



ONTARIO

44 PARK CRESCENT

C.H. James and Percy Dobson created the St. James Park Estate and Extension in the early 1880's from Vidal's Crown Portion 114. Surveyor, Thomas B. Huntz declared the Extension 'A' in December, 1883.¹ The Marchant, Albert J. Thurgood, had land in Gillies Street during 1902 but, by 1903, he had lot 38 in Park Crescent and had constructed Ontario there.²

The architect, Horace MacKinnell married Agnes Thomas whose sister, Ida, had married Thurgood. MacKinnell designed Ontario and it was named in respect to Ida Thomas' birthplace in Canada.³ The Thurgoods lived at Ontario until the 1920's when George Lee took the house; Ada Rogers was a later resident.⁴ The original owner, Thurgood was one of the Essendon Football Club greats.⁵

Ontario is designed in the Federation Style with emphasis on the Orient, via the roof shape and decoration, and on the English Arts and Crafts Movement, via leadlight designs and glazed tiling.

Marseilles pattern terracotta tiles clad the roof and rough-cast stucco creates the half-timbered gables and upper wall finish. The many gables of the roof reflect the bayed floor plan. At the entrance is a two-bay verandah with segmented arched opening in timber on tapered and fluted stucco columns. Leadlight window bays, with hipped roofs, occurred under the main gables but one has now been replaced by an inappropriate skillion roof addition to the south-west.⁶ The former Coach house and stable remain in fairly original condition at the rear and the pierced, round-head picket fence has survived at the boundary.

Ontario is one of two similar houses at the Arthur Street-Park Crescent corner; together with their mature planting and the garden of Hadley Wold, opposite, they form a precinct of Edwardian character. Ontario is a relatively large property for the area and the era, as exemplified by its two-level stable block, however prominent alterations have diminished the prospective architectural importance of the house.