

# MOUNT MARTHA HOUSE



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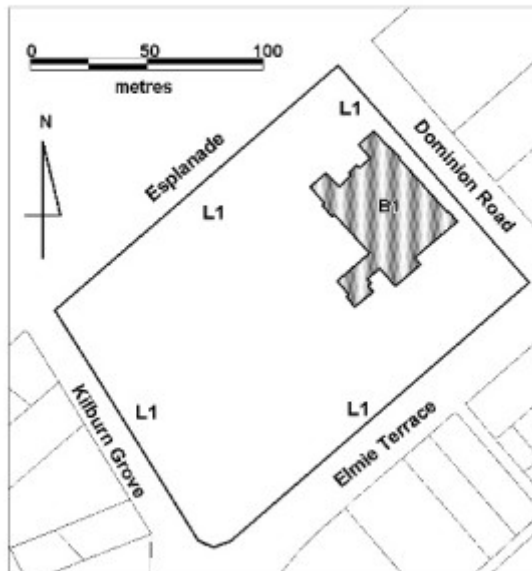
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Mount Martha House



Mount Martha House



mount martha house plan

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## Location

468 ESPLANADE MOUNT MARTHA, MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

## Municipality

MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1901

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO61

## VHR Registration

October 12, 2000

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 4, 2022

### What is significant?

Mount Martha House, a large single-storey timber building in a picturesque Federation Queen Anne style was built in 1889-90 as a hotel in association with the proposed Mount Martha Estate subdivision of 1889. The hotel was designed by well-known Melbourne architects, Tappin, Gilbert and Dennehy, Tappin being one of the directors of the Mount Martha Estate Company. The building operated as a guest house from 1890 to 1950 except for a period during World War II, when servicemen were stationed there. It was used as a WRAAC barracks from 1950 to 1978, and since that time as a community centre.

### How is it significant?

Mount Martha House is architecturally and historically significant to the State of Victoria.

### Why is it significant?

Mount Martha House is historically significant as an example of a nineteenth century hotel, coffee palace and guest house which operated from the late 1880s to 1950. It is also historically significant for its use as accommodation for servicemen during World War II, and as a WRAAC barracks from the 1950s to the 1970s.

Mount Martha House is architecturally significant as representative of late nineteenth century seaside resort hotels, whose form reflects its function as a guest house or hotel.

Mount Martha House is of architectural significance for its unusual and accomplished picturesque Federation Queen Anne design which is complemented by its landmark siting. There are few comparable designs in Victoria in general.

Mount Martha House is of historical significance for its associations with the development of the Mount Martha Estate, which was an early example of a scheme to promote summer residences for the wealthy on the Mornington Peninsula. While elements of the planning of the Estate can still be discerned in the street pattern and street names, this building and The Chalet (the residence of Byron Moore, one of the developers) are the only built remnants of the scheme. Its prominent siting on the esplanade signified its importance to the development of the Mount Martha Estate.

## 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:

### General Conditions:

1. All alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.

3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.

4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

## **Exterior**

\* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.

\* Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipework, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.

\* Installation or repair of damp proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.

\* **Repair of fences and gates.**

\* **Regular garden maintenance.**

\* Installation, removal and replacement of garden watering systems.

\* Laying and repair of gravel toppings to the driveways.

## **Residence Interior**

\* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.

\* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.

\* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves and skirtings.

\* Painting of previously painted walls and ceiling provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original painting or other decorative scheme.

\* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and flexible floor coverings.

\* Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and provided that the location of the heating unit is concealed from view.

\* Installation, removal or replacement of kitchen benches, cupboards and fixtures including sinks, stoves, ovens refrigerators, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring, provided that the existing masonry structure of the building core, including the old stove alcove, remains in place.

\* Refurbishment of existing bathrooms, toilets and or en suites including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.

\* Installation, removal and replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed.

\* Installation, removal and replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.

\* Installation, removal and replacement of smoke detectors

In accordance with s92(3), permit exemption issued by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria on 9 October 2020 (P32542):

A total of 24 temporary events on the Parade Ground within a calendar year, undertaken in accordance with the 'Management Plan for Standing Permit Exemptions for Events at the Parade Ground, Mount Martha House' dated August 2020. The following applies to these events:

- a) Events are to be of no more than 24 hours duration (including bump in and bump out);
- b) any affected areas of the Parade Ground are made good to match the condition of the Parade Ground prior to the installation of the temporary elements
- c) the event takes place no less than 14 days from any other event on the site, except for the 'Community Carols' event in December which can occur at a shorter time prior before or after another event;
- d) the total area of temporary structures does not exceed 1300 square metres (50% of the total site).

The following infrastructure is allowed for these events:

- Heavy items such as generators, stages, projection equipment, screens, catering/vendor vans, stage trucks and portable toilets and the like which are placed on a protective surface (board or track mats)
- Temporary structures, fencing, furniture, infrastructure and other small-scale items which do not require fixing to the ground.
- Marquees and tents (lightweight structures) with no internal ground covering which are weighted down with sandbags or water tanks and avoid the requirement for driven metal stakes.
- Temporary access to the site by heavy vehicles (such as forklifts and tractors etc.) for the purposes of bump-in and bump-out activities where the vehicle is fitted with compaction minimising tyres or driving on protective track matting.
- Temporary access to the site by trucks driven on protective track matting for the purpose of bump-in and bump-out activities.
- Ten (10) or less catering/vendor vans which are located on protective boards or track matting.
- Temporary structures, fencing and infrastructure located no closer than three (3) metres from the base of the Golden Cypress on the western perimeter of the designated area.
- Temporary installation of track mat, board or super-track and/or other protective surfaces to prevent damage to turf in areas of high pedestrian/vehicular traffic or where heavy structures will be located.
- One temporary sign affixed to each of the perimeter fences of Mount Martha House for a duration of no more than five (5) days prior to an event. Only one sign is allowed on the Dominion Road fence and one sign is allowed on the Esplanade fence. The exemption will only apply if the sign meets the following conditions:
  - o The sign (dimensions, colours, materials etc.) is approved through the Council licence agreement or event permit;
  - o Each sign must be five (5) square metres or less in total size;
  - o The sign must specifically advertise the event being held.
- Temporary directional or wayfinding signs which do not require metal fixings.
- Use of the site within periods of heavy rainfall (20mm or more in a 24 hour period or 50 mm in the preceding 36 hours, as recorded by the Bureau of Meteorology) where supra-track or other ground protection is used in areas of high pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
- The Executive Director must be notified within 14 days of the following:
  - o When and where each event took place;
  - o The extent of damage, if any, to the Parade Ground;
  - o The works undertaken to rectify affected areas of the Parade Ground.
- Should minor changes be required from time to time in relation to the above approved permit exemption events then the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria is to be contacted to outline what these changes are, and will provide a response as to whether that is approved or not in the scope of this issued permit exemption.

Construction dates	1889,
Architect/Designer	Tappin, Gilbert & Dennehy,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	MOUNT MARTHA HOTEL,

Hermes Number 5353

Property Number

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## History

### Contextual History:

Mount Martha was named by Captain Hobson of HMS Rattlesnake after Mrs Martha Lonsdale, wife of the first Lieutenant-Governor of the Port Phillip district, William Lonsdale.

By the 1880s the Mornington Peninsula was an increasingly popular site for wealthy businessmen to build summer residences. In 1890 the Mount Martha Estate was set up on 1300 acres of Robert Watson's estate by a syndicate which included Henry Byron Moore, a Surveyor General in the 1870s and land speculator in the 1880s. The scheme was set up to capitalise on this trend by attracting a wider sample of wealthy Melbournians to the area. The estate was designed by Allan and Tuxen Bros with sinuous roads following the contours of the hillside, and offered allotments laid out with commanding ocean views unobstructed by neighbours. This was an extensive bayside residential subdivision which went as far as Bay Road on the north, Nepean Highway on the east and Park Road on the south. The 1890s depression put an early stop to the Estate as a whole and only a few allotments were sold.

### History of Place:

Mount Martha House was originally known as Mount Martha Hotel. It was constructed in 1889-90 and opened in June 1890. The first manager is believed to have been one of the Tuxen family. The hotel later became a coffee palace or temperance hotel and then a guest house. The large timber hotel was designed by Melbourne architects Tappin, Gilbert and Dennehy. W.B. Tappin was one of the directors of the Mount Martha Estate Company. The hotel offered saltwater baths, picturesque walks and drives, and boasted of "a perfect winter climate".

Mount Martha House was used as a post office for the area for many years, and had its own postmistress. Mail was collected from Mornington Railway Station at the same time as the guests arriving from Melbourne.

A private golf course was an attraction from about 1911. Sir Robert Knox was the chairman of a company which ran Mount Martha House as a semi-private country club in the 1930s.

In May 1935, a new company was formed to purchase Mount Martha House, to operate once again as a guest house. The Prides owned the property from 1935 to the 1950s and took over the post office which was still operating from the House. They also operated the local telephone switchboard. The house could accommodate up to 100 people. Recreational facilities included the nine hole golf course, a croquet lawn, two bowling lawns, two tennis courts, fishing and horse riding at the local riding school.

At this time, Mount Martha House had fifteen modern bath and shower rooms with hot and cold water in every bedroom. Lock up garages were provided. The guests could spend time in the library, smoking room, sun room and lounge room, and dances and parlour games were held in the ballroom in the evenings.

During World War II, the Royal Australian Air Force under Air Commander Harry Cobby used Mount Martha House to accommodate servicemen. The Mount Martha area was used as the base for military activity when Balcombe Camp was established close by in 1940. Roads, sewerage and water supply were improved by the military. Many of the roads in Mount Martha date from this period. Balcombe camp became the Army Apprentices School after the war. At Balcombe, the army also trained recruits for the Survey Corps and the Signals Corps, and conducted the Army School of Music.

After the war, Mount Martha House reverted to guest house use. In 1947, Mount Martha House was sold to the

Fordyce family, who continued to run it as a guest house The Department of the Army bought Mount Martha House from the Fordyces on 26 July 1950 for use as a barracks for the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps for women attending courses at the Balcombe Army School. The army did not take possession until July 1952. The No. 30 WRAAC Barracks was closed in 1974.

In 1978, the Federal Government agreed to sell Mount Martha House to the Mornington Shire Council. Since that time it has been used as a community centre for the area.

## **Assessment Against Criteria**

a. The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.

Mount Martha House is historically significant as an example of a nineteenth century seaside resort hotel, coffee palace and guest house which operated from the late 1880s to 1950. It is also historically significant for its use as accommodation for servicemen during World War II, and as a WRAAC barracks from the 1950s to the 1970s

b. The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness

c. The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage

d. The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects

Mount Martha House is architecturally significant as representative of late nineteenth century seaside resort hotels. Its form reflects its function as a guest house or hotel.

e. The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features

Mount Martha House is of architectural significance for its unusual and accomplished picturesque Federation Queen Anne design which is complemented by its landmark siting. There are few comparable designs in Victoria in general.

f. The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements

g. The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations

. Mount Martha House is of historical significance for its associations with the development of the Mount Martha Estate, which was an early example of a scheme to promote summer residences for the wealthy on the Mornington Peninsula. While elements of the planning of the Estate can still be discerned in the street pattern and street names, this building and The Chalet (the residence of Byron Moore, one of the developers) are the only built remnants of the scheme. Mount Martha House's prominent siting on the esplanade signified its importance to the development of the Mount Martha Estate.

h. Any other matter which the Council deems relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

## **Extent of Registration**

Heritage Act 1995

### **NOTICE OF REGISTRATION**

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1901 in the category described as a Heritage place: Mount Martha House, 468 the Esplanade, Mornington, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council.

EXTENT:

1. All the building known as Mount Martha House being the House marked B1 on diagram 1901 held by the Executive Director.
2. All the land bounded by Dominion Road, Elmie Terrace, Kilburn Grove and the Esplanade marked L1 on Plan 1901 held by the Executive Director.

Dated 12 October 2000

RAY TONKIN Executive Director

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*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/>*