



Alex Miller Memorial Homes 22A Park Street

History

(see McKillop Street complex)

The Alexander Miller Memorial Homes are represented throughout Victoria but commenced in Geelong around 1909. Architects, Laird & Buchan designed all of the Geelong complexes and those throughout the State (ie. Rushworth, Benalla).¹ The builder was Ernest A Nott and the contract sum £6544, expended from the foundation stone laying March 1923 to the opening November 1923². Nott also built the Aphrasia Street complex.

Miller was born in Scotland, the son of a farmer. In 1928 memories of Miller were recited in the local press:

In the seventies in a drapers shop in Moorabool street, Geelong, a young man was making an indelible mark on the minds and memories of all classes of people...in his master's shop. Elderly women speak today of the kindly attention and obliging service of young Alex Miller. Quick at his work, keenly observant of human nature, and rapidly increasing his knowledge of his trade, he was always thoughtful of his customers requirements...Gradually Miller extended his business into the country centres and his name became a household word for fair and honourable trading throughout the north-east of Victoria and its Goulburn valley.

Miller's homes were intended for the elderly who had no other means of support. His projects (1909-) began before his death and his aims were inspired by the dearth of any old age pension until c1900.⁴ Geelong examples include those in Pakington Street (1910) and 324 Ryrie Street(1915).

Description

Based on the Bungalow Court principles expounded in America early this century, these are red brick Bungalows grouped around and facing a courtyard of concrete and lawn.

Each gable-roof design resembles the Indian and Asian colonial era traveler's accommodation prototypes which inspired the Bungalow on America's west coast. Developed there as an inexpensive form of housing which contrasted with the despised 19th century row-houses, the Bungalow and Bungalow Courts used land economically, sharing their open space as part of the courtyard. A similar principle was reiterated after the Second War, in Australia, as an answer to housing shortages.

Red brick, terra-cotta roof tiles and the broad gable roof line associated with the Bungalow are all typical attributes of the Indian or Far Eastern bungalows colonial deriva-

¹ see Butler, Waranga Conservation Study (1989)

² Laird & Buchan contract book 6, p. 73, GHRC, GA 9 3 23

³ W R Lang, Alexander Miller-the man, Investigator 9 86 p.95f

⁴ ibid.