

NAME: Terrace

ADDRESS: 53-59 George Street

CONSTRUCTION DATE: Pre 1858

ALTERATIONS./ADDITIONS: Facades of 53 and 59 stripped of surface modelling.

ARCHITECT: John Gill?

BUILDER: Unknown

FIRST OWNER: 1858 William Reynolds/gentleman.

FIRST OCC./USE: Various/residences

PRESENT OWNER: Various

PRESENT OCC./USE: Various/residences

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS: Rendered masonry

INTACTNESS/CONDITION: Nos. 55,57 substantially intact; nos. 53,59 - facade altered.

AREA STREETSCAPE: Part of recommended area A4



IMPORTANCE:

This terrace was constructed prior to 1858, and was possibly designed by John Gill in 1853, although this has not been verified.

The facades have been altered to numbers 53 and 59, but the unusual classicizing design of the central pair with paved pilasters projecting through the string course and cornice (and terminating in a debased pediment) is of considerable interest.

If these houses can be attributed to Gill, they are of considerable importance. They would provide the earliest surviving example of a terrace development outside Melbourne conforming to the requirements of the 1849 Melbourne Building Act.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that this terrace be brought to the attention of the Historic Buildings Council and that further research be undertaken to establish the true importance of the terrace. It is also recommended that this terrace be added to the Register of the National Estate and be specified under Clause 8 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Third Schedule).

BUILDING ANALYSIS AND EVIDENCE:

These four houses were constructed prior to 1858. William Reynolds, a gentleman, owned them at this date.¹ Reynolds occupied all the properties at various times, but primarily they were rented out. Numbers 55 and 59 were used as boarding houses for a long period of time.²

It was not possible to trace these houses in the Melbourne City Council Ratebooks,³ but it is possible that the two houses designed by John Gill in George Street, Collingwood in 1853⁴ form part of this group. The unusual classicizing design of the central pair with pilasters projecting through the stringcourse and cornice results in an unusual composition. A similar classicizing element can be seen behind the verandahs on the facade of 163-165 Victoria Parade, but the detailing is less notable.

It is possible that Gill designed these houses as he was active in the 1850's in Fitzroy: in 1851 he designed three houses for J.P. Bear in Victoria Street, Fitzroy: in 1853 he designed a group of seven houses for William F. Splatt, M.L.C., and in 1854 Gill called tenders for two houses in Nicholson Street (probably the first part of Royal Terrace).⁵ If it is substantiated that Gill did this terrace,⁶ it would be the earliest known surviving terrace house which incorporated the fire-preventive requirements of the 1849 Building Act - namely, the continuous front parapet and the projecting party walls dividing the properties.

Due to limited time it was not possible for the consultants to verify the above speculation. The buildings as they stand, have been substantially altered, but the classicizing elements to 55 and 57 are of particular interest. More research is recommended to establish the true importance of these buildings.

1. Fitzroy Ratebooks 1858: Reynolds (owner), various occupants, B.H. 7R 110.
2. Refer ratebook entries.
3. Refer 36-50 Gore Street for description of sources referred.
4. *Melbourne Herald* 6.5.1853. Tenders called by John Gill - erection of 2 dwelling houses for Captain Mair, George Street, Collingwood.
5. Information from Architects Index held at the University of Melbourne, as summarised in M.B. Lewis "64-78 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy" November 1978. p.4
6. If Ratebook searches continue to prove fruitless, reference to the M.C.C. Building Register Book is recommended.

NAME: -

ADDRESS: 67, 69 George Street.

CONSTRUCTION DATE: 67 - 1873, 69 - 1888.

ALTERATNS/ADDTNS: New tiled verandah roof to 69.

ARCHITECT: 67 - G.R. Cox

FIRST OWNER: Hewitt Henderson.

FIRST OCC./USE: 67 - Hewitt Henderson/
dairyman/house;
69 - Gustav Brunstein/
waiter/house.

PRESENT OWNER: 67 - Estate of I. Duchon
& S. Duchon.
69 - S. Duchon.

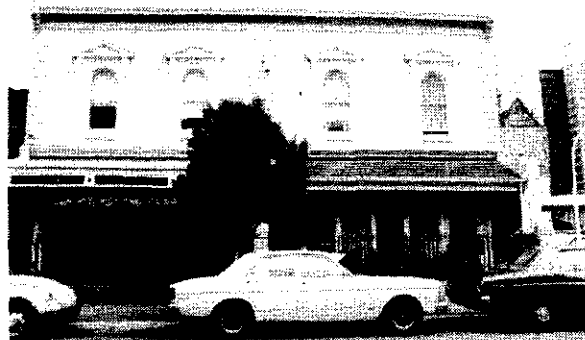
PRESENT OCC./USE: 67 - S. Duchon & I. Anderson
69 - G. Grigson, & B. Lewis.

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS: Rendered brick.

INTACTNESS/CONDITION: Substantially intact, good condition.

AREA/STREETSCAPE: Part of recommended area A4.

IMPORTANCE:



This pair of houses constructed to the design of architect G.R. Cox in 1873 and 1888 provides the most important example of Renaissance Revival terrace pair in Fitzroy. It is the only known dwelling designed by the architect, George Reilly Cox.