



Mason House 30 Alexandra Avenue

History

Sited on a Crown Grant sold to J. McN. Main in 1855, this house was built for Peter Mason during 1857-8.¹ It was of brick, verandahed and had four rooms plus a kitchen. By the 1870s a room had been added but otherwise its size remained static, at least until the 1920s.²

After Peter Mason, came William Mason, and after him, Thomas

Brequet owned the house for near 20 years.³ George Taylor, a Bendigo civil servant, and Lavinia Ritchie were later owners.⁴ No single occupier remained for a long period: occupiers names including Thomas Webb, George England, Emil Sichlau, Claus Kohn and Charles Cook.⁵

Peter Mason was an early Geelong resident, holding property at the corner of Corio and Yarra Streets in the early 1840s. He opened the Caledonian Hotel there in 1842, staying until he was replaced by Winstanley (q.v.) in 1847.⁶ By the 1850s, he was described as a brewer and

resident in Fyans Street, South Geelong. Phoebe Mason, his wife, died there in 1851.⁷ He was also listed in Mercer Street in the 1854 directory.

E. de Balk's 1866 view shows this house as face-brick with a concave verandah, pitched from hard under the gutter line and a (timber?) double palisade fence. The roof appears to have been shingled, the present slate one having also been extended south since this view was taken. Two brick chimneys are visible in the main roof and one at the rear of the house.

Description

A simple double-fronted stuccoed brick house with a M-hipped slated (once shingled) roof, set hard on the Fitzroy Street and Alexandra Avenue corner.

External Integrity

Shown with a verandah in 1866 and c1914, it has since acquired a gabled porch, the side windows have been altered and possibly other reproduction details such as shutters and cast-iron detailing have been added. The fence has been replaced.

1 RB1857-8, 626 'unfinished'

2 RB1920, 574 'five rooms'

3 RB1859-60, 609; RB1865-6, 499; RB1881, 475

4 RB1920, 574; RB1910, 580

5 RB 1865-6, 499; RB1870-1, 463; VB1874, 467; VB1890, 514; RB1910, 510

6 INV. Vol.7, pp.85, 124; Vol.8, pp.66, 111, 136, 147; Vol.9, pp.67, 99

7 INV. 12-80, p.117

City of Geelong Urban Conservation Study
Significant Sites

Streetscape

Part of a small group of early houses (26-30) which adjoins mainly Edwardian era villas.

Significance

Historically, connected with Peter Mason, one of Geelong's early landholders and hotelkeepers. It is of a housing type from Geelong's major residential building phase in the 1850s and represents the concentration of these houses which once existed in the northern part of the town as an important residential precinct until the close of last century.

Architecturally, rare among the 1850s cottages surviving in Geelong, being of masonry rather than timber.

Architecturally, typical of early houses, as demonstrated by its roof form and on-street siting.