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# Benyeo



35 Bruce Street, Toorak



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## Location

35 Bruce Street TOORAK, STONNINGTON CITY

## Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO568

## Heritage Listing

Stonnington City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 25, 2016

### What is significant?

'Benyeo' at 35 Bruce Street, Toorak, is significant. It was built in c1890-91 by one of Melbourne's leading landboomers, Charles Henry James (1848-1898) of 'Illawarra', at the tail end of the speculative property boom. 'Benyeo' was one of three residences constructed by C. H. James on the north side of Bruce Street, but the only one that survives.

It is a substantial single-storey Italianate villa of rendered masonry with a hipped roof clad in slate and chimneys with unusual classical detailing. It presents a symmetrical facade to Bruce Street comprising two projecting rectangular bays and a verandah that stretches across the front facade and returns to both sides of the house. It is set back behind a mid-sized section and is significant to the extent of its nineteenth-century external form and fabric.

The modern additions and alterations including the high masonry front wall are not significant.

### **How is it significant?**

'Benyeo' at 35 Bruce Street, Toorak is of local architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

### **Why is it significant?**

Architecturally, 'Benyeo' is a highly intact and refined example of a distinguished residence built as part of a speculative property development in 1890-91 by one of Melbourne's leading landboomers, Charles Henry James. It is one of the few remaining houses of a number of prominently located late-nineteenth century villas that were constructed following the subdivision of the 'Balmerino' estate. The house adopts a symmetrical plan with a hipped slate roof, distinctive chimneys, a pair of projecting bays to the front and a return verandah. (Criterion D).

Aesthetically, it is distinguished by its generous size and sophisticated detailing including the continuous cast-iron verandah that stretches across the front facade and returns to both side elevations. The verandah is notable for its high quality cast-iron work, including the slender columns with heavy Corinthian capitals and the lacework patterns to the frieze, brackets and fringe set between chamfered timbers. The verandah floor is raised and retains its decorative tessellated tiles with bluestone nosing. The wide chimneys are unusually detailed in cement render with a heavy cornice set between a classical frieze and are also of note. (Criterion E)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Stonnington - City of Stonnington Victorian Houses Study, City of Stonnington, 2016;
Construction dates	1890,
Hermes Number	200143
Property Number	

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## **Physical Description 1**

'Benyeo' is a substantial single-storey Italianate villa that is highly intact. It occupies an allotment on the north side of Bruce Street mid-block between Balmerino Avenue and Canberra Road in Toorak. The house is set back from Bruce Street behind a generous front garden with a semicircular drive, all behind a tall contemporary front fence that conceals much of the house from the street. A driveway has been retained along the eastern boundary as depicted in the MMBW plan.

Constructed in c1890-91 the building is distinguished by its generous size and sophisticated detailing. It has an M-profile hipped roof, clad in slate, with a pair of wide rectangular projecting bays to the front that have their own hipped roof above the continuous cast-iron verandah (clad in corrugated iron), that stretches across the front facade and returns to both side elevations. It gives the building a symmetrical composition as viewed from Bruce Street, despite the infilled section of the verandah to the east, which is depicted in the MMBW plan, dated 1900. The verandah terminates at both side elevations by secondary projecting bays. The wide chimneys are unusually detailed in cement render with a heavy cornice set between a classical frieze. The deep eaves are supported on paired brackets which are continuous to both side elevations.

The verandah is notable for its high quality cast-iron work including the slender columns with heavy Corinthian capitals and the lacework patterns of the frieze, brackets and fringe set between chamfered timber verandah

beams. The verandah floor is raised and retains its decorative tessellated tiles with bluestone nosing. The walls beneath the verandah are rendered with recessed panels set between piers either side of the front entrance door and window lights, and beneath the moulded sill course. The windows to the front projecting bays are deeply recessed with wide sidelights, all with double-hung timber sashes. The highly elaborate timber door has cricket-bat mouldings and wide sidelights.

A number of extensions were constructed in the c1970s which appear to have been restricted to the rear third of the house. The high masonry front fence is an unsympathetic addition.

## **Local Historical Themes**

This place illustrates the following themes, as identified in the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, rev. 2009):

3.3.3 Speculators and land boomers

8.2 Middle-class suburbs and the suburban ideal

*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/>*