Wyalla, Monaro Road, Kooyong c1930
Stonnington History Collection MP2272

Monaro Road Kooyong walk December 2018

Start at the northwest corner of Mernda Road and Monaro Road Kooyong

Before Europeans arrived in the area and changed the landscape, the early surveyors noted that there was sandy soil wooded with box, gum and wattle. There were several large patches of heath and scrub, and there were areas of tea tree along Gardiner's Creek. Gardiner's Creek flowed through its floodplain in a number of channels. Thickets of swamp paperback grew close by the water together with reeds and rushes. Swamp gum, blackwood and black wattle would also have been found along the watercourse. On higher ground river gum was probably the dominant species. To European eyes, this prospect of grass, timber and water appeared ideal for cattle production.

European settlers began moving into this area in the late 1830s, soon after the settlement around Port Phillip Bay. John Gardiner drove his cattle from New South Wales and claimed an immense grazing lease from Hawthorn to Brighton. Gardiner was the early name for Malvern. Stock routes leading to Gippsland developed in the undulating country. Gardiner, and the other pastoralists who followed, began to clear the land. They cut timber to create additional grassland and to provide building materials and fuel. Their cattle were larger and heavier than the native animals and as a result, their hooves would have compacted the soil and hindered the regeneration of the natural vegetation. The pastoralists dug wells and built tanks for additional water and they made primitive crossings across the creeks.

In 1839, James McAlpine obtained a pasturage licence for land on Kooyong Koot (Gardiners Creek), including the land that Ferrie had purchased. McAlpine grew potatoes and kept some milk cows.

In 1840, 60 acres bounded by Glenferrie Road, Gardiners Creek, the line of Avenel Road and Gardiners Creek (Toorak) Road, was purchased by solicitor Peter Ferrie. Peter, together with his wife Elizabeth and her sister Miss Atherton, arrived at Port Phillip in September 1839 as cabin passengers on the 'Caledonia', which had sailed from Leith in Scotland. Before the end of the year, Ferrie had purchased land in Swanston and Bourke Streets Melbourne and commenced practice as a conveyancer and solicitor. When a census was taken in March 1841, Ferrie's household's return confirmed that he was occupying the land and had named it 'Glen Ferrie'. The Port Phillip Directory for 1841 gave his address as 'Glen Ferrie, Yarra Yarra'.

The area attracted pastoralists, speculators and market gardeners. Glenferrie Road, first surveyed in 1854, was originally Sir Henry's Road, named after Governor Sir Henry Barkly. In 1857 it was renamed Barkly Road and in 1872 changed to Glenferry Road after Peter Ferrie's property 'Glen Ferry', The name Kooyong comes from the word 'Kooyongkoot' which was the early Aboriginal name for Gardiners Creek. Kooyong is a native word meaning 'camp or resting place, the haunt of the waterfowl'. The name Monaro comes from an Aboriginal word meaning 'high plain' or 'high plateau' and Mernda is derived from an Aboriginal word meaning 'earth'.

Walk west along Mernda Road. Stop at 9 Mernda Road

9 Mernda Road was designed by architects Godfrey and Spowers in 1932 for Hugh Syme. It is a derivation of the Old English style. The main feature is the projecting gable which has a central chimney breast. The base of the chimney features rustic stonework with terracotta shingles capping the extension. The entry arch features tapestry bricks.

7 Mernda Road designed in 1925, has many similarities to the work of architect Rodney Alsop. It has a steeply pitched, multi-gabled slate roof and features an interesting complexity of forms of different heights and orientations. The windows are of a simple Georgian Revival character.

Cross to the southwest corner of Moralla Road

Kooyong is of local heritage significance with an architecturally interesting and diverse group of inter-war dwellings and streetscapes. The building stock of Moralla Road, the southern portion of Monaro Road, the east side of Glenferrie Road and the north side of Toorak Road, includes substantial villas and bungalows on broad allotments.

Walk east along Mernda Road and stop at the corner of Monaro Road

'Thanes', formerly known as 'Wyalla', at 13 A Monaro Road, is of national significance and was designed by Walter Butler. It was built in 1908 for Franz Wallach, a mining engineer. The house has rough-cast walls and a slate roof. Its most distinctive features are its Elizabethan parapets to the six main gables, as well as the swagged parapets to the projections over the bay windows and entry porch. Originally a much larger property, 'Thanes' was progressively subdivided during the interwar period. 'Thanes' is of architectural significance as an extraordinary example of the Arts and Crafts freestyle, with distinctive Elizabethan influences, and as perhaps the most unusual Arts and Crafts residence constructed in Victoria. The plan form is typical of the Arts and Crafts Movement, with the house being one room deep with a corridor, and bent to form a boomerang shape. The house is planned so that the principal living areas face down a northeast slope, giving views over the Tooronga Valley. The hallway (50 feet long and 10 feet wide), and the upstairs landing, are both impressive spaces in the house. The joinery details, including the staircase balustrade and timber panelling are well crafted. An interesting Australian touch is an arched entry featuring a wreath of gum leaves and nuts, a motif repeated in a second entrance on the axis of the main hall. The Arts and Crafts movement in Australia encouraged the use of Australian materials and motifs, reflecting burgeoning nationalism around the time of Federation and the belief in the necessity of a locally authentic form of decoration. 'Thanes' is also of architectural significance as one of the most outstanding works of Walter Butler, an architect of great talent and prolific output. It demonstrates his pioneering use of solar design principles in Australia, and his deep interest in arts and crafts principles, a legacy of his early experience with leading arts and crafts architects.

The Righetti family, including Leonard, his wife Ethel and their five children, lived at 'Wyalla' from 1927 until around 1940. Leonard Righetti was a Councillor for the City of Malvern, 1930-51, and Mayor, 1934-35 and 1938-40.

Turn the corner into Monaro Road

24 Monaro Road was designed by architects Schreiber and Jorgensen in 1923.

Cross Monaro Road and walk south. Stop at 23 Monaro Road

No 23 was built for Thomas Slattery in 1915, is a single-storey late Federation style villa with a wide-hipped slate roof extending over the front garden. The casement bay windows have simple skillion window canopies. The house is built of pressed red brick which is relieved by rough-cast in key positions.

Return north along Monaro Road. Follow Monaro Road around to the entrance to Kooyong Station

The railway line, along the northern edge of the municipality, was established in 1890 through the Yarra and Gardiner's Creek valleys from Burnley. Stations were established at Heyington, Kooyong, Tooronga, Gardiner, Glen Iris and Darling.

Cross to the opposite side of Monaro Road. Walk south and stop at 6 Monaro Road

'Glen Loeman', 6 Monaro Road, Kooyong, is of note as a representative and intact example of the Federation Queen Anne style which was commonly applied to the design of houses in Victoria from the late 1880s through to the early twentieth century. 'Glen Loeman' features a complex roof form, a lower pitch verandah roof, projecting gables, red brick walls that are roughcast rendered, and Art Nouveau-inspired half-timbering.

Continue south along Monaro Road and at 8 Monaro Road

8 Monaro Kooyong dates from around 1930 when a house and garage were built for banker, Arthur Stallwood to the design of architect Eric Beecham. In 1931, the Australian Home Beautiful featured exterior and interior photographs and a floor plan of the house. Titled 'A Pleasant Home in a Pleasant Situation', the article described the house as having 'adapted the Old English style to Australian conditions, and the result is an attractive well-balanced building which presents several distinctive features to mark it out from its fellows.'

Continue south along Monaro Road to Monaro Close

The early house, 'Glenferrie' ('Glen Ferrie'), was built in 1840 for Peter Ferrie, on 60 acres bounded by Glenferrie Road, Gardiners Creek, the line of Avenel Road and Toorak Road. A second house on the site, 'Zeerust', was built around 1870 by James Ferguson MLA, of Ferguson and Moore, engravers, lithographers & stationers. A new mansion, also known as 'Glenferrie', was built near the corner of Toorak and Glenferrie Roads, replacing the earlier house on the site. The new two-storey brick mansion included 'fourteen rooms, two kitchens, storerooms, offices, stables and coach house'. The property also included 'shrubbery, garden, pasture and cultivation'.

In 1902, with the subdivision of the Toorak Estate, Mernda Road, Moralla Road and Monaro Road were created. The mansion, known by this time as 'Culbin', was retained on a reduced allotment. Around 1904 George Stevenson purchased the property and the mansion was renamed and became known as 'Zeerust'. The Stevenson family lived at 'Zeerust' from 1904 until 1951. In September 1902, agents W. L. Baillieu and Co. held an auction of 'splendid building sites' Land surrounding the mansion 'Glenferrie' was sold with the condition that 'the main portion of any building erected thereon shall be of brick or stone'. 'Glenferrie' was demolished prior to the creation of Monaro Close in 1954.

Follow Monaro Road south, back to the starting point of the walk