Address:	36 Bent Street, Moonee Ponds
Place typology:	Residential
Construction date range:	Circa 1891
Architectural style:	Victorian Italianate
Assessment:	heritage ALLIANCE, May 2021
Recommendation:	That the place be included in the heritage overlay schedule

Photo of place:





36 Bent Street, Moonee Ponds. Photographs, heritage ALLIANCE, May 2021

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

36 Bent Street, Moonee Ponds, is an asymmetrical brick and stucco Victorian Italianate villa, built circa 1891. The highly ornamental façade with a projecting faceted bay and stucco decoration is unusual in this area. The significant features of the house includes:

- Single storey asymmetrical form with projecting faceted bay to one side.
- Brick façade with large areas of ornate stucco with acanthus, keystone, egg and dart and dog tooth mouldings.
- M-profile hipped roof (but not the cement tiles) with stucco moulding between under eave brackets and toothed metal fascia trim.
- The convex corrugated iron verandah and cast-iron frieze and posts.
- Original fenestration pattern, arched windows and door joinery.

How is it significant?

36 Bent Street, Moonee Ponds, is of local architectural (representative) significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant

36 Bent Street, Moonee Ponds, is significant as a brick and stucco asymmetrical Victorian Italianate residence. It demonstrates the villa typology of the period but is a later and more interesting example for its use of decorative stucco mouldings over the windows, across the façade and in quoining. The brick Victorian Italianate style is common in Moonee Ponds, but villas with such elaborate stucco decoration are not. Only two others, 89 Primrose Street and 72 Eglinton Street, Moonee Ponds, are directly comparable for the use of stucco mouldings.

36 Bent Street, Moonee Ponds, demonstrates the attributes of the Italianate style through its form, fabric and decorative details. It demonstrates the asymmetrical form with a projecting faceted bay, part verandah with cast-iron frieze and posts. The M-profile hipped roof has been reclad with cement tiles but was probably originally slate. The moulded stucco decoration is derived from Roman and classical elements and quoining made to replicate stone. It is a fairly intact example of the Victorian Italianate and has an unusual level of decorative detail. (Criterion D)

Description:

36 Bent Street, Moonee Ponds, is an asymmetrical double fronted Victorian Italianate villa. The house has a low-pitched M-hipped roof in cement tile with a projecting faceted bay window to one side of a part corrugated iron convex verandah. The chimneys appear to be missing. The verandah has a cast-iron frieze on cast iron paired posts.

The walls of the villa are face brick, which is tuck pointed on front façade with elaborate stucco quoining and moulding to the edges, bay windows, façade under the verandah and above the cornice line. The under eave brackets are moulded cement or stucco and there are elaborate moulded panels between the brackets also in stucco. There is a raised parapet wall to the east side, above the cornice, with moulding. The fascia has a metal toothed edge.

The ornamentation of the façade includes a shaped recessed niche moulding between the two front windows. The three bay windows are timber double hung arches with elaborate mouldings and a moulded keystone to the centre of the window head. The two timber double hung sashes under the verandah are also arched. The moulded timber door has a security screen and leadlight sidelights and fanlight. Across the front is a moulded band of acanthus and above this the windows have dog tooth inner mouldings and applied egg and dart moulding acting as a drip mould on the outer edge.

Other than the removal of the chimneys and original roof material which was probably slate, the house is very intact and the moulding and ornamentation is unusual in the area.

History:

Contextual History

City of Moonee Valley occupies part of the Traditional lands of the Wurundjeri-willam clan of the Woi-wurrung people. Many sites in the area now known as City of Moonee Valley show evidence of Woi-wurrung activities and spiritual connections. Fish were trapped in the rivers and creeks, stone was quarried from the river edges, murnong daisy was collected and kangaroos hunted across grassland areas, and bark was harvested from trees in the river valleys. This relationship between the Woi-wurrung and the land, water, animals and plants, continues to this day (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.29).

The first Europeans to explore the area known as Moonee Valley was a surveyor, Charles Grimes in 1803. In 1836, settlers moving from Van Diemen's Land crossed the area in the hope of finding empty, cheap and plentiful land for sheep. By 1842, surveyors had created the first map of the Parish of Doutta Galla and then Woi-wurrung lands were offered for sale by the British Crown to Europeans (noting that the land was never ceded). The Wurundjeri were moved off their land which had a profound impact on their culture, health and language. By 1860, the entire parish was sold (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.32-33).

Early development of the area began with the goldrush period of the 1850s which saw Mount Alexander Road used as a thoroughfare to the diggings with over 30,000 people estimated as moving along the dirt road each week. Businesses and shops sprang up providing sustenance, transport and accommodation to service the passing gold rush trade. Some very early wayside hotels and shops still survive from this period (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.51-54).

After the heady days of the goldrush, the 1860s saw Essendon, Ascot Vale, Moonee Ponds and Flemington develop into permanent townships. The development of railways by private companies gave huge impetus to suburban development of the area with the opening of the Essendon railway in 1860. The government purchased the line in 1868. Suburban trains terminated at Essendon and it wasn't until 1889 that Ascot Vale, Moonee Ponds and Newmarket stations were completed. By 1893 stations opened at Strathmore and Pascoe Vale and in 1922 Glenbervie Station opened. The railways provided an enormous boost to residential development along the line and those who had previously moved to areas without trains, now clamoured for them (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.59).

By the 1880s Essendon had become a Borough and by 1891 had a population of 14,411. Many subdivisions occurred during the land boom of the 1880s and many failed to eventuate due to the depression of the 1890s. In the interwar period a boom in subdivision and residential infill occurred in Travancore, Essendon, Ascot Vale, Strathmore and Moonee Ponds, which was focused on new transport routes along the tram lines, first established to Essendon in 1905. In 1919 the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board was formed and lines were extended and improved. The tram lines saw development occur either side of Maribyrnong Road, further along Mt Alexander Road, Buckley Street and Keilor Road (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.65-68; p.115).

In the three decades after the Second World War, Melbourne's suburbs ballooned outward to cater for post-war migration, the baby boom, an increasing need for new housing, and a more car-centred economy. Areas to the north of Essendon had been open paddocks in 1945, but by 1950 the Shire of Keilor found themselves with a developing suburb with no name. It was later called Niddrie. Similarly, Airport West was developing quickly with houses being built before the roads. By 1964 it was claimed that Airport West had the cheapest cream brick veneers in Melbourne (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.120-121).

Many houses in these post-war areas were austere weatherboard or brick veneer bungalows, with a few scattered architect designed or project homes on new blocks, particularly along the Boulevard in Aberfeldie. These post-war housing areas were car-centred communities located close to industry along Keilor Road, Matthews Avenue around Essendon Airport and East Keilor. By 1960 Airport West had its first hotel, the famous Skyways Hotel and then in the 1970s the first shopping centre, owned by Westfield was begun (heritage ALLIANCE, *Gap Heritage Study,* 2005: p.28-30).

Post-war housing pressure also saw a huge investment by the Housing Commission of Victoria who developed 150 bungalows in concrete, weatherboard and brick in Aberfeldie. They then began an ambitious estate of houses and flats on a 77 acre site at Ascot Vale in 1949. These low-rise walk-up flats eventually gave rise to the high-rise flats of Flemington which opened in June 1965 (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.123).

Many post-war migrants bought or built houses in the outer areas of the municipality, close to employment and industry and where new, cheaper housing was readily available. These developments and public housing in Aberfeldie, Ascot Vale and Flemington have had a long-lasting effect on the nature of the Moonee Valley community which today is one of the most diverse and vibrant in Melbourne (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.124).

Place History

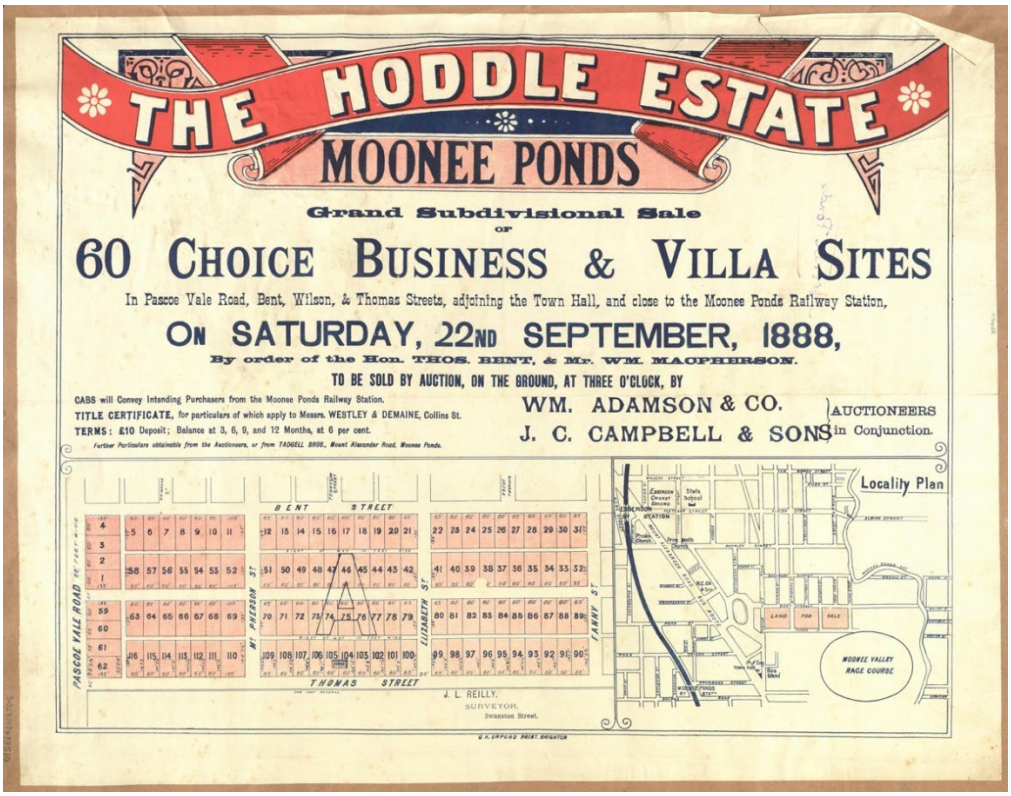
36 Bent Street, Moonee Ponds is located on the south side of Bent Street between McPherson and Capulet Streets (originally named Elizabeth Street).

The site was part of the Hoddle Estate subdivision, which comprised Crown Allotments 3 and 4 and part of Allotment 2, Section 5 in the Parish of Doutta Galla (Context, *2017 Heritage Study, Vol. 2*, 2021: p.501. The land was purchased from the crown by Robert Hoddle, surveyor-general of Victoria, and passed to his wife Fanny Agnes following his death in 1881 (Probate, Public Records Office Victoria, VPRS 28/P0, 22/930). At the time, his real and personal properties were valued at £127,000 (*The Age*, 8 Aug 1894, p.9).

The Hoddle Estate was then acquired by speculator Thomas Bent for which Bent and Thomas Streets are named (Context, *2017 Heritage Study, Vol. 2*, 2021: p.502. The subdivision ran between Salisbury Street to the north, Thomas Street to the south, Fanny Street to the east and Pascoe Vale Road to the West (*The Hoddle Estate Moonee Ponds*, State Library of Victoria, 1889). Multiple subdivisional sales took place, the first on June 2, 1888, which offered 40 business, villa and mansion sites (*The Argus*, 12 May 1888, p.3). Advertisements lauded the location of the estate, noting:

> *"It may, however, be mentioned that the Hoddle Estate is situated close to the Essendon Town Hall, and within a few minutes walk of the Moonee Ponds Station and busses, so that a more convenient position could not possibly be chosen for building purposes (North Melbourne Advertiser, 30 June 1888, p.2)."*

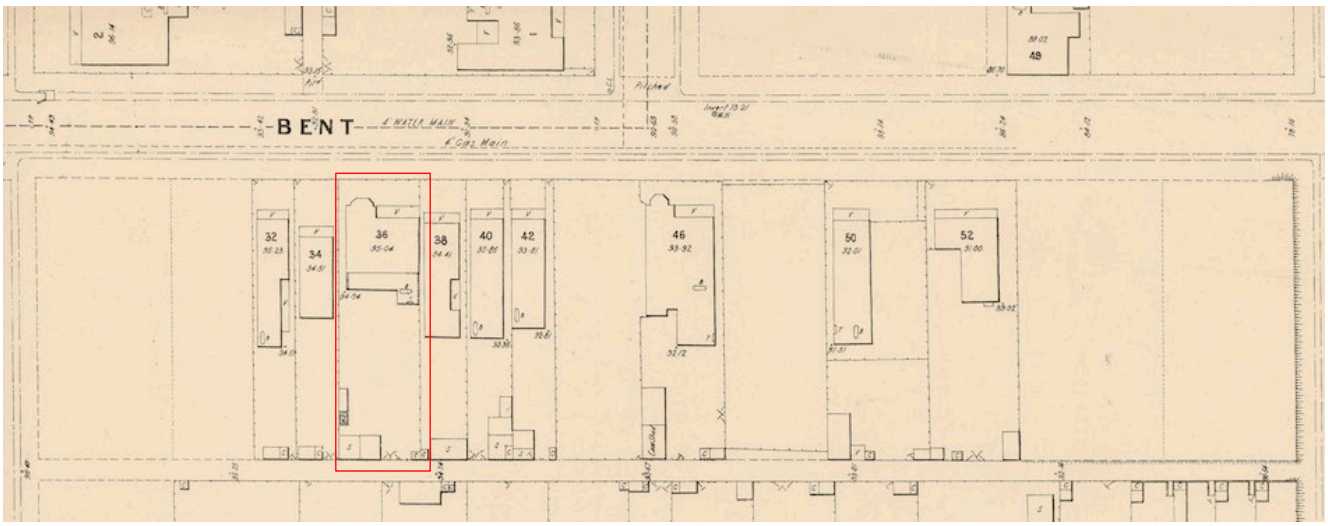
All allotments were sold for a total of £13,689 (*The Age*, 4 June 1888, p.4). Sales occurred in the following weeks with similar success (*North Melbourne Advertiser*, 30 June 1888, p.2; *The Argus*, 6 June 1888, p.6). An auction poster advertising the clearing sale of the estate shows the southern portion of Bent Street, between Elizabeth and McPherson Streets as sold (The Hoddle Estate Moonee Ponds, State Library of Victoria, 1889). 36 Bent Street, Moonee Ponds was located on lot 14 of Block A in the Hoddle Estate subdivision with a frontage of 60 feet (The Hoddle Estate, State Library of Victoria, 1888; Essendon Historical Society Notes).



"The Hoddle Estate (Bent, Thomas and Fanny Street, Pascoe Vale Road," 1888, State Library of Victoria.

According to the *Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) detail plan*, most of the development of the subdivision was concentrated to the west of Capulet Street (*MMBW Plan no. 2274*, 1909). Nine of fifteen of the allotments on the block containing no. 36 Bent Street were developed by this time, including no. 36 Bent Street [Ibid]. Named "The Waves," no. 36 Bent Street was constructed in 1891 for plasterer William George Harless who occupied the house until 1892 when it was sold to Frank Foster Reville (Essendon Historical Society Notes). Reville does not appear to have occupied the site until some years later, with the *Sands & McDougall Directory* listing the house as vacant in 1895 (*Sands & McDougall*, 1895). Reville passed in 1906, with the house then passing to Laura Martin, also of Bent Street, and was then sold in 1908 to William Smith (Land Title, Vol. 2455, Fol. 887). In Smith's probate, a description of the villa is given as:

> *"All that piece of land having a frontage of 40 feet to the South side of Bent Street, Moonee Ponds by a depth of 135 feet to a 10 feet road at rear […] upon which land are erected a dwelling house containing five rooms and outbuildings known as Number 36 Bent Street […] (Probate, Public Records Office Victoria, VPRS 28/P3, 149/053)."*



Exert from MMBW Plan no. 2274, 1909, State Library of Victoria.

Sources:

Primary Sources

The Argus
The Age
Hoddle Estate Auction Plan, State Library of Victoria
Land Titles, LANDATA
Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Plans, State Library of Victoria
North Melbourne Advertiser
Probates, Public Records Office Victoria
Sands & McDougall Directories

Secondary Sources

Context, 2017 Heritage Study, Vol. 2
Essendon Historical Society Notes

Thematic Context:

City of Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History, 2012

6. Building towns, cities and the garden state

6.7 Making houses for Victorians.

Comparative Analysis:

During the boom years during the 1880s, the City of Moonee Valley saw increased residential development through subdivision of large estates. Often demonstrating the early phase of the suburban expansion near the railway lines or arterial roads, Victorian-era houses in Moonee Valley are mostly single-storey Italianate style villas, with some examples of mansions, double-storey villas, single- and double-storey terraces and detached cottages. Most are built of brick, with one timber example evident.

The Italianate style is a revival in the mid-nineteenth century of earlier Italian architectural forms and details, especially those from the time of the Renaissance, which were in themselves a revival and reappraisal of Greek and most importantly Roman architecture.

The Italianate style was also associated, but less commonly in Victoria and chiefly in the 1840s to 1860s but with lingering influence, with a revival of building forms of vernacular Italian rural buildings, particularly in their use of asymmetrical massing and towers producing a picturesque effect.

The Italianate style as applied to domestic architecture in Victoria favoured simple building forms, sometimes enlivened by bays and towers, with sheer wall surfaces in face brick (often bi-chrome or polychrome) or cement render generally incorporating quoining (often as surface decoration if not necessarily structural need).

Decoration in the Italianate style derived from Roman precedents and included elements from Classical entablatures and architectural orders, including a hierarchy of architraves, friezes, and cornices with associated moulding, panels, and brackets, applied to eaves, parapets and chimneys.

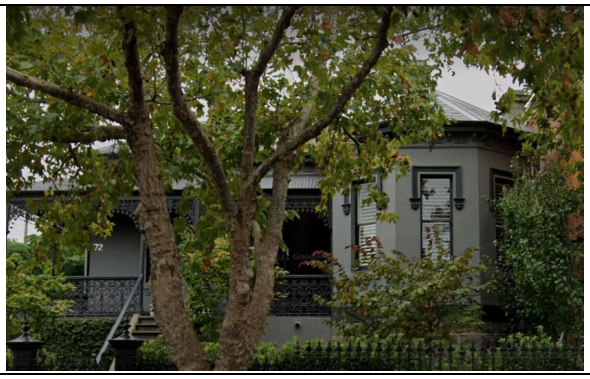
Eclectic touches were often married to the Italianate style, including Romanesque, Gothic, or stilted segmental arch-headed fenestration, incongruous replication of masonry features in timber, and excessive ornament that characterised the Boom style of the late nineteenth century.

The Italianate style is well represented in the Moonee Valley Heritage Overlay. Individually significant examples included detached villas (both symmetrical and asymmetrical in plan), terrace houses and mansions. Typically, they are set within a

garden with a low front fence at the street frontage. Detailing ranges from modest to elaborate, typically including features from the era including cast-iron verandah friezes and posts and polychrome masonry to the front façade. The level of intactness of the Victorian-era Italianate villas in the City of Moonee Valley is moderate to very high (Context, *2017 Heritage Study,* p.514-515).

Whilst the Victorian era and brick Italianate style are common in Moonee Ponds, villas like 36 Bent Street, Moonee Ponds, with such elaborate stucco decoration are not common. Only two others, 89 Primrose Street and 72 Eglinton Street, Moonee Ponds, are directly comparable for the use of stucco mouldings.

	Photos from Google Streetview
89 Primrose Street, Essendon (HO505) built 1892, is a late Victorian era Italianate villa. It is a richly decorated example of the Italianate style with its asymmetrical form and projecting bays, walls of polychrome and plain brick, slate roof, patterned chimneys and decorative detail in encaustic tile panels beneath the windows. It possesses a relatively high integrity, with very few changes visible to original or early elements of the place. It is a good representative example of the Italianate style with a high decorative quality that compares very well with 36 Bent Street, Moonee Ponds.	
31 Dickens Street, Moonee Ponds (HO516) is a late Victorian era Italianate villa, built c.1900. The Italianate style is well represented in the Heritage Overlay in Moonee Valley with detached houses forming the largest typological grouping. Individually significant examples comparable with 31 Dickens Street, Moonee Ponds include 3 Aberfeldie Street, Essendon, 1892-1897 (HO143), 23 Brown Avenue, Ascot Vale c.1891 (HO392), 28 Nicholson Street, Essendon, 1891 (HO265), each of which demonstrate the same single-storey and asymmetrical form with variations of decorative detail. This is a later example of the villa style than 36 Bent Street, but is still comparative in terms of its general form and level of integrity.	
71 Primrose Street, Essendon (HO504) a stone-fronted Victorian Italianate house built in 1891-92. While its integrity is diminished by the replacement of original roof tiles, loss of chimneys and front verandah, the significance is retained because its Victorian origins are clearly evident and is enhanced by the unusual bluestone and freestone construction. 36 Bent street is far more intact than this example and is a far more typical example of the Italianate villa form.	

72 Eglinton Street, Moonee Ponds (HO12) is is a rendered asymmetrical Italianate villa on the corner allotment with both polygonal and square projecting bays. It has less ornamentation than 36 Bent Street and has a two sided design due to its location on a corner allotment. It is contributory to a precinct and has been altered, but still has a moderately high integrity.	

Recommendation:

That 36 Bent Street, Moonee Ponds be included in the Heritage Overlay schedule.

Schedule:

External Paint Controls	Yes
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Solar Energy Controls	Yes
Fences and Outbuildings	No
Prohibited Uses	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No