
21 William Street, South Yarra



21 William Street, South Yarra (prior to removal of verandah)

Location

21 William Street, SOUTH YARRA VIC 3141 - Property No 41118

Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO462

Heritage Listing

Stonnington City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is Significant?

The double-storey Victorian Italianate style villa at 21 William Street, South Yarra was constructed c1897 for wealthy bookseller John Donne. It was built at a time when William Street was populated by affluent families in large houses, in marked contrast to the denser, smaller scale housing occurring to its east and south.

21 William Street is significant to the extent of its nineteenth century external form and fabric. The legibility of the built form in views from the public realm and the building's open garden setting further contribute to the significance of the place. Modern alterations and additions are not considered to be significant.

How is it Significant?

21 William Street, South Yarra is of local architectural and historical significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it Significant?

21 William Street, South Yarra is architecturally significant as a fine, albeit altered, example of a large Victorian Italianate style villa (Criterion D). Recent works have diminished the significance of the house but it retains elaborate and unconventional detailing that distinguishes it from other large late-Victorian dwellings in the municipality (Criterion E).

The building is historically significant as evidence of the pattern of development which created enclaves of affluent middle class housing in and near the generally higher, northern parts of the former City of Prahran, away from the more densely populated low lying areas to the south (Criterion A, TEH 8.2 Middle-class suburbs and the suburban ideal).

The building forms part of a relatively small extant group of substantial double-storey Italianate villas within the Municipality which illustrate the role of houses generally, and classically-inspired houses in particular, as symbols of wealth, status and taste for Melbourne's nineteenth century middle and upper classes (Criterion B, 8.4.1 - Houses as a symbol of wealth, status and fashion).

The site is of some minor historical interest for its unusual allotment shape brought about by the construction of the railway line in the late 1870s (3.3.4 - Uncontrolled and unplanned development).

Heritage Study/Consultant	Stonnington - Prahran Character and Conservation Study 1992, Nigel Lewis & Graeme Butler & Associates, 1992;
Other Names	'Walton',
Hermes Number	197627
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The site at 21 William Street, South Yarra is occupied by a substantial double-storey Victorian Italianate style villa with rendered masonry walls and a hipped slate roof. It is located on the west side of William Street and backs onto the public walkway that runs alongside the Frankston/Cranbourne railway line. The villa adopts a common late-Victorian asymmetrical form with a double-storey projecting bay to one side of a verandah. The original cast iron verandah (and possibly the original tiled verandah floor) has recently been demolished and a first floor balcony is currently under construction.

The facade is heavily embellished with stuccoed Classical ornament, including archivolt window mouldings, stylised corbels, unusual vermiculated keystones and an acanthus leaf string course. The first floor level is delineated by a much plainer, solid looking string course. The eaves have particularly ornate brackets set between 'cricket bat' mouldings.

The string courses and ornate bracketed eaves return along the side elevations for a short distance only. The side elevations are otherwise plainly detailed with window locations seemingly dictated by the internal plan form.

Research undertaken to date has not uncovered the name of the designer, although the sophistication of the

design and its unconventional detailing suggests the involvement of a capable architect.

Apart from the loss of the front verandah, the exterior appears to be mainly intact, including those parts of the rear and side elevations that are visible from the public realm. Alterations to the rear seem to be mostly confined to the enlargement of some ground floor openings and the addition of a timber-framed pergola. The property also has a modern solid brick fence to the front and south (side) boundaries.

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/>