



## Murphy House 9 England Street

### History

On land granted to the ubiquitous Silas Harding in 1851, this site was created in a subdivision between 1852 and 1854. Harding sold 23, 24, 30 or 33 feet wide residential frontages onto Corio Terrace and England Street<sup>1</sup> to persons such as James Sinclair, Patrick Ryan, William Lee, Pat Bryan and Dennis McGrath. This lot was sold to John Murphy for £300 in 1852.<sup>2</sup> Murphy brought the land under the Torrens system in 1873.<sup>3</sup>

The first rate listing, as a 3-room timber house, was in 1853, being apparently incomplete in the previous year.<sup>4</sup> After a brief occupation, Murphy leased it to a large number of tenants until Mary Fleming became its long-term owner-occupier late last century.<sup>5</sup> It possessed a verandah by the mid-1860s and gained another room ten years later. When Fleming became the owner the house

had five rooms plus a kitchen. By c1885 it had six. After Murphy sold to one Gleeson, the valuation rose dramatically from £8 to £18 between 1874-5: similarly, the description gained a room plus a kitchen.<sup>6</sup> This may indicate a general renovation or reconstruction, in an era when many Geelong houses were extended.<sup>7</sup>

By the 1920s, however, when Mary Jane Hooper owned it, it was noted as 'old' by the valuer in his yearly assessment.

A John Murphy held freehold land in Yarra Street during 1849-50. Another John Murphy (a Geelong shoemaker since the town's beginning) took up the Red Lion hotel licence in the late 1840s.<sup>8</sup> One or both of these could have built 9 England Street. Little is known of Gleeson.<sup>9</sup>

The 1854 plan shows five similarly planned houses facing 'Prospect Place'. 'Prospect Place' became England Street, suggesting that this house was one of them.<sup>10</sup> The Cox c1864 plan shows three buildings fronting the street,

- 1 RGO SN5824
- 2 RGO, R-931
- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 RB1853, 433; RB1852, 473
- 5 VB1881, 523; RB1885, 521; VB1895-6, 612
- 6 VB1874, 517; VB1870-1, 512; VB1876, 514
- 7 Statistical Register
- 8 INV, V.11196, V.15/44
- 9 John Gleeson at Breakwater in the 1880s (GD1882-3)
- 10 Confirmed by 1873 Search Plan, SN5824

but grouped in a different way. The c1912-14 plan shows the street wholly built up but with differing plan configurations to that of 1854.

**Description**

This is a double-fronted weatherboarded house with a gabled roof, concave verandah and distinctive scalloped barge. It is sited on the building line. The wave-pattern timber verandah frieze is also notable, as is the unusual verandah extension at the south end. The chimney is cemented and corniced (probably from the 1874-5 additions) and the boards, bead-edged.

**External Integrity**

Balustrade may have been replaced, also new windows and a door.

**Streetscape**

Contributing part of precinct 3.1, the city's oldest residential enclave and one of the crucial period elements in England Street, among a now depleted but once valuable old residential streetscape.

**Significance**

Historically, probably linked with the first subdivision of this Crown Grant and the first allotment owner, John Murphy.

Architecturally, the house possesses (like 17 England Street) valuable timber details. Hence, with its siting, form and detailing, it is perceptibly old and contributes to this old residential domain. Although subsequently extended in c1874-5, it still possesses an 1850's character and represents, like 39 Balliang Street, an era when Geelong householders extended their houses rather than replace them.