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# Wilhelmi House



372 Punt Rd, South Yarra



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## Location

372 Punt Road SOUTH YARRA, STONNINGTON CITY

## Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO564

## Heritage Listing

Stonnington City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 25, 2016

### What is significant?

Wilhelmi House at 372 Punt Road, South Yarra, is significant. It was built in 1861 for Charles Wilhelmi and his family, replacing (or extending) a previous timber house.

It is a small brick villa, built to the side boundaries, and set behind a generous front garden. The roof is in the form of two parallel hipped roofs, covered in slate, and retains two chimneys with a simple corbelled top resting on cream brick brackets and tall patterned chimney pots. The facade is dominated by a rendered parapet with a

simple dentilated cornice, in the Regency manner. Below it is an elegant concave hipped verandah. It rests on cast-iron columns and has a combined cast-iron frieze and brackets (a c1880s addition, which is contributory). The front door and sash windows are arranged in a symmetrical fashion.

The face brick front wall has been bagged and painted in the twentieth century, obscuring the handmade bricks. This element is intrusive and not of heritage significance.

#### **How is it significant?**

The Wilhelmi House is of local architectural and historical (associational) significance to the City of Stonnington.

#### **Why is it significant?**

Architecturally, Wilhelmi House is an example of one of South Yarra's rich collection of Victorian Georgian and Regency houses, which are rare in the eastern parts of Stonnington and metropolitan Melbourne more generally. It is a modest villa, which retains much of its original character and fabric, including typical features of the Victorian Regency style: a symmetrical form and placement of openings, a corniced parapet to the front, and a front verandah with an elegant convex hipped roof. (Criteria B & D)

Historically, it is significant for its association with notable German botanist J.F.C. ('Charles') Wilhelmi (1829-1884), who served as Assistant Government Botanist in Victoria under Ferdinand Mueller, from 1858 until 1865. Wilhelmi published an important early work while living here, entitled *Manners and Customs of the Australian Natives* (1862), concerning the Aboriginal people of Port Lincoln in South Australia. (Criterion H)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Stonnington - City of Stonnington Victorian Houses Study, City of Stonnington, 2016;
Construction dates	1861,
Hermes Number	200150
Property Number	

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## **Physical Description 1**

The house at 372 Punt Road, South Yarra, is a small Victorian Regency house which is freestanding, but built to the side boundaries. It is set back behind a large front garden at the corner of Alexandra Street.

The house sits beneath two parallel slate-clad hipped roofs, a larger and taller one over the front rooms and a narrower one over the back rooms (hidden by a simple parapet). It retains two chimneys with a simple corbelled top resting on cream brick brackets. Each has two tall patterned terracotta pots.

The facade is dominated by a rendered parapet with a simple dentilated cornice, in the Regency manner. Below it is an elegant concave hipped verandah. It rests on cast-iron columns and has a combined cast-iron frieze and brackets (a c1880s addition).

The facade is symmetrical with a central doorway (no sidelights and possibly no highlight), with a simple double-hung sash window (probably with a bluestone sill) to either side. The facade is of face brick which has been bagged and painted. The north side elevation is rendered, and there is a single window at the rear which has a moulded render surround.

Alterations to the house itself include the bagging of the face brick, replacement of the verandah floor with concrete, and replacement of the front door with a glazed unit. The rear narrow rear wing was demolished and replaced with a conjoined two-storey rear unit in the former back yard (2A Alexandra Street, built in 2000). It is clearly a separate structure from the house and is set well back from the front, so is only visible in oblique views when viewed from Punt Road, but is clearly visible on Alexandra Street. The house sits behind a tall timber paling

fence around its front yard.

## **Local Historical Themes**

This place illustrates the following themes, as identified in the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context rev. 2009):

3.5 Immigrating to seek opportunity

8.2 Middle-class suburbs and the suburban ideal

*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/>*