

Place name:	Formerly <i>St Heliers</i>
Address:	2 Athol Street, Moonee Ponds
Place typology:	Residential
Construction date range:	1902
Architectural style:	Victorian Italianate Survival
Assessment:	M.McDougall, May 2021
Recommendation:	That the place be included in the heritage overlay schedule

Photo of place:



2 Athol Street, Moonee Ponds, Source, M. McDougall, May 2021



2 Athol Street, Moonee Ponds, Source, M. McDougall, May 2021

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

The substantial dichromatic brick villa, in Victorian Italianate Survival style constructed for Ebenezer and Ellen Cass in 1902, is significant. Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Hipped roof of slate with bracketted eaves, with elaborate paired eaves brackets
- Dichromatic brickwork, including the cream brick semicircular arches with tapering brick voussoirs and “keystone” to windows and cream brick banding
- Ogee profile verandah roof to Athol and Edgar Street elevations, with gabled roof entry within the verandah roof on the eastern side
- Cast iron verandah posts and lacework frieze and brackets
- Four original brick chimneys with plain terracotta chimney pots
- Original skillion-roofed brick outbuilding to the north west corner at the rear

How is it significant?

The house is of local historic and architectural (representative) significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

The house at 2 Athol Street, Moonee Ponds is of historical significance for its capacity to demonstrate, along with other similar villas in the area, the way the elevated land near the Ascot Vale and Moonee Ponds railway stations attracted prestigious villa residences. While this house was constructed in the Federation period, well after the Land Boom of the 1880s, its size and style reflects the other villas which had been constructed in that earlier period. (Criterion A)

The house at 2 Athol Street, Moonee Ponds is of architectural (representative) significance as a late example of the Italianate style that was very popular in the municipality, particularly in Moonee Ponds during the Land Boom of the 1880s. It is a substantial, well-built, and excellent example of the Italianate Survival style. It is likely that it was constructed in the style of the majority of houses already built in the street, and so was probably designed to fit into the existing neighbourhood, rather than reflecting new Federation styles, such as Queen Anne Revival. (Criterion D)

Description:

The original section of the house has a hipped roof of slate, with a projecting hipped roof section to Athol Street, and central valley to the rear. There is a gabled roof entry to the verandah roof on the eastern side, facing Edgar Street. The part verandah to the two main facades has an unusual ogee profile roof of corrugated iron, painted in stripes of terracotta and cream.

The walls are dichromatic brickwork, with red brick body and bands of cream brick at window base, mid and hard sections. The semi-circular arches over the windows featured tapered cream bricks and “keystone” detailing. There are four original brick chimneys, which have a rendered band towards the top, and rendered cornice capping, with plain terracotta chimney pots. There are two chimneys with a single chimney pot, one with a double, and one triple. The verandah has slender cast iron columns with a decorative iron lace frieze and brackets, and double posts at the corner. The timber framed windows are double hung with plain glazed sashes, with semi-circular top to the upper sash. The front door is not visible from the street.

The house is sited to provide a large front garden to Athol Street, a long garden to Edgar Street and a relatively small rear yard, which appears to be paved. The front garden has areas of lawn, a row of tall Italian Pencil Pines (*Cupressus sempervirens 'glauca'*) hedging to the perimeter and to garden beds, a fountain, and an ogee-roofed gazebo. The fencing to Athol Street frontage and to part of Edgar Street, is modern (reproduction) timber picket, part timber paling to Edgar Street and a solid brick rear fence, with roller door to Edgar Street/rear lane corner. The fence has engaged piers to the internal side and cement capping, to the main fence with square capping to the piers.

Integrity

There is a large two storey addition to the western side, with double garage to the lower level. There is also a conservatory addition on the eastern side with lantern roof. The verandah at the rear, which is a similar form to the part verandah to the Athol and Edgar Street elevations, is also a later addition. None of these additions are considered contributory, although sympathetic in approach. The main (original) part of the house appears to be substantially intact.

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 Dousta 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 Glenberrie 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).

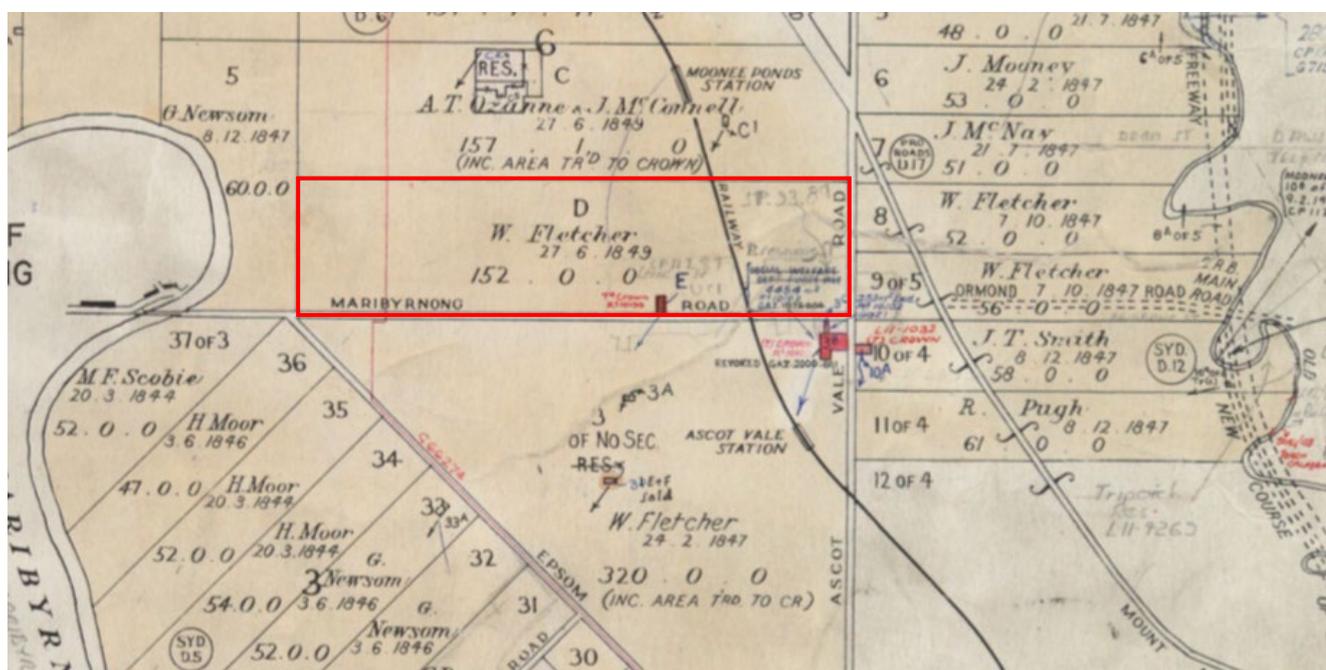
Many houses in these post-war areas were austere weatherboard or brick veneer bungalows, with a few scattered architect designed or project homes on new blocks, particularly along the Boulevard in Aberfeldie. These post-war housing areas

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).

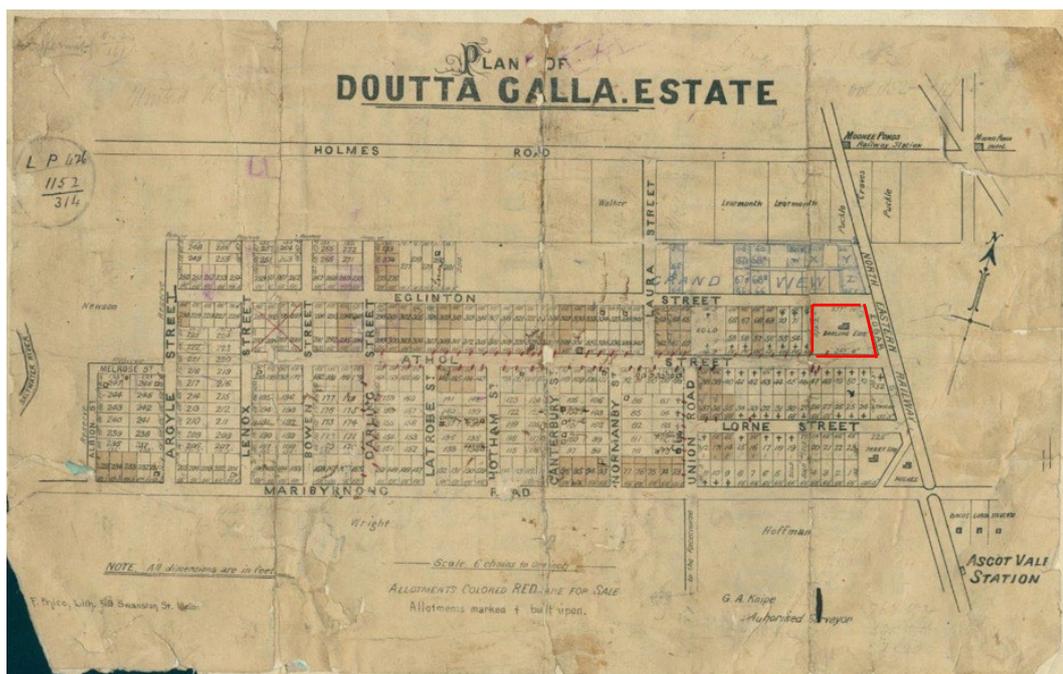
Many post-war migrants bought or built houses in the outer areas of the municipality, close to employment and industry and where new, cheaper housing was readily available. These developments and public housing in Aberfeldie, Ascot Vale and Flemington have had a long-lasting effect on the nature of the 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



Extract from Dousta Galla Parish Plan, Source: Public Records Office of Victoria

The land, part of Crown allotment D, Section 6, Parish of Dousta Galla, was first acquired from the Crown by W. Fletcher on 27/6/1849.

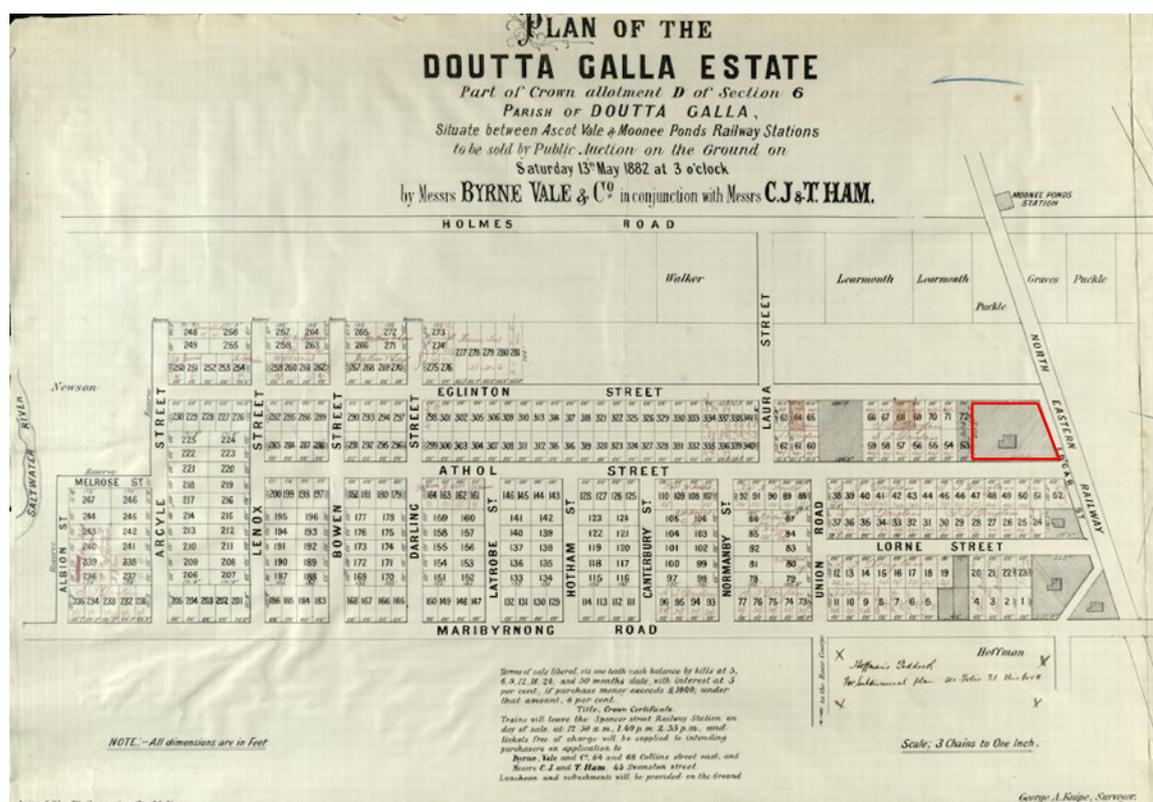


Subdivision Plan, Douтта Galla Estate 1876, Source: Essendon Historical Society

The 110 acre Douтта Galla Estate, purchased in 1867 for £11,000, was for sale in April 1882, and at the time was owner by Andrew Wright. The Douтта Galla Estate was situated between Moonee Ponds and Ascot Vale stations, and ran from the railway line, almost to what was then the Saltwater River (now Maribyrnong River).

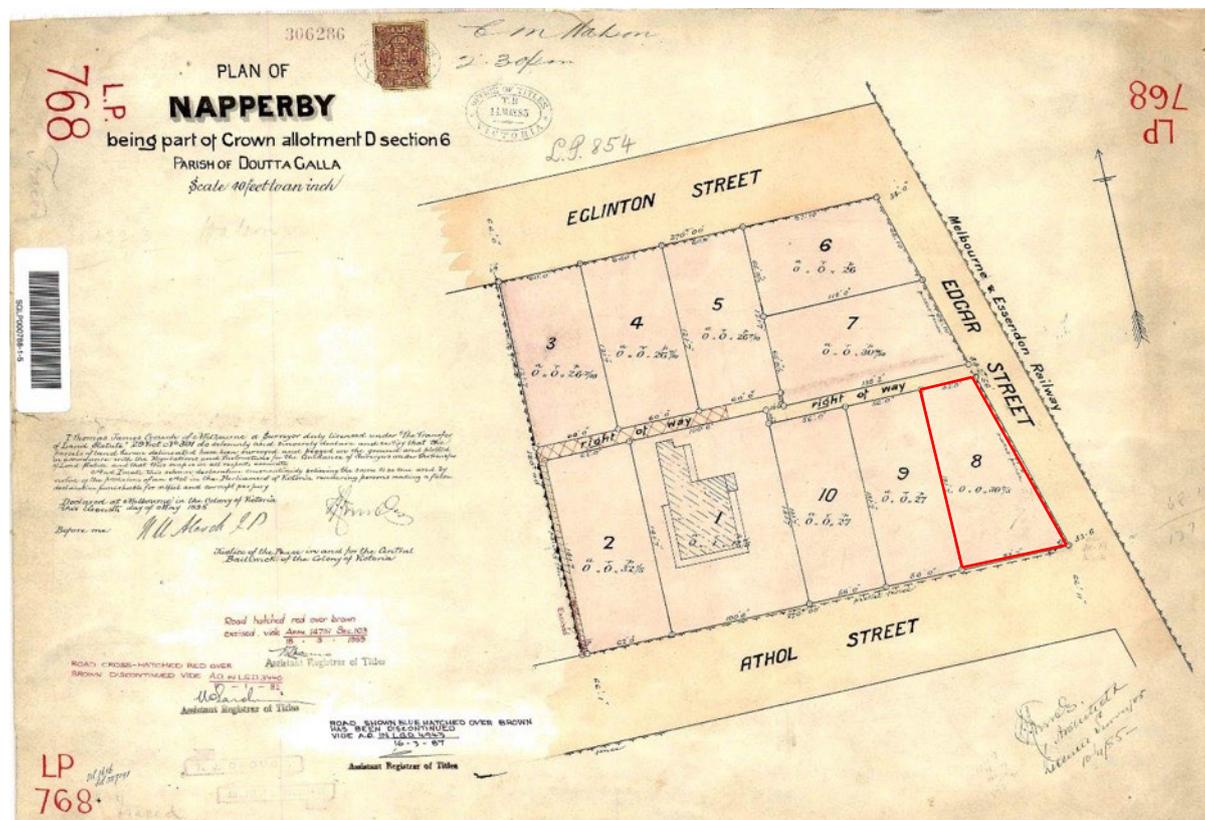
The land boom resulted in a massive rise in the value of the estate, which by 1887 was worth £500,000 (Aldous, p. 69).

The 1876 subdivision plan shows site of 2 Athol Street (a larger block) is already occupied by Darling Esq. In 1882, the plan of the Douтта Galla Estate shows the land at the corner of Athol and Edgar Streets, on the north side of Athol Street, as being a large block, with a frontage of 367'8" (114.8 metres) to Athol Street and extending through to Eglington Street on the north. There is an L-shaped building, presumably a dwelling, in the centre.



Plan of the Douтта Galla Estate, 1882, Source, State Library of Victoria

The land occupied by Darling Esq. in the 1876 subdivision plan was further subdivided on 11 May 1885, in a subdivision named 'Napperby', with a right-of-way created between Athol and Eglington Streets. The site for sale in 1892, had a frontage approximately one third of the frontage of the allotment in 1882, and the site was vacant.



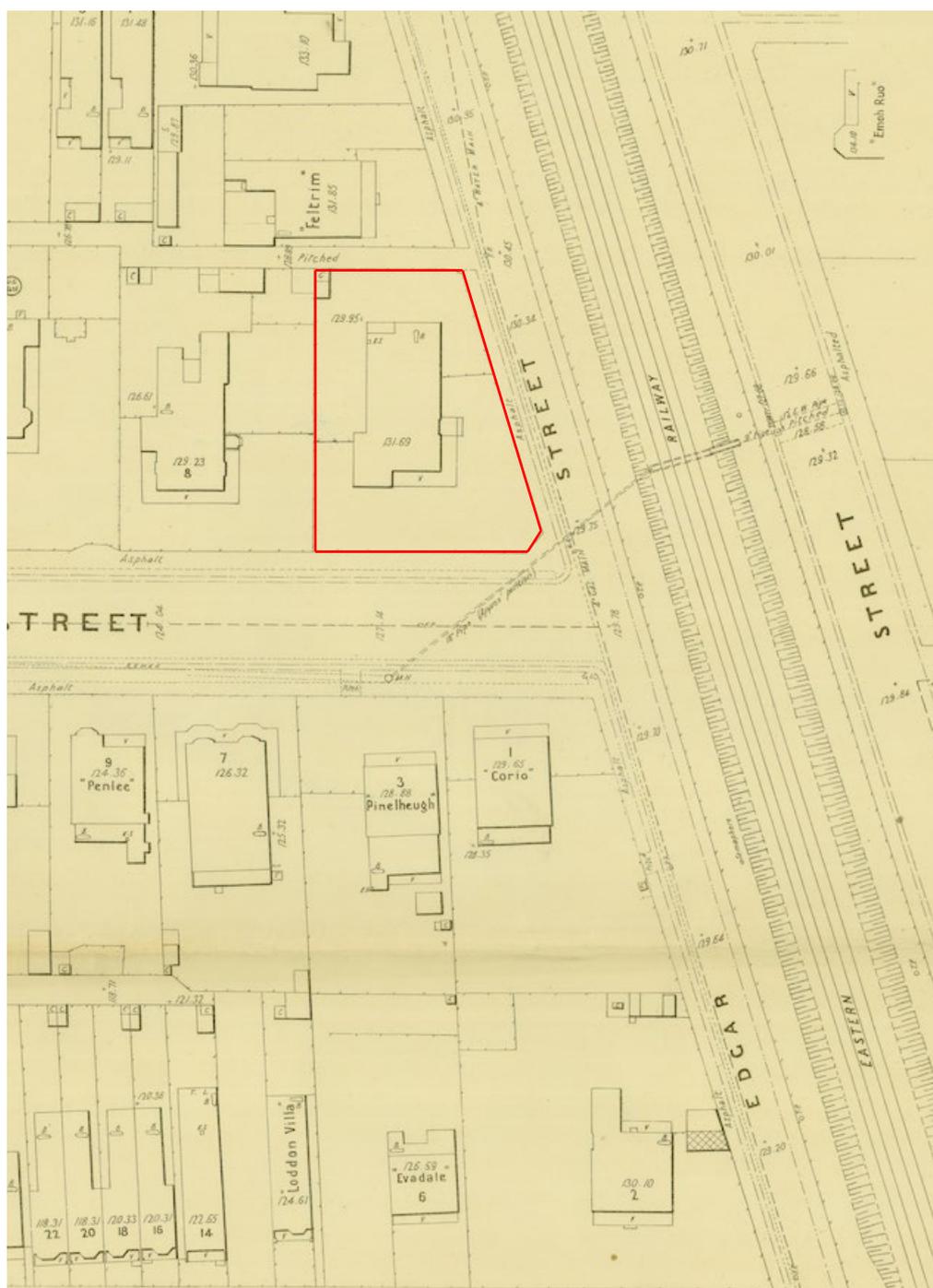
Napperby Estate 1885 Land Titles, Source, Public Records Office of Victoria, provided by Essendon Historical Society

An auction notice in the Argus on Wednesday 7 December, 1892, described the land for sale: “that choice building site, having 107ft 7in. frontage to Athol street by a depth of 137ft along Edgar street, with a pitched right-of-way at rear, and fenced with good picket fence and water, surrounded by some of the best villas in the district....”

The Sands and McDougall Directory of 1890 lists W. Tulloch as the occupier on the north side of Athol Street, as one of eight sites between Edgar Street and Union Road.

In February 1898, Ellen Mary Cass acquired the land (Certificate of Title Vol 2675 Folio 933). The Sands and McDougall directory of 1900 doesn't have a listing for the occupier of the site in either Athol Street or Edgar Street. The 1904 Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plan shows the house, so it appears it was constructed between 1900 and 1904. Essendon Historical Society rate books confirm the construction date as 1902. By 1905, Ebenezer Cass is listed at St Heliers, and the address is Edgar Street. The house has been constructed on the corner site, with the main entry facing Edgar Street, so it begins to be listed under Edgar Street from this time until 1925, when the next owner, Michael Meara is the occupier of the house, listed under Athol Street again.

Ebenezer Cass was born in 1843 in Stourbridge, Worcestershire, England and arrived in Australia on 21 December 1859 aged 17 and listed as a labourer. He married Ellen Mary R. He is likely to have made money through investing in gold mining shares, just prior to the 1870s quartz gold mining boom and was listed as a shareholder in the Palm Gold Mining Company, operating at Durham Lead, Mt Mercer, near Buninyong in 1865, as well as the Tyson's Reef Quartz Mining and Crushing and Pumping Company, while he was resident in Melbourne, and the Clunes Northern Quartz Mining Company in 1869, when he was living in Auckland. He does not appear to have been prominent in local affairs. Little has been found about his wife (Ancestry.com).



Extract from Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Detail Plan no. 1612, Source, State Library of Victoria, 1904

The 1904 Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plan clearly shows the plan of the house largely as it is today, but without later extensions. The plan shows a return verandah to Athol and Edgar Streets, with the main entry facing Edgar St. There is a small outbuilding at the rear, in the same location as a brick building with skillion roof now stands. The plan shows fencing dividing the front and rear gardens.

Sources:

Primary Sources

The Argus

Certificates of Title, LANDATA

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Plans, State Library of Victoria

Public Records Office Victoria, Probates and Wills

Secondary Sources

Aldous, Grant, *The Stop-Over That Stayed: A History of Essendon*, 1979, City of Essendon
Living Histories, *Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History*, Adopted 18 September 2012
Context Pty Ltd, *Moonee Valley Gap Study Stage 1*, 2014
Research by Essendon Historical Society
Ancestry.com

Thematic Context:

City of Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History, 2012

2. Peopling Victoria's places and landscapes
 - 2.7. Promoting settlement
6. Building towns, cities and the garden state
 - 6.7. Making houses for Victorians

Comparative Analysis:

There are a large number of similar houses in the municipality, and Victorian Italianate is well-represented in the heritage overlay. The majority were built in the 1880s.

However, there are fewer of the later examples—the so-called Italianate Survival—like the example at 2 Athol Street, built around 20 years after the majority of Victorian examples in the Federation period.

During the boom years during the 1880s, the City of Moonee Valley saw increased residential development through subdivision of large estates. By the turn of the century, some residential allotments near the railway lines and tramways that remained unoccupied during the 1890s economic depression became gradually developed. Demonstrating the enduring suburban expansion during the very early Edwardian-era, these transitional-period houses sometimes display Italianate-style features and forms, blended with new architectural trends of the early twentieth century. These examples are sometimes referred to as Italianate Survival style.

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 Heritage Overlay in Moonee Valley. 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. On the current Heritage Overlay, a few transitional-period villas are identified as Italianate Survival style (Context, 2017 Heritage Study, Vol. 2, 2021: p. 54).

The house at 2 Athol Street is best compared to substantial examples from the early twentieth century, listed in the table below. It is a substantial corner example of the style and is the only one with an unusual ogee profile verandah.

	All photos from Google Streetview
<p>Tyneside, 31 Dickens Street, Moonee Ponds 1900 (HO516) is significant as an example of an Italianate villa with some Queen Anne Revival style features. The Italianate style is well represented in the Heritage Overlay in Moonee Valley with detached houses forming the largest typological grouping. This example has a bullnosed roof to the verandah.</p>	
<p>House, 40 Maribyrnong Rd, Moonee Ponds, 1903 (HO521), is a Federation era Italianate Survival villa built in 1903. Like 31 Dickens Street, it has a bullnosed verandah. The gabled shed with slate roof at the rear of the residence is also significant.</p>	
<p>12 Athol St, Moonee Ponds, ca.1900 (HO156) is aesthetically important for its unusual facade treatment, and is symmetrical, with gablets in the verandah. Unlike 2 Athol Street, it has a lacework balustrade to the front verandah, in addition to the frieze.</p>	
<p>26 Fletcher Street, Essendon, c.1905 (HO300) is a dichromatic Federation-era brick villa of Italianate Survival style. Asymmetrical in plan it has a hip roof clad in slate tiles with a projecting bay and there is a return verandah with a cast-iron frieze. Some of the original materials have been replaced sympathetically.</p>	

Recommendation:

That 2 Athol Street, Moonee Ponds be included in the Heritage Overlay schedule

Schedule:

External Paint Controls	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Solar Energy Controls	Yes
Fences and Outbuildings	Yes (Original skillion-roofed brick outbuilding to the northwest corner at the rear of the dwelling)
Prohibited Uses	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No