
Name	House (formerly <i>Surrey College, Norton</i>)	Reference No	
Address	12 Vincent Street, Surrey Hills	Survey Date	16 September 2005
Building Type	Residence	Grading	B
Date	c.1892	Previous Grading	B



Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

Intactness Good Fair Poor

Heritage Status HV AHC NT Rec. BPS Heritage Overlay

History

The subject property formed allotment 15, sometimes referred to in rate entries as allotment 15A of the 'Railway Station Estate', Surrey Hills. Records for the Shire of Boroondara's 1890-91 rate cycle listed Rosalie Hanson as the owner of allotments 13-18, each approximately 71' x 132' all of which were vacant and accorded a nav (net annual value) of £12 each¹. By the following year, the Reverend Frederick Darling was recorded as the owner of vacant allotments 15 and 16, the nav of each having decreased to £10. Reverend Darling, Presbyterian minister and school teacher resided nearby in a newly-built house in Kent Street, later Kent Road, Surrey Hills, upon allotment 56 of the 'Surrey Park Estate', a short distance from the subject property.² According to J Alex Allan's unpublished history of Camberwell, the Reverend Darling had served as minister to the nascent Surrey Hills congregation, and resigned from this post in 1892 to concentrate on the management of a college. He continued however, to conduct services at Canterbury in an honorary capacity.³

Records of the Shire's 1892-93 rate cycle recorded that the subject allotment was now occupied by a brick college, with a nav of £20. The adjoining allotment, allotment 16, remained vacant. Reverend Darling however is thought to have continued to occupy his residence in nearby Kent Road.⁴ The college continued to be listed in the following year's rate books – described as a brick college in 1894-95 and 1895-96, with the rated value dropping to £16. The property was last listed as a college in records of the 1899-1900 rate cycle, and was subsequently described from this date onwards as a four-roomed brick building.⁵ At this time in Kent Street, the Reverend Darling was in the process of acquiring neighboring allotments. This same year his Kent Street property was now described as a 17 room college, subsequently expanding to 22 rooms by the 1901-02 rate cycle and occupying allotments 56, 58, 23 and 26, to the corner of Kent Street and Union Roads.⁶ Subsequently, it would be listed in the rate books as 'Surrey College'.⁷

Returning to the Vincent Street property, rate records indicate that it was extended in c. 1903, and now comprised six rooms. The Reverend Darling was still listed as its owner as well as of the vacant allotment next door.⁸ In 1908-09, the property was recorded as being tenanted by Alfred James Jeffery, an engineer.⁹ By this date other allotments in Vincent Street were being developed with primarily weatherboard buildings being constructed.¹⁰

By 1915, Reverend Darling had moved to Woolstonecraft in Sydney, where in time he would become the seventh director of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales. At this time the subject property had been named *Norton*, was still occupied by Jeffery and four others and consisted of six rooms.¹¹ Darling retained ownership of the Vincent Street property until c.1921. Records from the 1919-20 rate cycle listed the building as now being tenanted by Joseph T Poynton, a rubber worker, and eight others. The adjoining allotment - allotment 16 - had been sold by this date and a weatherboard house had been constructed upon it.¹² By the 1921-22 rate cycle Joseph Poynton was listed as both the occupant and owner of the property.¹³ Poynton occupied the property until the end of the 1920s. From 1930 until the late 1950s the property was occupied by the Barber family. Listings in the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria* between 1957 and 1961 recorded the occupant as 'not available', suggesting the property may have fallen into disrepair and remained vacant for several years. By 1962 it was occupied by J Toth, who remained in residence until at least 1974.¹⁴

(G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, amended by Lovell Chen, 2005)

Description & Integrity

12 Vincent Street, of c. 1892, was originally a small school. It is not clear whether it combined a residential function as well.

Graeme Butler has noted that the building is described as having an iron roof; if this was accurate, this roof is now covered in slate, with galvanized iron ridge-capping. The original windows, visible from the street, had pointed arches and colored upper panes; these have had new sashes added to them and the two front west windows have been extended down to the floor-line more recently. The verandah, with its Japanese patterned frieze, looks stylistically different and may have been added in 1902; along with, perhaps, the gable trussing and window frames.¹⁵ The massive and vertically planked front door is understood to have replaced the original.¹⁶

The walls are in simply polychromed, plain-coursed brick in the 'new style' of the early 1890s, closer to contemporary Gothic Revival usage than the increasingly fanciful patterning common in most contemporary houses. Graeme Butler has suggested that the Gothic details worked to mark out the school room area from the rest of the house.¹⁷ The arches are marked out with polychrome at their stress points, and on the verandah wall the umber brick line is turned on its head.

The MMBW Detail Plan no. 72 (c. 1909) shows that in 1909 it was one of only four houses in Vincent Street.¹⁸ Its present site boundaries were established, and it had a small outbuilding.¹⁹ This may have been incorporated into the present 'bungalow' arrangement toward the rear of the site, adjacent to a more recent carport. The dormer above the verandah is a later addition (1999),²⁰ and the internal plan has been changed.

The front fence was added around the time of the dormer and internal alterations, and the driveway was repaved in brick.

Historical Context

As noted above, by 1909 only limited development had occurred in Vincent Street, with four residences shown. It is interesting to note that this area of Surrey Hills is said to have had a fair number of private hospitals and small institutional buildings scattered through its streets.²¹

Comparative Analysis

It is difficult to identify direct comparisons for this building, as a purpose-built schoolroom in the Gothic style. Graeme Butler has observed that this building is distinctive in being a small school of just one or two dedicated rooms rather than the much larger type of school being more generally built at the time.²² The institutional use of the building is well marked in the wall treatments, and the house has a serious yet endearing demeanour, unusual in domestic-scaled renderings of the Gothic.

As noted by Butler, the deliberate accentuation of Gothic arches marks out No. 12's identity as a public building,²³ presumably with church connections.

Assessment Against Criteria

Amended Heritage Victoria Criteria

CRITERION A: The historical importance, association with or relationship to Boroondara's history of the place or object.

The house is of historical significance as an unusual example in Boroondara of a diminutive schoolhouse possibly also with a residential function, and for its association with the Rev. Frederick Darling, later a director of the New South Wales Presbyterian Church and minister at its socially important St Stephens' Sydney.²⁴

CRITERION E: The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

The building is of interest for its combination of Gothic form and detailing with the distinctive Japanese inspired timber verandah and timber gable trussing and window (albeit the latter elements possibly early alterations).

CRITERION G: The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations

The house is distinctive as a 'public building' constructed at residential scale; its original use as a schoolhouse, possibly combined with a residential function, is well-expressed in its external detailing and representation of Gothic form.

Statement of Significance

12 Vincent Street, Surrey Hills is of local historical and architectural significance. The house is of historical significance as an unusual example in Boroondara of a diminutive schoolhouse, and for its association with the Rev. Frederick Darling, later a director of the New South Wales Presbyterian Church and minister at its socially important St Stephens' Sydney.²⁵ It is of architectural significance as a 'public building' constructed at residential scale; its original use as a schoolhouse, possibly combined with a residential function, is well-expressed in its external detailing and representation of Gothic form. The building is also of interest for its combination of Gothic form and detailing with the distinctive Japanese inspired timber verandah and timber gable trussing and window frames (albeit the latter elements possibly early alterations).

Grading Review

Unchanged.

Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Boroondara Planning Scheme.

Identified By

G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study, 1991.

References

General: G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study, 1991.

Specific:

¹ Shire of Boroondara Rate Books, 1890-91, #3665-3666, nav £12 each.

² Shire of Boroondara Rate Books, 1891-92, #720-21, vacant land, nav £10 each; #1711, house and land, Kent Road, nav £40.

³ Allan, J Alex, *The History of Camberwell (Victoria): 1841-1950*, unpublished typescript, 1954, p. 188.

⁴ Shire of Boroondara Rate Books, 1892-93, #1685, College, lot 15a, nav £20; #1686, land, lot 16, nav £7; #1291, brick house, allotment 56, nav £35.

⁵ Shire of Boroondara Rate Books, 1899-1900, #753, college, 4 rooms brick, lot 15a, nav £16; 1900-01, #782, 4 rooms brick, lot 15a, nav £16; #783, land, lot 16, nav £4.

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- ⁶ Shire of Boroondara Rate Books, 1901-02, #1066, 22 rooms brick, lots 56, 58, 23, 26, nav £141.
- ⁷ Shire of Boroondara Rate Books, 1902-03, #1124, 'Surrey College', 22 rooms brick, nav £141.
- ⁸ Shire of Boroondara Rate Books, 1903-04, #1628, 6 rooms, brick, lot 15a, nav £22.
- ⁹ Borough of Camberwell Rate Books, 1908-09, #1838, 6 rooms, brick, lot 15a, Alfred James Jeffery, rated person, Reverend F Darling, owner, nav £22.
- ¹⁰ The MMBW survey plan, no. 72, scale 160':1", dated 1909 showed four other houses in Vincent Street, with 'Col Col' on the same side of the street as the subject property, to its north. All the houses are shaded on the plan as being of weatherboard construction, including, mistakenly the subject property.
- ¹¹ Borough of Camberwell Rate Books, 1914-15, #1498; Allan, J Alex, *The History of Camberwell (Victoria): 1841-1950*, unpublished typescript, 1954, p.188.
- ¹² Borough of Camberwell Rate Books, 1919-20, #1691, 6 rooms, brick, lot 15a, Joseph Poynton, rated person, Reverend F Darling, owner, nav £30.
- ¹³ City of Camberwell Rate Books, 1921-22, #1750, 6 rooms, brick.
- ¹⁴ Pattern of occupation derived from listings in the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years, between 1926 and 1974.
- ¹⁵ G Butler, City of Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, vol. 4, pp. 295-6.
- ¹⁶ Information provided by current owner, April 2007.
- ¹⁷ G Butler, City of Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, vol. 4, pp. 295-6.
- ¹⁸ Note that this plan shows the building as of timber construction, a curious anomaly.
- ¹⁹ MMBW Plan No. 72, (Surrey Hills), scale 160'-1", dated 1909.
- ²⁰ City of Boroondara Building File # 40/408/17212.
- ²¹ Conversation with Henry Jamieson, local retailer and resident since the mid-1930s, 2002.
- ²² G Butler, City of Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, vol. 4, pp. 295-6.
- ²³ G Butler, City of Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, vol. 4, pp. 295-6.
- ²⁴ G Butler, City of Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, vol. 4, pp. 295-6.
- ²⁵ G Butler, City of Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, vol. 4, pp. 295-6.