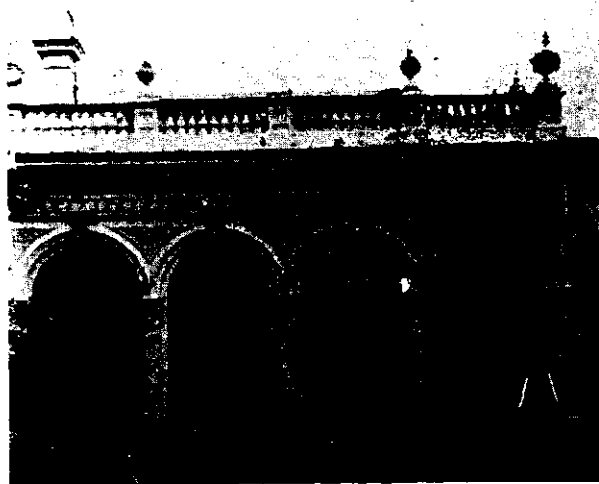


NAME: House

ADDRESS: 39 Kneen Street

CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1892
ARCHITECT: unknown
BUILDER: unknown
FIRST OWNER: John Meckiff
PRESENT OWNER: G.H. Pritchard
CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS: brick, slate roof
CONSERVATION AREA: A8



BUILDING CITATION:

This house was constructed in 1892 for John Meckiff. John Meckiff was well known in the building and contracting trade of Melbourne during the 1870's and 1880's. The house itself is of a striking formal eclectic Renaissance composition with an arcade in 2 orders returning around the corner. The spandrel panels are in decorative relief tile work and the cornice is supported on paired brackets with ribboned garlands between. The balustraded parapet supports draped urns with spiked balls.

The unusual central mansard roof appears to be a later addition.

The house is an unusual decorative arcaded composition. The whole effect is one of opulence, typical of the late boom period.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that this building be added to the Historic Buildings Register, the Register of the National Estate, and the Town and Country Planning Act (Third Schedule).

BUILDING ANALYSIS:

39 Kneen Street, built for John Meckiff, is first mentioned in the 1892 Fitzroy Ratebook when it was described as a brick house, 11 rooms and stable (£65).¹ Meckiff had constructed a wood workshop on the site in 1888 which was valued at £20.²

John Meckiff, first owner of this building, was extremely well-known in the building and contracting trade of Melbourne during the 1870's and 1880's according to biographical details included in *Victoria and its Metropolis*:³

Meckiff, John, North Fitzroy, was born at Poplar, London, 28th October, 1849; served his apprenticeship to Messrs. C. J. Mair and Co., shipbuilders, Millwall, as a carpenter and joiner, and was afterwards employed by Messrs. Watts Brothers on several railway stations on the North London line. He arrived in Victoria in 1870, and was engaged as foreman carpenter for Mr. Charles Carter, of Queen-street, for two years, on the additions to the residences of Mr. Sturt, P.M., Mr. Ireland, Q.C., at Templestowe, and Mr. Lynch, at Brighton. In 1873, he contracted for the erection of Perry's hay and corn store, butcher's shop, and two residences; in 1874 he was employed by Mr. Mitchell, the contractor, on the additional story to Sargood's warehouse, Flinders-street; several warehouses in Flinders-lane; the Scots Church, Collins-street; Mr. Laidlaw's residence, Heidelberg; the Ladies' College, East Melbourne; St. Stephen's Church, Richmond; an additional story to Champion's Hotel, Swanston-street; Mr. Rowe's residence, Templestowe; and the Victoria Coffee Palace, Collins-street. In 1875, he was foreman for Mr. James Moore, at the Catholic presbytery, South Melbourne, &c. He was also employed by Messrs. Pickering and Sutherland, at the State-school, South Melbourne; and at Finley's Brewery, South Richmond; and was then foreman for Messrs. Rawlings and Sayers, at Webster's warehouse, Flinders-lane; the

residences of Mr. Bruce, South Yarra; and Mr. Newman, Mount Grand View, Prahran. He then entered the employ of Messrs. Nation and Ganlin, and worked on the National Bank of Victoria, Collins-street; Briscoe's warehouse, Little Collins-street; was foreman carpenter for the same firm at the Eastern Market, Lincoln and Stuart's warehouse, Flinders-lane; Malls' hay and corn store, Brunswick-street; fixed Fairbank's scales and weighbridges in the Exhibition, 1881; was at the Colonial Bank, the Mutual Store, Selborne chambers, the Mercantile bond and free stores; and was the foreman joiner for the same firm at their workshops, Church-street, Richmond; re-instated their premises after the recent fire; superintended the work at a large number of mansions, residences, and stores; George and George's alterations; tramway workshops, Nicholson-street, and engine-house, Punt-road. In 1885, Mr. Meckiff joined the firm of Sanders, Turner, and Meckiff, builders and contractors, of Canning-street, and erected numerous terraces, dwellings, &c.; also the Wesleyan Church in Sackville-street. This partnership was dissolved in 1885, and the firm of Sanders and Meckiff was established in 1886. They have since built the engine-house and chimney stack at the railway goods platform, and many large stores, hotels, and dwellings throughout Melbourne and the suburbs, and are still carrying out extensive contracts.

1. Fitzroy Ratebook 1892
2. Fitzroy Ratebook 1888
3. A. Sutherland (ed) *Victoria and Metropolis* 2 Vols. 1888 Vol. 2 p.647

House, 39 Kneen Street (Continued)

The house itself is of a formal unusual eclectic Renaissance composition with an arcade in 2 orders returning around the corner. The arcade is composed of Roman doric pilasters with relief tile work spandrel panels surmounted by a band of key pattern frieze, a cornice supported on paired brackets with ribboned garlands between, and a balustraded parapet carrying draped urns and spiked balls.

The unusual central section with a semi-mansard roof contains corner windows with charming semi circular heads, but reflects an undistinguished interior space and seems to be a later addition. The interior front rooms are of considerable pretension with the original fire place and intact elaborate cornice.

NAME: House ADDRESS: 124 Michael Street

CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1884
ARCHITECT: unknown
BUILDER: Thomas Chevalier
FIRST OWNER: Thomas Chevalier, builder
PRESENT OWNER: M.A. Mossiman
CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS: rendered brickwork
CONSERVATION AREA: A9



BUILDING CITATION:

This house, constructed in 1884,¹ is of interest for its narrow site and somewhat distorted composition. There is a projecting bay at the ground floor level which supports an upper balcony with a simple cast iron balustrade, timber posts and sawtooth bressumer mouldings. The parapet above surmounts a cornice supported on single brackets which alternate with paterae. The pedimental motif with nail head archivolt moulding is flanked by scrolls and urns. On the ground floor there are hood moulds to the windows (broken by a face in the central window) which are connected across the facade at impost level and linked to the label mould of the entrance door.

The double iron palisade fence is intact.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that this building be specified under Clause 8 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Third Schedule).

¹. Fitzroy Ratebook 1884 Brick house 4 rooms £40. Thomas Chevalier Builder.