

Richmond architect, James Miller Robertson, was associated with the early history of the brick house at 19 Elm Grove. A building was first recorded on the site in 1863 when Robertson was the owner/occupier of a "new unfinished brick and iron house of four rooms" N.A.V. £14.⁽¹⁾ Valuation went up in 1864 when Robertson's house was listed as a brick and iron dwelling of five rooms NAV £26.⁽²⁾ In 1866 it was listed as a brick and wood house of four rooms N.A.V. £30.⁽³⁾ and in 1868 as a stone and wood dwelling of six rooms N.A.V £32.⁽⁴⁾

During the early 1870's it was described as a brick and iron dwelling of five rooms N.A.V. £25, still owned and occupied by J. M. Robertson, architect.⁽⁵⁾ From circa 1877 Robertson's house was described as a brick house of seven rooms N.A.V. £52.⁽⁶⁾

No. 17 forms an interesting group with the brick building at No. 19 (the home of James Bonham, builder) and the small colonial wooden cottage at No. 21, owned and occupied during the 1860's by Auguste Freitag, contractor.⁽⁷⁾

In the 1880's, No. 19 became the property of John B. Bennett, a Melbourne solicitor, and was occupied for a time during that decade by the distinguished architect, William Salway.⁽⁸⁾ He was the architect responsible for the design of many Melbourne residences, including Dr. Beaney's residence in Collins Street, now the Alexandra Club.⁽⁹⁾

An 1896 M.M.B.W. Detail Plan shows 19 Elm Grove with its front porch, a paved area and garden fronting on to the street. There is a long back verandah facing an asphaltd area and what appear to be stables at the back right-of-way.⁽¹⁰⁾

(1) Richmond R.B. 1863 No. 272

(2) Ibid 1864 No. 79

(3) Ibid 1866 No. 1001

(4) Ibid 1868 No. 2331

(5) Ibid 1877 No. 3428

(6) Ibid 1877 No. 3428

(7) F.N. 5105

(8) There are 104 cards for this architect in Miles Lewis'

Architects Index for the design of commercial and public buildings and houses.

(9) Victoria and its Metropolis vol. 2 pp 570-571 (1900)