

Camberwell Conservation Study 1991
BUILDING CITATION

**Verulam, later Parlington,
46 Parlington Street**



Historic Buildings Register R
Australian Heritage Commission:
National Trust of Australia (Class/Rec.):
Classified

NTA File Number: 1515

Study Grading: A

Precinct: 16.00 Streetscape: 2

Construction Date: 1888

First Owner: McIntosh, James

Architect: Gall, James ?

History

The history of the Parlington site is in two main stages and the present building is thought to represent both of these eras¹.

The portion at the rear may have existed on the site since the 1860-70s, being owned and occupied over a long period by William Elsdon who became Chief Engineer of the Victorian Railways. The later portion, which includes the distinctive tower section with its fine staircase and splendid stained and frosted glass panels, was constructed in 1888 for James Macintosh probably to the design of James Gall. The Macintosh clan crest, a springing cat with the motto, 'Touch not the cat bot a glove,' is depicted in a stained glass panel over the front door. James Gall was the designer of the adjacent property, Froggnall.

During the 1890s and at the turn of the century, the house was known as Verulam and was owned and

occupied by Albert Terry, pioneer Victorian brewer. It was renamed Parlington after Parlington Street by the Kellet family who purchased the property in the 1950s.

Canterbury, once a rural district with orchards and open fields, became attractive to the subdividers from the 1860s. The vanguard of suburbia arrived there in that decade, usually city men who wanted a comfortable estate of ten or twenty acres. They build roomy houses with wide verandahs looking out on lines of pines or elms or oaks. They were proud of their fruit trees and vines, their trim English lawns. As early as 1868 Canterbury Road, then called Delaney's Road, was a fashionable rural road. John O'Shanassy, draper; David Syme, Snowden and Arthur Manton lived in the area during the 1860s.

With the extension of the railway in the 1880s new suburbs were opened up between Malvern and Canterbury. Many large estates were subdivided. In 1881 the Metropolitan Gas Company decided to lay pipes to the Camberwell area. As a result of such developments Camberwell, Canterbury, Surrey Hills and Riversdale and Glen Iris became the scene of a vigorous social life.² According to the historian, Geoffrey Blainey, *Visitors who walked from Camberwell railway station into Burke Road in the late 1880s heard on every side the sound of the hammers and the tapping of bricks.*³

By the 1890s there were three good shopping centres at Surrey Hills, Balwyn and Canterbury. The last was the largest.⁴

William Elsdon

In May 1872 William Elsdon, later Chief Engineer, Victorian Railways, became the owner of this site.⁵ At that date the property extended back from Mont Albert Road to Canterbury Road and covered 7 acres.⁶ Elsdon was first rated in 1871-2 for 'house and land' in 'Survey Road', the previous owner/occupier having been Alfred Eldret.

Elsdon arrived in Melbourne from England in 1854, acting as Robert Stephenson's representative, and accompanying two English locomotives ordered by the Melbourne and Hobson's Bay Railway Company. The early 1850s saw the birth of the Victorian railway system, the

1 inspection needed to verify
2 Geoffrey Blainey, *A History of Camberwell* (1980), pp.32-33, 55-60, 70.
3 *ibid.*, p.57
4 *ibid.*, 70
5 Title Vol.496, Fol.115, held by Kellett family
See MMBW drainage plan (1905)
6 *ibid.*; RB1875-6, 282 first entry to give area - AV unchanged to 1873-4;
7 RB1871-2,269; RB1870-1,266

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first two lines being the Sandridge (Port Melbourne) and St. Kilda lines.⁸

At first, Elsdon resided at the Railway Reserve, Sandridge, where a son, William Percy, was born in 1865. William Percy Elsdon became a surveyor, was articled to the firm of Terry & Oakden and became a member and fellow⁹ of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects.

Melbourne directories confirm that William Elsdon, then of the Melbourne & Hobson's Bay Railway Company, was at Mont Albert Road by c1876 although municipal rate books give an earlier date of c1868. By 1880 he was described as Chief Engineer, Victorian Railways. Titles Office records suggest that on 27 October 1887 he sold his Mont Albert Road property to James Macintosh.¹⁰ By the 1890s Elsdon was listed at Brentani Terrace, Grey Street east, East Melbourne.

Elsdon's first house at Mont Albert Road appears to have been a modest structure. A house was listed on the site as early as 1868 with a valuation for house and land of only £22.¹¹ Valuation had doubled to £40, by 1877, after interim rises and falls¹. From 1882-3, the valuation began a steady rise, going from £40 to £100 by 1887-8².

James McIntosh

By 1888-9 the rated value of the property had tripled to £300, confirming the construction of the house as 1888, during James McIntosh's tenure³. The architect, James Gall, called tenders to 'erect a mansion' at Mont Albert Road in August 1888; however this was probably for Frognall, next door⁴.

Further confirmation of the 1888 date and Macintosh's involvement may be found in an article in *Victoria and its Metropolis* (1888) describing the work of the builder, Robert Gamlin. In that year, Gamlin constructed new residences for O. Beale at Toorak and J. McIntosh at Camberwell. Gamlin built many notable Victorian structures including the Fitzroy Town Hall, Eastern Market, Wilson Hall, Richmond cable tram engine house and the Grand Hotel at Queenscliffe.⁵

A motto set in the stained glass over the front door ('Touch not the cat bot a glove') is the motto of the Macintosh clan in Scotland.⁶

The designing architect for Parlington is thought to

have been James Gall. During the 1880s Gall designed a number of Canterbury and Camberwell residences, including the similar and adjacent mansion, Frognall (q.v.).

Albert Terry

A new owner, the brewer, Albert Terry was listed for the first time in the 1893 directory. The previous year, Macintosh's residence was recorded as vacant.

Terry, who arrived in Melbourne in 1852 was a pioneer of the brewing industry of Australia. He was founder and proprietor of the West End Brewery which in 1889 bought out Latham's Carlton Brewery. He was also, from the 1890s and at the turn of the century, associated with the Burnley Brewery in Richmond.⁷ By 1900 Terry's house in Mont Albert Road was described as having 15 rooms and was valued at £150.⁸ In 1902 the valuation was £275.⁹

A 1905 MMBW *Record Plan* shows Terry's property Verulam with its neighbour, Frognall; both properties with extensive garden and orchard areas and sweeping carriage drives opening on to Mont Albert Road.

Terry's property is shown with a large coach-house/stable block at the rear. Both properties have large orchards. A tennis court is indicated at the sides of each property.¹⁰

Albert Terry died at Verulam on 27 August 1907. Mrs. Julia Terry was the occupier the following year but by 1910 it was vacant.

Kellett family

The Kellett family, who recently sold the property to James Smith were the owners from the 1950s. By that date the 7 acre property had been subdivided. In 1915 Parlington Street was created, named after a property south of Terry's residence. Parlington Street roughly followed the line of the Verulam drive to Mont Albert Road. The Kelletts renamed the house after this street.

Description

The house is both externally and internally in a remarkably intact condition¹¹. The Italianate house with its asymmetrical composition decorated

8 Leo T. Harrigan, *Victorian Railways* (1962), pp.38-30

9 *Cyclopedia of Victoria III*, pp.128-129

10 Title Vol.1973, Fol.464

11 Camberwell RB1868 Nos. 267, 268, 270

1 RB1877-8,319

2 Camberwell RB1883, Nos. 429-30; 1884, Nos. 611-3; RB1886-7, 980; RB1887-8,1382

3 RB1888-9,1694

4 BEMJ 25.8.1888 sp.8

5 *Victoria and its Metropolis*, Vol.2, p.639

6 C Kellaway: conversation with Andrea Biasiutti (nee Kellett),

7/1/88

7 Sloane and Sullivan, 'The Carlton brewery,' M.U. Arch. Essay, 1966; Melbourne/Vic. Directories; *Australasian*, 14 Sept. 1907 (obituary)

8 Camberwell (North Riding), RB 1894-1902, 9-10, or 10-11

9 *ibid.*

10 MMBW *Record Plan*, No. 70 (1905)

11 drawing from the HBC inspection, 3 November 1988

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by loggias and a tower still has an unpainted rendered facade. The interior is equally intact with its splendid stained glass over the front door with the cat motif bearing the motto 'Touch not the cat but a glove,' stained glass panels in the hall doors depicting spring and summer and above the elegant staircase panels with bird motifs. It is believed that encaustic mosaic tiles survive under the front hall carpet. Memories of a more affluent life style are suggested by the servants' buttons throughout the house beside the marble fireplaces and the original elaborate gas fittings in the hall and front room. When the Kellett family moved in during the 1950s, there was electricity only in one room.

Like Frognall, the house uses the Italian Renaissance villa revival as a vehicle to impress, both in the grandeur of its massing and the detail of its ornament. As with Frognall, both arcuation and trabeation are applied to the house elevations, each providing the required void or mass to aid the dynamic nature of the composition. Both covered and open terraces are utilized towards the same aim but it is the tower, with its massive pediments and balustraded parapet, which provides the most distinctive element in the composition. The stilted arch and segment arch forms also play a role in breaking up the massive wall planes created by the building's scale. Deep eaves brackets, an ornate impost mould, keystones and bracketed sills are few of the standard architectural devices used in contemporary Italianate style villas. Swags, elongated modillions and barreled chimney tops add to the mounting detail.

An exceptional feature of the house is the intact stable block at the rear which comprises the original stables, coachhouse and coachmen's quarters shown in the 1905 MMBW plan. The stables still contain the original timber stalls and feed bins. There is also a cellar under the house with a wired-in pantry/creamery area. Some work has been done on the stables in more recent times.

Although the extensive garden/orchard area has gone, the curved carriage drive with its ovaloid lawn design shown in the 1905 plan still remains.

Comparative Examples

Werribee Park (1873-8), Mintaro at Monegeeta, 54

Jolimont Terrace, Jolimont, Noorilim at Murchison (1878).

The above examples although equal in scale and ornament do not possess the same dynamic massing as either Frognall or Parlington mainly because of the symmetry of their planning in contrast to the dedicated asymmetry applied in the late 19th century villa designs.

Comparative Examples

The following Camberwell sites may be compared with this site.

35⁷, PROSPECT HILL ROAD, 1881
 630, RIVERSDALE ROAD, 1882
 2, BERWICK STREET, 1885c
 53, PROSPECT HILL ROAD, 1886-7
 320, CAMBERWELL ROAD, 1886
 3, FERMANACH ROAD, 1887
 57, SEYMOUR GROVE, 1887
 33, ALMA ROAD, 1888
 19, CANTERBURY ROAD, 1888
 635, RIVERSDALE ROAD, 1888
 89, UNION ROAD, 1888
 2, PEPPIN STREET, 1889 (?)
 25, ALMA ROAD, 1889(?)
 54, MONT ALBERT ROAD, 1889-9
 36, ALMA ROAD, 1889
 208, CANTERBURY ROAD, 1889
 15, IRILBARRA ROAD, 1889
 21, IRILBARRA ROAD, 1889
 43, KENT ROAD, 1889
 2, MOLESWORTH STREET, 1889
 137, MONT ALBERT ROAD, 1889
 32, PROSPECT HILL ROAD, 1889
 10, TRAFALGAR ROAD, 1889
 26A, WANDSWORTH ROAD, 1889
 50, WANDSWORTH ROAD, 1889
 42, WARRICAL ROAD, 1889
 262, UNION ROAD, 1890/1900
 15, ALMA ROAD, 1890
 544, BURKE ROAD, 1890
 27, INGLESBY ROAD, 1890
 7, VICTORIA AVENUE, 1890
 13, VICTORIA AVENUE, 1890
 57, YARRBAT AVENUE, 1890c7
 7A, ALMA ROAD, 1891-2
 13, BALWYN ROAD, 1891-4
 73-79, BALWYN ROAD, 1891
 320, CAMBERWELL ROAD, 1892
 622, RIVERSDALE ROAD, 1892
 6, TRAFALGAR ROAD, 1892
 125, WATTLE VALLEY ROAD, 1892
 136, CANTERBURY ROAD, 1893
 816-822, RIVERSDALE ROAD, 1895
 30, HOWARD STREET, 1895c
 29, CANTERBURY ROAD, 1897
 52, PROSPECT HILL ROAD, 1897
 15, KASOUKA ROAD, 1898
 150, MONT ALBERT ROAD, 1899
 26, VICTORIA AVENUE, 1899

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External Integrity
Generally original.

brewer, Albert Terry, who died at Verulam (the earlier name for Parlinton) in August 1907: of State importance.

Streetscape

Distinguishable as a pre-subdivision house, in a largely Edwardian context and, importantly, identifiable as the near twin of Frognall, each visible from the other's tower.

Significance

Architecturally :

Considered with Frognall, both as fully developed examples of the Italianate style, Parlinton is among the best of its style and scale group : both being distinguished by the high integrity, application of ornate cement detailing and the dynamic composition employed in both buildings as aided by their towers and overall three-dimensional treatment: of State importance.

The building also has significance for its intact unpainted rendered facade and intact interior with its elegant staircase, splendid stained and frosted glass, the servants' bells throughout and original gas fittings in the hall and front room also the intact stable and coachhouse block with its original timber stalls and feed-boxes. The curved carriage drive with its ovaloid lawn design as shown on a 1905 MMBW drainage plan still remains, providing part of the original setting.

Historically:

Parlinton, with its distinctive tower illustrates well the lifestyle of the affluent merchants and businessmen who flocked to the suburbs of Camberwell, Canterbury, Surrey Hills and Glen Iris during the boom years of the 1880s following the extension of the railway system.

Parlinton's site has associations with 19th century railway development through its occupancy by William Elsdon, Chief Engineer of the pioneer Melbourne and Hobson's Bay Railway Company in the 1850s and then of the site in the 1870s prior to the extension of the railway to the Camberwell area.

The house has associations from the 1890s until the turn of the century with the pioneer Australian