



Wynnstay 1888  
Stonnington History Collection PH8509

## **Hampden Road Armadale Walk    November 2019**

### **Start on the northwest corner of Hampden Road and Avalon Road**

This area, bound by Dandenong Road, Kooyong Road, High Street and Orrong Road was first offered for sale by the Crown on 15 May 1850.

Between 1850 and 1870 the area developed very slowly. Kearney's 1855 map of Melbourne shows that by the mid 1850s, some of the land had been roughly cleared, but that other land was still bushland. There were a few small buildings in the vicinity of High Street and a rough roadway that was later to be known as Hampden Road (north), including a short-lived hotel called the Boundary. In the 1850s, ten year old Thomas Tivendale was lost for one day while walking from Malvern to Prahran, through a northern section of Armadale.

Early mansions in this area included 'Wynnstay' (1879), 'Barnato' (built before 1885), 'Avalon' (1880), 'Namerong' (1880), and 'Elgin' (1883).

### **Walk west along the north side of Avalon Road and stop outside No 15 Avalon Road**

Avalon Road was formed after the subdivision of the mansion 'Avalon'. It was built in 1880 by William Williams. Architect Richard H. Butler was responsible for the subdivision of the land in 1903. 15 Avalon Road, built in 1933, is a substantial two-storey house with Arts and Crafts influences.

### **Walk west along Avalon Road and stop at 1 Avalon Road**

'Thurla' 1 Avalon Road was built in 1904 and became the home of Ernest Ricardo and his family, who lived there for almost ninety years. Mrs Ricardo was well-known for her services to charity. 'Thurla' is of state significance as a house virtually intact in its original condition and retaining its original garden setting. The house was designed by the important domestic architect Walter Butler for his accountant brother Richard Butler in 1903. 'Thurla' exhibits externally traditional elements such as rough-cast stucco, red face brickwork, a tiled roof and half-timbering, which all derive from medieval domestic construction in Northern Europe. These are, however, combined in a free manner with deliberate asymmetrical devices such as hooded triangular plan window bays and Art Nouveau inspired cast cement detailing to constitute the Edwardian Freestyle. Internally, lacquered joinery, polished floors, sympathetically coloured wallpapers and a notable arboreal frieze above the dining room picture rail provide a period atmosphere.

The garden also possesses much of its early planting presumed to be designed by Butler. The unusually high brick and concrete boundary fence, with flying buttresses, was designed by architect, Arthur Peck.

'Pensford', the house next door on the corner of Orrong Road, is of regional significance as an example of the work of the important Victorian architect, Walter Richmond Butler, and as a relatively uncommon instance of the art nouveau influence on domestic architecture in Melbourne.

Butler was a notable member of the group of architects in Melbourne who promoted a range of red-brick styles from the 1880s until the 1900s, all based on arts and crafts ideals. These styles included the Melbourne domestic Queen Anne style. Butler's domestic work was generally for wealthy clients and much of it was in Toorak and Armadale. His houses before about 1905 in particular reflect strongly his English training and association with the leading English arts and crafts designers. His later houses display an increasing American influence. The stylised plant form decorations on the west parapet and chimneys at 'Pensford' are early examples of the Art Nouveau influence in domestic architecture in Melbourne. 'Pensford' was designed for Butler's brother, R H Butler, and its name commemorates Butler's birthplace in Somerset, England.

**Turn right into Orrong Road and walk north to the northwest corner of Barnato Grove  
Walk east along Barnato Grove to the corner of the laneway and stop**

Barnato Grove is a short street of mid-twentieth century houses. It was created when the Barnato estate was first subdivided in 1912. It was extended after a second subdivision in 1934.

**Walk north along the laneway through to Elgin Avenue. Stay on the west side, walk north and stop**

Elgin Avenue was formerly known as Wynnstay Avenue. 'Wynnstay' was a large mansion on the west side of Elgin Avenue. A large block of land on the southeast corner of Orrong Road and High Street was bought by George W. Taylor who then lived with his wife and family in 'Wynnstay'. George Taylor was a generous, self-made Welshman, an estate agent and a land speculator. Taylor was a Prahran Councillor intermittently between 1877 and 1887, and Mayor in 1884/5. He gave generously to the City of Prahran, his gifts including the original statue, urns and fountain in the Victoria Gardens. In August 1885, after the formal opening of the Victoria Gardens by Lady Loch, the Governor's wife, George and his wife entertained 300 guests at a garden party in the grounds of 'Wynnstay', and 6,000 children in the adjoining paddocks. In 1887 the north end of Elgin Avenue was formed when 'Wynnstay' was subdivided, the south end was still part of the Elgin estate at that time. Taylor bought heavily during the boom years of the 1880s but was bankrupted in the depression that followed.

**Cross to the east side and stop at 21 Elgin Avenue**

Elgin, an intact example of a grand Victorian-style mansion still located on a large allotment that once fronted Orrong Road.

The large two-storey house, with its cast iron verandah, was built in 1900 for Mary Windsor. The facade facing Elgin Street has a pair of ornate bay windows on each storey, each containing narrow, arched double-hung windows. The balcony returns on both sides. Elegant cast iron columns are paired and bracketed with fine lacework with a few segments missing. The roof is hidden behind a continuous parapet wall, complete with balustrade and frieze. The grand residence is situated on raised foundations with most of the area lawn. The mansion had a long drive from the stables at the rear.

'Elgin' became the University College, better known as Bassett's. By 1918 the college had relocated to the Colosseum Arcade in Chapel Street. In 1927, the year in which the estate was finally subdivided, 'Elgin' was described as having "twenty commodious and nicely decorated rooms", four bathrooms, a brick garage and stables. During the 1940s, the property became known as Elgin Hall Guest House. Since 1958 it has had many uses including as a Hungarian Youth Club Hostel and later as Roman Catholic Church Seminary. It is now a private home.

## **Return to Barnato Grove along the laneway, turn left and stop at 7 Barnato Grove**

The original property, 'Barnato', was on the north side of Barnato Grove. In an 1887 poster advertising the sale of the early mansion 'Wynnstay', the owner of 'Barnato' is shown as William Highett. The names of H.V. Alcock and Alexander W. Cunningham appear in the directories as later owners or occupiers. H.V. Alcock manufactured billiard tables that were found in most hotels at that time. The company traded from High Street, Armadale, and more recently trades from Darling Road Malvern East.

The Rev. Charles Strong, a controversial clergyman who broke from the Presbyterian Church to form the Australian Church, lived in Barnato Grove during the 1920s and 30s.

Immediately to the south of 'Barnato' stood the mansion 'Avalon', which may have been built as early as 1874. Throughout the 1880s it was occupied by the Hon William Williams J P, who called the house 'Bryn-Hyrst'. When offered for sale, the house was described as 'a first class brick residence with tower, tiled entrance hall, reception rooms, study, billiard room, 7 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, kitchen, laundry, tower room, asphalted tennis court, croquet lawn, on 2.75 acres'. Around 1900 'Avalon' was occupied by accountant Richard H. Butler. Correspondence held by the Stonnington History Centre shows that Butler paid for the construction of Avalon Road in 1903, possibly following the route of his driveway from Orrong Road.

## **Cross to the south side of Barnato Grove and walk west towards Orrong Road. Turn left and stop at the corner of Avalon Road**

Further south along Orrong Road, past the King David School towards Dandenong Road, there are two large homes.

'Sebrof' comes from the reverse of the spelling of the surname of the second owners, Sir Charles and Mary Forbes. The house features a fine tower an excellent view of Port Phillip Bay. At one time it was used as part of Larnook Domestic Arts Teachers' College.

'Redcourt', built in 1888, with its entrance and gatehouse on the corner of Orrong Road and Dandenong Road, had a sweeping carriage drive to the front of the house and then around to the stables at the rear of the property. A conservatory was located on the northern boundary and gravel paths encircled formal gardens. It was built in 1888 by glass and timber merchant Edward Yencken, to the design of architect Joseph Reed. Reed's firm also designed the State Library of Victoria and the Royal Exhibition Building. Reed's exuberant Queen Anne design for 'Redcourt' consists of Tudor-style half-timbering, turned porch posts, ornamental spindles and stained glass.

## **Cross to the south side of Avalon Road and walk along to the west corner of Redcourt Avenue. Walk south along Redcourt Avenue and stop outside 6 Redcourt Avenue**

Redcourt Avenue is named after the mansion 'Redcourt'. In 1932, 'Redcourt' was acquired by Thomas M Burke and subdivided creating Redcourt Avenue.

Redcourt Avenue was developed as a high quality housing estate by prominent builders Dickson and Yorston, who were strongly influenced by the Garden City movement in the planning of their estates and they often provided generous front gardens and low stone fences.

The first of the Redcourt Avenue villas was No 6, built in 1933. Originally named 'Brynhyrst', it was built for William Williams, a merchant, Mayor of Melbourne 1866 / 1867 and later MLA for Maldon.

6 Redcourt Avenue was opened to the public as an 'Exhibition Home'. It was finished with high quality materials and equipped with all manner of novel fixtures including dust-proof cupboards, recesses for an electric refrigerator and electric oven in the kitchen, heated towel rails in the bathroom and 'disappearing' sprinklers in the garden lawn. The design drew high praise in an issue of the 'Australian Home Beautiful'. The author of the article wrote 'The architect Mr Gordon J Sutherland has adapted the modern trend of design to this house in a manner distinctly different from

Mediterranean and English styles. It can hardly be said to be influenced from any one source. It is rather a gesture of architectural independence. Plain but not dull, dignified but not pompous, and admirably suited to the needs of a comfortably situated family of today, it has been planned to take full advantage of the varying local climatic conditions.'

Many prominent architects were responsible for both the design and construction of the houses in Redcourt Avenue including the fine Old English Style residence at 361 Dandenong Road, (2A Redcourt Avenue) by A Mortimer McMillan, and 9 Redcourt Avenue designed by Architects RM and MHKing, a Moderne style villa with a 'handsomely decorated' ballroom, maid's quarters and a billiard room over a double-garage at the back of the house.

Soon after the Redcourt Avenue houses were completed, stringent wartime regulations brought an abrupt halt to domestic construction across the country.

**Walk north to the corner of Avalon Road. Turn right and walk along and stop outside No 10 Avalon Road, on the southwest corner of Hampden Road. Turn right into Hampden Road and walk south and stop outside 52 Hampden Road**

'Namarong', also known as 'Upton Hall', formerly stood on extensive grounds. It was built before 1879. The renowned manufacturer of billiard tables, H V Alcock, was the first occupier. From 1950 until the 1980s, the house was occupied by a Canadian order of nuns.

**Walk south to the corner of Dandenong Road**

To the east, in Dandenong Road, is 'Norrilim', now part of the King David School. It was built in the 1880s for a wholesale grocer, John Currie and known as 'Mount Melville'. From the 1890s it was the home of William Irving Winter-Irving, the son of an early Port Phillip District pastoralist. The Education Department used the property as a student hostel from 1949 and renamed it Frank Tate House.

Soon after the construction of the tramway in 1910, the municipalities of Malvern, Prahran, St Kilda and Caulfield, together with the Prahran & Malvern Tramways Trust, developed a plan to beautify Dandenong Road. A number of Federation style timber rest houses designed by Leonard Flanagan, and ornamental tramway poles, were erected and a four lane wide avenue of plane trees was planted. Malvern and Caulfield Councils also planted Canary Island Palms and ornamental garden beds at key intersections including at Hawthorn/Glenferrie Roads where some early rockery remains. The poles and shelter are the earliest still remaining in Melbourne and are on the Victorian Heritage Register.

**Cross to the east side of Hampden Road and walk north and stop at 31 Hampden Road**

Hampden Road takes its name from 'Hampden Villa', the first house to be built at the southern end of the street. 'Hampden Villa', later 'Duncaig', was originally built c1856 for Daniel Rutter Long and his family. Rutter Long was a prominent pharmacist both in Victoria and in Britain. The house was later substantially transformed inside and out by the eminent society architect, Walter Butler, for his own use. Duncaig, with its distinctive Freestyle parapets, British colonial timber detailing, "open-plan" internal circulation plus internal finishes and detailing, was the prototype for later Butler designs. The Avalon Road residential subdivision was apparently created by Butler. Traces are still visible of the original building occupied by the Rutter Long family.

**Walk north to the corner of Avondale Road, cross the road and walk east along. Stop at 15 Avondale Road.**

In 1881 a large parcel of land was subdivided as part of the Auburn Vale Estate. In 1887 Prahran Council debated whether or not to allow timber buildings to be erected in Avondale Road.

Eliza White erected a 9 roomed brick villa in 1902 at 13 Avondale Road. The large house on the corner of Auburn Grove was one of the small early twentieth-century hospitals run by matrons and financed by local doctors. The hospital specialised in post-operative care and maternity cases and owed much of its success to the skills and management of its matron. It was a homely place, with Matron's homemade scones and rock cakes for afternoon tea.

### **Walk east to 15 Avondale Road**

In 1903 Flora Timms erected a brick house of 9 rooms at 15 Avondale Road known as 'Ashby'. Ashby is a small town in north west Leicestershire, England, where Flora's father, William, was born. The house was converted to flats around 1920.

As soon as the railway line through Armadale was suggested, subdivisions of the land east of Avondale Road were planned and the long streets, Denbigh Road, Sutherland Road and Armadale Street, were laid out. The first train travelled through Armadale Station on 7 May 1879. The positioning of the railway line was important for all future growth in the area. The site chosen for the station buildings was determined by the topography, with the land sloping down to a creek. The original Armadale station was a much simpler building and had no overhead bridge. The station as we see it today was constructed in two stages. Around 1913, the line was regraded and duplicated and the level crossings were replaced by overhead bridges. Further changes were made around 1922 when the lines were electrified.

### **Retrace your steps to the corner of Auburn Grove**

A large home, 'Auburn Vale', was built around 1870 and was owned by Alexander Borthwick. It was subdivided in the late 1880s, and Auburn Grove and Avondale Road were officially taken over as public roads in 1890. Most of the houses erected on the 'Auburn Vale' land were late-Victorian.

### **Walk north along Auburn Road to 20 Auburn Road**

20 Auburn Grove was used as the Armadale Police Station from around 1904 to 1930. A shed at the back served as the lockup.

**Cross the road and return on the west side to the corner of Avondale Road. Turn right and walk west to the corner of Hampden Road. Follow Hampden Road around to the starting point of the walk.**