

**House, 39 Kneen St, Fitzroy North, VIC, Australia**

**Photographs:**



**List:** Register of the National Estate

**Class:** Historic

**Legal Status:** [Registered](#) (30/06/1992)

**Place ID:** 15320

**Place File No:** 2/11/020/0081

**Statement of Significance:**

This 1892 residence is of great interest for its unusual composition of single-level Italianate arcades, rich decoration and Mansard roof (Criterion B.2). The House, built for a leading Melbourne builder of the time, reflects the boom-era in Melbourne late last century (Criterion A.4).

**Official Values:** Not Available

**Description:**

Originally an eleven-roomed stuccoed brick house with stables, this residence was first owned and occupied by John Meckiff, a notable Melbourne builder, in 1892. Four years before Meckiff had built a timber workshop on the land. He arrived from England in 1870 and worked with many large building firms. In 1885 his firm Sanders Turner and Meckiff was formed and the firm Sanders and Meckiff was formed a year later. This company built the railway engine shed and chimney stack at Spencer Street and constructed many other unnamed large hotels and residences. Subsequent to Meckiff's ownership the house has been the home of an importer, a boot manufacturer, teachers of dancing, two nurses and a drainer. The House's distinctive design suggests that Meckiff did not himself draft the plans but instead obtained architectural assistance. It has intricate and unusual ornament applied across its equally unusual single storey arcaded brick form. Roman Doric Order pilasters are used in the arcade, garlands and a key-pattern frieze are found in the entablature and on the parapet are spiked urns and orbs. An iron palisade fence with one altered brick pier is at the front. Another unusual aspect of the house is the Mansard/monitor roof-line with its pseudo slate metal sheeting and arched dormers giving a French character to the rear section. The main slate roof is also pitched at two angles. Reputedly the front rooms are elaborately decorated.

**History:** Not Available

**Condition and Integrity:**

Alterations in the 1940s converted the building from eleven rooms to nine rooms although there is no evidence of this externally. The parapet orbs are incomplete and the iron and brick front fence appears altered. The main alterations are the painting of the assumed polychrome brickwork and the replacement of the verandah tiling. (1990)

**Location:**

39 Kneen Street, Fitzroy North.

**Bibliography:**

Jacobs Lewis Vines Architects, "North Fitzroy Conservation Study", Fitzroy, 1978.