

## ILLAWARRA



ILLAWARRA SOHE 2008



1 illawarra illawarra court  
toorak front view jun1989

### Location

1 ILLAWARRA COURT TOORAK, STONNINGTON CITY

### Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

### Level of significance

Registered

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0701

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO61

### VHR Registration

September 21, 1988

### Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 17, 1999

### What is significant?

Illawarra is a large and elaborate two storey red brick mansion with a dominating tower located off St Georges Road, Toorak. It was erected in 1889-91 by the builder CB Leith to the designs of the architect James Birthwhistle for the prominent land-boomer Charles Henry James. The house was converted to ten flats in 1925-26 and then to boarding accommodation for St Catherine's School in the late 1990s.

### How is it significant?

Illawarra is of architectural, historical and scientific significance to the State of Victoria.

#### Why is it significant?

Illawarra is of architectural significance as a flamboyant example of a boom era mansion which foreshadows developing trends in late-Victorian period architecture. The ornate grandiosity of the house epitomises the spectacular excesses of the final years of the land boom. The unique French Renaissance design and quality of the workmanship and fittings provide an excellent expression of the lifestyle of Melbourne's late-19th century elite. Its eclectic combination of mannerist detail, vernacular roof lines and picturesque composition foreshadowed subsequent trends in late-Victorian architecture, particularly the English Queen Anne Revival style, and hints at the Edwardian and Federation trends of the early decades of the 20th century.

Illawarra is of historical significance for its association with the prominent landboom figure Charles Henry James (1848-1898) and as a remnant manifestation of the landboom itself. James was one of the most flamboyant of the landboomers of the 1880s. Originally a North Melbourne grocer, he accumulated considerable wealth through land speculation, going on to become a leading banker, entrepreneur, grazier and MLC, before losing it all when the boom turned to bust. Illawarra reflects James' speedy rise to wealth and, like many of his landboom contemporaries, his determination to display it.

Illawarra is of scientific (technical) significance as the first recorded example of brick cavity wall construction employing galvanised wire ties in Victoria.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must notify the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

## Specific Exemptions:

### CONDITIONS:

1. This exemption remains valid while Illawarra is in the ownership of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
2. Exempt classes of works or activities are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the registered place/object. However, if other previously hidden original or inaccessible details of the object or place are uncovered, any works that may affect such items shall immediately cease. The Executive Director shall be notified of the details immediately to enable Heritage Victoria representatives to inspect and record the items, and for discussion to take place on the possible retention of the items, or the issue of a modified approval.
3. Nothing in this Declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exempt alterations provided work has not commenced on the alteration.

THE ATTENTION ON THE APPLICANT AND/OR OWNER IS DRAWN TO THE NEED TO OBTAIN ALL OTHER RELEVANT PERMITS PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF WORKS

Construction dates 1889,  
Architect/Designer Birtwhistle, James,  
Heritage Act Categories Registered place,  
Hermes Number 1161  
Property Number

---

## History

### Contextual History:History of Place:

James Henry was one of Melbourne's first 'land-boomers' and one of its most successful until the depression. He managed to stave off bankruptcy until 1897, later than many of his contemporaries. His political career was marked by self-interest; the Argus did not believe him to be well-informed, although he was 'in sympathy with the settled interests of the community.' He rarely spoke in council, and when he did it was invariably on development issues in the suburbs.

(ADB, 1851-90)

Associated People: Charles Henry James (1848-98)

## Extent of Registration

### AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 701.

Illawarra

1 Illawarra Court, Toorak

to the extent of all of the buildings and the whole of the land entered in the Register Book Certificate of Title Volume 5094 Folio 1018800.

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G36 21 September 1988 p.2872]

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*