

Original Use: Residence  
Date of Construction: 1889<sup>1</sup>  
Architect: Frederick de Garis and Son<sup>2</sup>

DESIGNATION A  
CITATION NO.23

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#### HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

The Rate Books record that accountant John Ditchburn was the first occupier of this brick house<sup>3</sup>. Constructed by E. Williams of South Melbourne<sup>4</sup>, the property attracted an N.A.V. of £200 in 1889<sup>5</sup>. Although the owner's name is not listed in the first instance, by 1895 the Melbourne Permanent Building Society is recorded as owning the property<sup>6</sup>. The house was named 'Melrose' by the turn of the century<sup>7</sup>.

The house clearly displays its late Victorian date of construction and has a vibrant application of polychromatic brickwork across its facade. In addition there are unusual castellated polygonal bay window units clad in render that stand in contrast to the walls and a very fine verandah decorated in cast iron. The roof is also very distinctive and intact, with patterning in the slates, bold cast iron ridge crestings, cast iron railings to the central widow's walk and clustered octagonal chimney stacks in keeping with the Tudor theme introduced by the castellation below. It is one of the more vibrant examples of de Garis's work: an architect who often worked with applied ornamentation. The house attracted attention at the time it was built, and was illustrated and described in *The Australasian Builder and Contractors' News*; in that article it being referred to as one of the '... many beautiful homes of the wealthy in Kew'.<sup>8</sup>



#### SIGNIFICANCE

'Butleigh Wootton' is of significance as a substantially intact large house of the late Victorian period and as such, is one of the key Victorian buildings to have been built in Kew. It is of particular distinction for the graceful and unusual arrangement of the bow window.

#### HERITAGE LISTINGS

HBR: Recommended for inclusion on the register.

GBR: N/A

RNE: Recommended for inclusion on the register.

National Trust: Recorded No.1338

- 1 City of Kew, Rate Books, 1885
- 2 *Eastern Suburbs Standard*, 6 May 1964
- 3 Rogers, D., *A History of Kew*, p.142
- 4 *Eastern Suburbs Standard*, loc.cit.
- 5 Kiddle, M., *Men of Yesterday*, p.212
- 6 *ibid.*
- 7 City of Kew, Rate Books, 1883
- 8 *Eastern Suburbs Standard*, loc.cit.
- 9 City of Kew, Rate Books, 1885
- 10 *ibid.*, 1896-1900
- 11 *ibid.*, 1910

The distinctive exterior of this building, with an elegant bowed window element rising through two stories and a fine Ionic portico, not to mention the building's great size, makes it of at least regional significance. The interior has undergone considerable change, with doorways and sections of walls removed to open up the various rooms into a single cohesive space. It nonetheless retains the majority of its original fabric, especially (it would seem) on the first floor. The central stairwell and architectural articulation of the first floor remain the most striking aspects of the interior. Whatever grounds it may once have had have now been sacrificed to adjacent developments, leaving only a small garden at the front.

This building warrants further investigation in order to assess whether or not it has the architectural or historical associations which would render it worthy of nomination to the Historic Buildings Council. Pending such investigation it should retain a nominal A classification.