.14, but not the c.1920s house on that site
- The mature Plane (*Platanus sp.*) street trees, and the mature English Elm (*Ulmus procera*) at the corner of Glenferrie Road.

The houses at Nos. 3 & 14 and non-original alterations and additions to the contributory houses and all front fences are not significant.

\*This house is of individual significance and has a separate place record and statement of significance.

### How is it significant?

The Sorrett Avenue precinct is of local historic and architectural significance to the City of Stonnington.

### Why is it significant?

It is historically significant as a representative example of the speculative residential development associated with the 1880s land boom in Melbourne and demonstrates the middle-class villas on former mansion estates in the late nineteenth century in Malvern. The relatively grand scale of the houses illustrates the optimistic view of the future of the suburb and the metropolis during the late nineteenth century and is typical of the development that led to the term 'Marvellous Melbourne'. The English Elm at the corner of Glenferrie Road is significant as the only survivor of the trees planted by Charles Umphelby to line the original Sorrett carriage drive. (Criteria A & D)

It is architecturally and aesthetically significant as fine example of late nineteenth century residential area. The architectural significance of the precinct is enhanced by the relatively high degree of integrity to the c.1890 construction date and the extent to which development in one period is apparent. The aesthetic qualities of the precinct are enhanced by the mature Plane trees, which provide a unifying aspect. (Criterion D)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Stonnington - City of Stonnington Heritage Strategy Review Precinct Gap Study - Groups 10 & 11, Context Pty Ltd, 2010;
Construction dates	1888,
Hermes Number	125219
Property Number	

## Physical Description 1

Sorrett Avenue is a modest sized residential street, in width and length, lined by mature Plane trees (*Platanus sp.*) and a row of fine Victorian villas on the south side with modest setbacks from the street. Most of the villas are two-storey and quite substantial in size and level of pretension. On the north side, only two Victorian-era houses survive: the extraordinary Tudor-influenced stone and brick house at No.1 (Of individual significance - please refer to the separate Hermes place record for further information) and the two storey Italianate villa at No.5.

As noted in the History for this precinct, the street was developed in a short period of time and a number of houses were constructed by the same builders. This is illustrated by the pattern of development, which includes two or three distinct groups of houses of similar design. The first is the pair of single storey Italianate houses at Nos. 2 & 4 constructed by builder Henry Phillips. They have decorative slated hip roofs, an asymmetrical front with canted bay window (arched windows), cast-iron lace to verandah, and bichromatic brick chimneys with mould modillions. Originally identical, No.2 has been rendered and the verandah enclosed, while the walls of No.4 have been overpainted.

The detailing of this pair of single storey villas (particularly to the chimneys) is similar to that used on the two storey polychrome villas at Nos. 8 and 12, which suggests that they were constructed by the same builder. The two storey villas have an asymmetrical facade with square projecting bay, a slate hip roof, and a one-storey gabled section at rear. All of the houses are characterised by intact cast-iron ornament to return verandahs.

The other group, which includes Nos. 5, 6, 10 are asymmetrical two-storey rendered Italianate villas, with two-storey canted bays. Originally identical, they have now been altered to varying degrees: the roof to No.5 has been replaced with Marseilles tiles, while the hip roof above the canted bay to No.6 was changed c.1920s to gable with shingle and modillion details, and the upper verandah of No.10 may have been extended.

The two-storey Georgian Revival brick villa at 14 Sorrett Avenue is later in date (c1915-20) and set back further from the street. Behind it stands the intact Gothic Revival brick stables, which is L-shaped in plan.

The final house on the south side at No.16 is a brick (now over-painted) two-storey Italianate villa, similar in details to Nos. 8 and 12, but narrower (no projecting front bay). It has a L-shaped verandah with cast-iron lace, door on right-hand side of facade, and bi-chromatic brick chimneys with mould modillions (this chimney detail is similar to Nos. 2, 4, 8 & 12).

The mature Plane trees provide a unifying element that contributes to the historic character. Another important tree is the English Elm (*Ulmus procera*) at the south-east corner of Glenferrie Road. This is believed to be the sole survivor of the trees planted by Charles Umphelby when the Sorrett carriage drive was created.

## **Local Historical Themes**

3.3.3 Speculation and land boomers - subdivision from 1880 onwards 8.2.2 Country in the city - suburban development in Malvern before 1920

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*