

iron detailing, also by its part in an Italianate villa streetscape; regional importance.

Historically, Gooch, through his academic achievements and key role as a creator of Camberwell's social and cultural life, is of local importance and regional interest.

**Beechfield,  
21 Trafalgar Road, Camberwell**



**Study Grading:** A  
**Precinct:** 29.20 **Streetscape:** 2  
**Construction Date:** 1899  
**First Owner:** Dawborn, Charles

**History**

Charles Dawborn, a warehouseman, had a house built in 1899 on land he owned in Trafalgar Road, Allotments 26 and 27.<sup>1</sup> The brick residence was of 9 rooms.<sup>2</sup> In 1902 he sold the property to John McBratney who lived at Beechfield, as the property was named, until after 1905.<sup>3</sup> A surveyor, George Roberts, owned the property by 1907 and occupied it until the early 1920s.<sup>4</sup> Owen Dixon purchased Beechfield in the late 1920s and lived there with his family for a decade.<sup>5</sup>

Number 21 Trafalgar Road was subdivided into three lots by 1940<sup>6</sup> and Laurence A. Holzer occupied the original residence.

The Right Honourable Sir Owen Dixon was born on April 28, 1886, the son of Joseph William Dixon, a Hawthorn solicitor.<sup>8</sup> He was educated at Hawthorn College and Melbourne University, where he graduated LLB with a Master of Arts Degree in 1909.<sup>9</sup> He was called to the Bar the following year and became a Kings Counsel at the comparatively young age of 36, in 1922.<sup>10</sup> During his 18 years at the Bar, including a short period as an acting supreme court judge (1926), he became known for his ability to quickly grasp the essentials of any knotty legal problem.<sup>11</sup>

In 1920, Dixon married Alice Cossland, the daughter of a Melbourne Minister, and the couple had two sons and two daughters.<sup>12</sup> Dixon earned international acclaim when he appeared before the Privy Council in 1922-24.<sup>13</sup> At the age of 42 he was the youngest of six High Court Judges when he was appointed to the High Court Bench in 1929.<sup>14</sup> The Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, appointed him to several important shipping and economic posts, including the Central Wool Committee (1940-42), the Australian Shipping Control Board (1941-2) and the Marine War Risks Insurance Board (1941- 2).<sup>15</sup> In 1942, John Curtin, the Prime Minister at the time, appointed Dixon to the position of Australia's Minister to Washington.<sup>16</sup> He was made an Honorary Doctor of Law by Harvard University and received the Howland Prize from Yale University.<sup>17</sup>

Created K.C.M.G. in 1941, Sir Owen Dixon returned to the High Court in 1944.<sup>18</sup> The United Nations Security Council appointed him to mediate in the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan in 1950.<sup>19</sup> He then accepted the appointment of Chief Justice and was created a Privy Councillor in 1951.<sup>20</sup> In 1954 he was created K.C.M.G.<sup>21</sup> The Queen bestowed on him his

- 1 RB1898-99, 528; RB1899-90, 554
- 2 *ibid.*
- 3 RB1901-2, 559; D1905
- 4 RB1907-8, 574; D1920
- 5 D1930; D1935
- 6 D1940
- 7 *ibid.*
- 8 WWA 1968, p.252
- 9 *ibid.*; Macklin, Robert, *100 Great Australians*, 1983, p.62
- 10 *ibid.*; WWA, *op.cit.*
- 11 Macklin, R., *op.cit.*
- 12 *ibid.*
- 13 *ibid.*
- 14 *ibid.*
- 15 *ibid.*; WWA, *op.cit.*
- 16 *ibid.*
- 17 Macklin, R., *op.cit.*
- 18 *ibid.*
- 19 *ibid.*
- 20 *ibid.*
- 21 *ibid.*

greatest honour, the Order of Merit, in 1963, an honour granted to only two other Australians.<sup>1</sup> Sir Owen Dixon retired as Chief Justice in April, 1964.<sup>2</sup> One of the greatest lawyers in Australian legal history, Sir Owen Dixon died in July, 1972.<sup>3</sup> In a tribute to Sir Owen Dixon, the Attorney-General, Senator Greenwood, said: "...His contribution to the development of law in Australia is never likely to be surpassed..."<sup>4</sup>

### Description

A notable design in the English Medieval domestic revival mode, this attic form house is of red brick, with rough-cast stucco and half-timbering in the gables and slates on the roof.

Window hoods are supported on timber brackets, as are verandahs on turned timber posts (part modified). Multi-casement windows form bays to the main wings. Part of the original round-top picket fence survives on the south side boundary, but a 'new' iron fence has been erected on the frontage. The mature landscape is related to the house period.

### Comparative Examples

Resembling the Queen Anne and Federation Bungalow Edwardian house styles, this design possesses more of the Tudor than English Queen Anne revival detailing and, with its dormers and sharply gabled roofs, contrasts with the low-hipped form of the Bungalow.

The following Camberwell sites may be compared with this site.

35, PROSPECT HILL ROAD, 1881  
 630, RIVERSDALE ROAD, 1882  
 2, BERWICK STREET, 1885c  
 53, PROSPECT HILL ROAD, 1886-7  
 320, CAMBERWELL ROAD, 1886  
 3, FERMANACH ROAD, 1887  
 57, SEYMOUR GROVE, 1887  
 33, ALMA ROAD, 1888  
 19, CANTERBURY ROAD, 1888  
 46, PARLINGTON STREET, 1888  
 635, RIVERSDALE ROAD, 1888  
 89, UNION ROAD, 1888  
 2, PEPPIN STREET, 1889 (?)  
 25, ALMA ROAD, 1889(?)  
 54, MONT ALBERT ROAD, 1889-9  
 36, ALMA ROAD, 1889  
 208, CANTERBURY ROAD, 1889  
 15, IRILBARRA ROAD, 1889  
 21, IRILBARRA ROAD, 1889  
 43, KENT ROAD, 1889  
 2, MOLESWORTH STREET, 1889  
 137, MONT ALBERT ROAD, 1889  
 32, PROSPECT HILL ROAD, 1889  
 10, TRAFALGAR ROAD, 1889  
 26A, WANDSWORTH ROAD, 1889  
 50, WANDSWORTH ROAD, 1889  
 42, WARRICAL ROAD, 1889  
 322-394, CAMBERWELL ROAD, 1890-1  
 262, UNION ROAD, c1890  
 15, ALMA ROAD, 1890

544, BURKE ROAD, 1890  
 27, INGLESBY ROAD, 1890  
 7, VICTORIA AVENUE, 1890  
 13, VICTORIA AVENUE, 1890  
 57, YARRRAT AVENUE, 1890c?  
 7A, ALMA ROAD, 1891-2  
 13, BALWYN ROAD, 1891-4  
 73-79, BALWYN ROAD, 1891,  
 320, CAMBERWELL ROAD, 1892  
 622, RIVERSDALE ROAD, 1892  
 6, TRAFALGAR ROAD, 1892  
 125, WATTLE VALLEY ROAD, 1892  
 136, CANTERBURY ROAD, 1893  
 668-670, BURKE ROAD, 1895  
 680, BURKE ROAD, 1895  
 816-822, RIVERSDALE ROAD, 1895  
 30, HOWARD STREET, 1895c  
 29, CANTERBURY ROAD, 1897  
 52, PROSPECT HILL ROAD, 1897  
 15, KASOLKA ROAD, 1898  
 150, MONT ALBERT ROAD, 1899  
 26, VICTORIA AVENUE, 1899

### External Integrity

Generally original, except for modification of the side verandah for use as a carport, and replacement of the fence.

### Streetscape

Contributes to a late Victorian and Edwardian era precinct, as one of its individually notable examples.

### Significance

Historically, long associated with the distinguished law practitioner, Sir Owen Dixon, and generally with the professional classes who traditionally sought Camberwell as a place to live. Owen Dixon played a prominent role in Victorian legal affairs, in Australian national affairs during the Second World War and in international affairs after the war. The house has considerable historic interest for its links with Dixon during major phases of his public life: of national importance.

Architecturally, a notable house in an unusual variant on the Medieval-inspired styles of the era, which also contributes to a residential precinct: of State importance ..

1 WWA, op.cit.  
 2 Macklin, R., op.cit., p.64  
 3 *The Age* 10/7/72, p.2  
 4 *ibid.*