

# City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

**Place name:** Gleneira  
**Other names:** House, Black locust trees

**Citation No:**  
**328**



**Address:** 12 Glen Eira Road, Ripponlea

**Category:** Residential: House

**Style:** Victorian: Italianate

**Constructed:** 1891

**Designer:** Unknown

**Amendment:** TBA

**Comment:** Revised citation

**Heritage Precinct:** Ripponlea Residential

**Heritage Overlay:** HO373

**Graded as:** Significant

**Victorian Heritage Register:** No

## Significance

### What is significant?

Gleneira, constructed in 1891 for Charles McEvoy, at 12 Glen Eira Road, Ripponlea, is significant. It is a rendered brick, two-storey, Italianate-style mansion. The three mature black locust trees (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) also contribute to the significance of the place.

Alterations and additions and the front fence are not significant.

### How is it significant?

Gleneira, 12 Glen Eira Road, Ripponlea is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

### Why is it significant?

Gleneira is historically significant, as evidence of the limited first phase of suburban development in Ripponlea during the Land Boom of the late-nineteenth century, with some of this development defined by mansions with large gardens. (Criterion A)

The black locust trees are significant as remnant early garden plantings of a species that is rare within the municipality. (Criteria A & B)

Gleneira is of aesthetic significance as a fine and intact example of an Italianate-style mansion with characteristic asymmetrical composition of its façade, which is expressed with a two-storey projecting bay, with a two-storey verandah extending to its side. Applied to this composition is elaborate and well-detailed

embellishment, with this including cement ornamentation, and a finely detailed verandah and balcony. The lower portion of the verandah and its sides have rendered arches, and the upper level of the verandah and the balustrade of the balcony on the projecting bay detailed in cast iron. Adding complexity to the design are arcuated and trabeated window openings, and a bay at the side containing an entrance porch reinforcing the asymmetry of the composition. Other notable features are the relatively deep eaves of the slate clad hip roof, which has pairs of eaves brackets. Contributing to the aesthetic value of the house is its garden setting, with its deep setback from Glen Eira Road and the mature black locust tree, one of three on this site. (Criterion E)

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## Thematic context

### Victoria's framework of historical themes

6. Building towns, cities and the garden state: 6.3 Shaping the suburbs, 6.7 Making homes for Victorians

### Port Phillip thematic environmental history

5. Buildings and cultural landscapes: 5.2 Shaping the suburbs (5.2.2 Private development), 5.3 Diverse Housing (5.3.1 Mansions and grand villas)

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## History

### Contextual history

Private development in the City of Port Phillip began from the time of the first sales of Crown land in the 1840s and 1850s. The gradual development of infrastructure, including roads, public transport networks and utilities, paved the way for increasing development of private land. Private subdivision within the broad framework set out by Hoddle's survey saw neighbourhoods in the City of Port Phillip grow into populated, thriving communities.

Mansion estates – large detached homes on generous allotments – defined early, permanent housing in Elwood and St Kilda, in the mid-nineteenth century. Although the oldest surviving houses in Elwood – such as Vautier House, built in the mid-1850s – are terrace houses, it was mansions on large allotments that came to characterise the neighbourhood in its early years. The estates were located in four distinct clusters: St Kilda Hill; the semi-rural estates occupying the high ground on the south side of Dandenong Road from the Nepean Road (now St Kilda Road) to Orrong Road; those surrounding the St Kilda Botanical Gardens and along Brighton Road; and the remote 'sea-side' estates along Ormond Esplanade. Kearney's 1855 map of the area shows the contrast between dense residential development in St Kilda, and the large mansion estates to the east of the Nepean Road including Charnwood and Marlton, south of Carlisle Street (then known as Beach Road), and on both sides of Brighton Road, including Erindale and Chiverton, and Bramshaw, Osborne House and Wiltonia further south.

Apart from the mansion estates, most of the development in Port Phillip prior to 1880 was confined to the early township reserves. However, the boom era of the 1880s saw intense land speculation across Melbourne, with large estates and the original crown allotments carved up into much smaller allotments for residential development that filled in the gaps shown on that plan.

During the peak of Melbourne's building boom in the 1880s, almost all the remaining land in Port Phillip (with the exception of the Elwood Swamp and the Fishermans Bend area) was subdivided and offered for sale. Prosperity saw land speculation intensify across the suburbs during that period in areas such as Elwood, Balaclava, Ripponlea, and St Kilda East that were remote from transport and services. When one of Elwood's oldest estates, Chiverton, was subdivided in 1885, it created 85 allotments. Despite the eager subdivision of land and colourful advertising, however, the actual building of homes in these remote subdivisions was slow. With the onset of the 1890s economic depression, many estates failed and remained



undeveloped for a decade or more. Maps of Elwood in the late 1890s, for example, show that residential development was still sparse and the beachside estates had failed spectacularly, with only a few houses on the Elwood Esplanade and Elwood Hill estates. Hood Street and Bluff Avenue remained entirely undeveloped at the turn of the century.

## Gleneira

Land to the north and south of Glen Eira Road between Brighton Road and the Sandringham railway was subdivided and offered for sale during the land boom of the late nineteenth century and by 1904 eight villas had been constructed, including a group of five along the south side (see Figure 1). To the south of these houses was the Erindale estate, which had been established c.1855 for Thomas Monahan and to the east of the railway was Quat Quatta, built in 1890-91. However, the economic depression of the 1890s halted development and it was not until the Ripponlea railway station was opened in 1913 that building recommenced.

This house, originally known as Gleneira, was constructed by 1891 for Charles McEvoy as his own residence (RB).

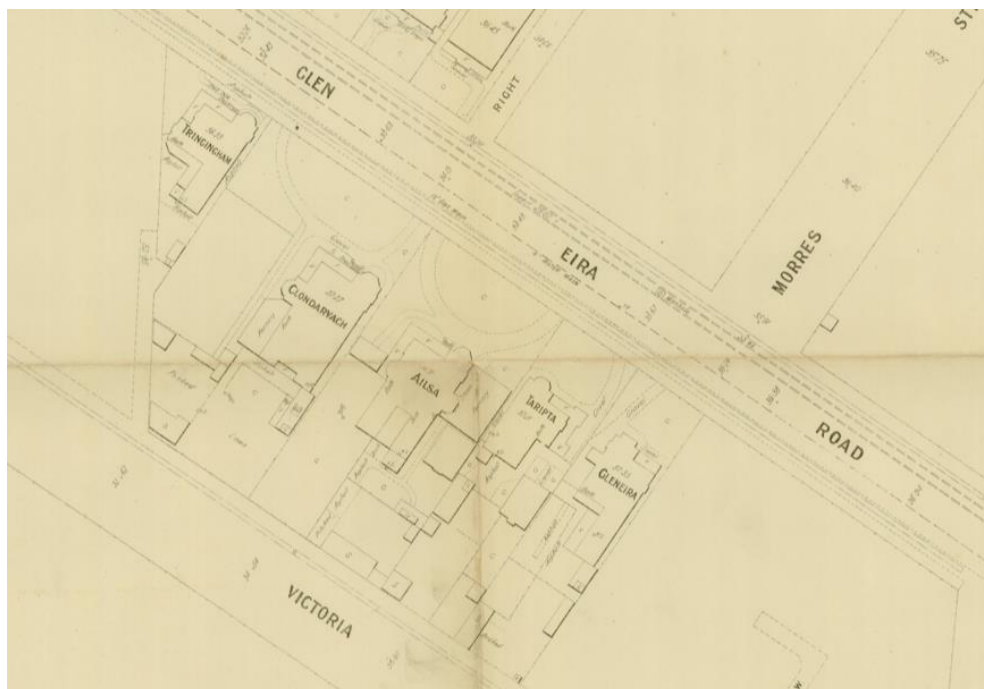


Figure 1: MMBW Detail Plan No. 1451 (detail) with Gleneira on the extreme right

## References

Francine Giffedder & Associates, 'Heritage Tree Report 12 Glen Eira Road, Ripponlea', December 2003

Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan No. 1451, dated 1904

Port Phillip Thematic Environmental History (TEH) **Version 1, July 2020**

St Kilda Rate Books (RB) 1890/91 no. 3925, Charles McEvoy o/o, N.A.V. 110 pounds

## Description

Gleneira is a large, two-storey, rendered brick, Victorian Italianate-style mansion, with a hip roof clad in slate tiles. The façade of the house is asymmetrically composed with a projecting bay to one side, the corners of this bay defined by rendered quoining. On the ground floor of the bay, a smaller bay projects with windows in a tripartite arrangement, the central window is arched and the windows flanking it with horizontal heads (a variation of the Serliana motif). This lower bay forms a balcony on the upper level, its

balustrade has cast iron lace, and facing this balcony are windows in a tripartite arrangement with horizontal heads. Windows on both the ground and first floors of the bay have rendered impost moulds and pronounced rendered mouldings towards the upper portions of the window openings. The upper and lower levels are delineated by a rendered cornice. The roof of the bay has relatively deep eaves, which are detailed with pairs of eaves brackets.

To the left of the projecting bay is a two-storey verandah. The ground floor of the verandah has a pair of rendered arched openings at front, and an arched opening on each level at one side. On the rear wall of this verandah on the ground floor is a pair of arched windows. The upper level of the verandah is embellished with cast iron columns, brackets and a balustrade, with a pair of windows with horizontal heads on the rear wall of the balcony. The windows adjacent to the verandah have rendered mouldings surrounding them. A door has been added to the side of the projecting bay on the first floor to access the balcony from a room in the bay.

On the west side of the house is a small projecting bay with hip roof. It has an arched opening that provides access to a tiled entrance porch. The four-panel entry door has leadlight sidelights and fanlight. Above the porch opening is a small double-hung sash window.

The house is set back from Glen Eira Road behind a mature garden and is obscured from view by a high rendered brick fence of recent origin. The garden contains three mature Black Locust trees (*Robinia pseudoacacia*). Two of the trees (Tree#1 and Tree#2) are situated within the rear yard adjacent to the west boundary and are of a similar size. When measured in 1999 Tree #1 was 18 metres in height and had a canopy spread of 11 metres, while Tree #2 was 17 metres in height with a canopy spread of 11 metres. The other tree, Tree #3, which is situated within the front yard was not measured at the same time as the other trees were assessed. It is lower in height.

The house is in good condition and has a relatively high degree of external intactness.

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## Comparative analysis

By the boom of the 1880s, many houses were built in the popular Italianate style. Characteristics of this style typically include an asymmetrical composition with squared or canted bay projecting to one side, a front verandah with cast iron posts and frieze and tessellated tiled floor, an M-profile, hipped roof clad in slate, brick or rendered chimneys, rendered or face brick façade (sometimes with bi-chromatic or polychromatic detailing), rendered decorative elements applied to the façade, and trabeated or arcuated wall openings.

Gleneira is a fine example of the Italianate style and is especially notable for its elaborate cement ornamentation, including around the windows, and the finely detailed cast iron verandah and balcony. The significance of the house is enhanced by its high degree of intactness. Within the Ripponlea area it is also one of a small number of surviving nineteenth century houses that illustrate the limited first phase of suburban development, with some of this defined by mansions and large gardens.

Comparable examples of nineteenth century mansions and villas in Ripponlea include:

- Quat Quatta (1891), 17 Quat Quatta Avenue, Ripponlea (Citation 368, Significant within HO7 Precinct). Single storey mansion of 14 rooms with canted bay windows and elaborate stucco-work to the balustraded parapet.
- Tringham (1891), 2 Glen Eira Road, Ripponlea (Citation 328, Significant within HO7 Precinct). Single storey asymmetrical form. Finely detailed with elaborate chimney, verandah and frieze decoration.
- Ulverston (1887), 23 Hotham Grove, Ripponlea (Citation 31, Individual HO149). Two storey asymmetrical form with a canted bay and two-level cast iron verandah. Features vermiculated panels above the ground floor windows to the bay.

The Black Locust trees are rare examples of this species in Port Phillip. The exact date of planting is not known, but the trees could date to the early twentieth century or even the late nineteenth. Black locust trees were more commonly planted in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century than post 1920s (Gilfedder, 2003).

Early garden plantings associated with residential properties are rare within Port Phillip. Other examples include:

- The mature Canary Island date palms (*Phoenix canariensis*), Jacarandas (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*) and Bhutan cypress (*Cupressus torulosa*) at the former Holmwood mansion, 61 Alexandra Street, St Kilda East (Citation 288). These date from the early twentieth century.
- The Moreton bay fig (*Ficus macrophylla*) at 43 Brighton Road, St Kilda (Citation 2291). Believed to date from the late nineteenth century, the associated house has been demolished.
- The mature Canary Island date palms, Moreton bay fig, and Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) at Pine Nook, 22 Shirley Grove, St Kilda East (Citation 2308). The house at Pine Nook dates from 1902 and the garden plantings were established soon afterward.
- The Stone pine (*Pinus pinea*) at 7 Hammerdale Avenue, St Kilda East (Citation 2293), which is a remnant of the garden of the demolished Hammerdale mansion. Believed to date from the late nineteenth century.
- The Canary Island date palms at 57 Blessington Street, St Kilda (Citation 428). Believed to date from the interwar period.

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## Assessment

This place has been assessed in accordance with the processes and guidelines outlined in the Australia ICOMOS *Charter for Places of Cultural Heritage Significance* (The Burra Charter) 2013, using the Hercon criteria.

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## Recommendations

Retain in the Heritage Overlay with tree controls.

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## Primary source

Peter Andrew Barrett, *H07 Elwood St Kilda Balaclava Ripponlea Precinct heritage review Stage 2: Review of existing heritage citations*, 2021

## Other studies

Andrew Ward & Associates, *City of Port Phillip Heritage Review*, 1998

David Bick, *St Kilda Conservation Study. Area 2*, 1985

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## Other images

