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# Riverlea



Robb 27

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## Location

27 Robb Street ESSENDON, MOONEE VALLEY CITY

## Municipality

MOONEE VALLEY CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO507

## Heritage Listing

Moonee Valley City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 31, 2021

What is Significant?

'Riverlea', at 27 Robb Street, Essendon, a Victorian era Italianate villa built in 1888, is significant.

Significant fabric includes the:

- original plan form, roof form, original pattern of fenestration on the principal and side elevations;

- polychromatic brickwork, slate roof, basalt foundations, verandahs with iron friezes, original chimneys; and
- decorative eaves and brackets, Gothic hood moulds, tessellated verandah floor, original window and door joinery.

The rear extension, fences, swimming pool, and the double garage are not significant.

How is it significant?

27 Robb Street, Essendon, is of local architectural (representative) and aesthetic significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

The house at 27 Robb Street, Essendon, is significant as an example of a Victorian era Italianate villa. It demonstrates the key characteristics of the Italianate style in the use of asymmetrical form, use of plain and polychrome brickwork, slate roofing and decorative detail. Typical brick quoining in cream frames the principal elevations. The house retains its original building and roof forms with chimneys, fenestration to principal and side elevations enlivened by label moulds, a return verandah with cast iron frieze and tessellated tile floor. The integrity of the house is enhanced by the high level of intactness of these main elements. The house is particularly distinguished from more typical examples of this type by the Venetian Gothic framing of the principal window in pointed arches composed of alternating red and cream brick voussoirs outlined by label mouldings. (Criteria D & E)

Heritage Study/Consultant Moonee Valley - Moonee Valley 2017 Heritage Study, Context, 2019;

Construction dates 1888,

Hermes Number 202299

Property Number

## Physical Description 1

27 Robb Street, Essendon, is a single-storey brick asymmetric Italianate style villa in a suburban street bound by footpaths and nature strips. Built in 1886, 27 Robb Street is positioned on the north-east corner of Robb Street and Leven Streets. The property abuts Court Street to the east, which is a wide service road with planted median strip. The land falls gently north to south but is more steep east to west, giving the house a raised aspect to the street.

Sitting on basalt foundations, the villa is constructed of bichrome brickwork, with render dressings to the chimneys. Asymmetrical in form, it is configured with a projecting front room with a faceted bay with windows. The return verandah has a shallow ogee-profile roof, while the main roof is hipped and clad in slate with metal ridge cappings.

On the front elevation of the house, the window treatment of the bay is unusual, with round-headed timber framed double-hung windows within Gothic arches constructed in alternating coloured voussoir brick work, indicating a Venetian influence. Capped by Gothic hood moulds with floriated stops, the apex of each arch has a cement rendered keystone which is vermiculated. The window sills are dressed basalt. Below the sills a recessed panel of brickwork continues the line of the windows to the basalt foundations below.

Other early features of the house include the bichrome brickwork that is used to simulate quoining at the building's edges. Moulded brick brackets sit below the eaves line. Single fluted iron posts with Corinthian capitals support the ogee-profile corrugated iron verandah roof. An ornate cast iron frieze sits under a stop-chamfered

verandah beam supporting the gutter. Under the verandah an elaborate door case, with leaded sidelights and fanlight, surrounds a deeply moulded six-panelled door. Adjacent to the door is a pair of tall, slender, timber-framed double-hung windows separated by bichrome brickwork. Recessed panels below the basalt sills, continue to the verandah floor extending the line of the windows. The verandah floor is tiled in tessellated tiles set within a dressed basalt edge. The verandah is accessed by a flight of seven dressed basalt steps facing Robb Street with side urns that are a later addition. A single door with leaded glass panels and fanlight, off the south facing projecting room, gives access to the return of the verandah. Four Italianate chimneys are constructed in bichrome brickwork with unpainted rendered bases and moulded caps; each chimney is topped with a pair of terracotta chimney pots.

The north and south side elevations are more utilitarian in detail. On the south side, the bichrome brickwork stops with the verandah and continues in red monochrome brickwork. The northern elevation is all monochrome. Simpler window treatments are used with timber-framed double-hung windows set into the brick walls with dressed basalt sills. Eaves brackets stop with the verandah on the southern elevation. No eaves brackets are used on the north.

27 Robb Street sits behind a reproduction cast-iron palisade fence, and has an established garden. There is evidence that the house had been overpainted at some stage, with the paint now removed, leaving the original brickwork dulled and pitted and the pointing of the mortar joints damaged. There is a modern swimming pool in the back yard with associated hard landscaping. A double garage, with flat roof, is accessed off Court Street at the rear.

The house is of relatively high integrity with few changes visible to original or early elements of the place. The building retains its original building form, roof forms, fenestration to principal and side elevations and return verandah.

The integrity of the building is enhanced by the high level of intactness of these main elements, which include slate roof with metal ridge cappings, bichrome brickwork on basalt foundations, Gothic hood moulds, eaves brackets, verandah with cast iron frieze, tessellated verandah floor and original chimneys. The integrity of the place as a whole is enhanced by its prominent corner position maintaining three street frontages.

The integrity of the building is diminished by the evidence that the brickwork has been overpainted, with the paint now removed, and the visible extensions. These include the large extension visible from Levien Street, which is difficult to discern from early fabric and visible decking covering the valleys of the original M-shaped roof form.

*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/>*