

Heritage Overlay No.: 087
Citation No.: 230
Place: House, 32 O’Neills Road

Other Names of Place: N/A
Location: 32 O’Neills Road, Melton
Critical Dates: Construction: unknown (c.1905)
Existing Heritage Listings: None
Recommended Level of Significance: LOCAL



Statement of Significance:

The house at 32 O’Neills Road, Melton, is significant as a moderately intact example of a Late Victorian style and for its associations with residential developments in Melton in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The house at 32 O’Neills Road is of architectural interest. Although altered, it still demonstrates original design qualities of a Late Victorian style. These qualities include the hipped roof form, together with the hipped bullnosed verandah that projects towards the front. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the single storey height, brick chimney (but not the overpainting), narrow eaves, corrugated profile sheet metal roof cladding, central timber framed door opening and the turned timber verandah posts.

The house at 32 O’Neills Road is historically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC B2). It is now a rare example of a house of its period in Melton, and a unique representation of the

town's history. This is enhanced by its prominent location. It is also expressive of the farming history of the Shire.

Overall, the house at 32 O'Neills Road is of LOCAL significance.

Description:

The house at 32 O'Neills Road, Melton, has a modest front garden comprising an open grassed area and perimeter garden beds. There is a paved driveway at the side that leads to a rear garage. The front is bound by a timber picket fence, approximately 1300 mm high.

The single storey, metal weatherboard, Late Victorian styled house is characterised by a hipped roof form, together with a hipped bullnosed verandah that projects towards the front. These roof forms are clad in deep red corrugated Colorbond. An early brick chimney (now painted) with a corbelled top adorns the roofline. Narrow overhangs are features of the eaves. The square guttering has also been introduced.

The front verandah is supported by turned timber posts and a capped timber balustrade that appears to have been introduced. Also introduced are the large timber framed double hung tripartite windows that may have replaced earlier single timber framed double hung windows. The central front timber framed doorway is early. The bullnose verandah has been renovated.

History:

The house at 32 O'Neill's Road is known to Melton's senior citizens as having been located on what was known as 'O'Neill's dairy farm'. Thomas O'Neill was born at Waterford, Ireland and arrived in the district about 1860, settling first at Keilor and later in the Melton area. 'By industry and hard work he made a comfortable home', renting land at Toolern Vale and purchasing property in the Rockbank area before buying land in Melton. His obituary notes that in 'pre railway days he conveyed his produce to Melbourne by road and saw the district emerge from its primeval state to a habitable district.'¹

Thomas O'Neill purchased Allotment 74, Township of Melton, in 1905 from Annie Therese Morris/Norris of St Kilda.² His son John Christopher O'Neill purchased further land until eventually the family owned the block bounded by Church Street, Palmerston Street, Centenary Avenue and O'Neill's Road, and leased the 2-acre closed road around the cemetery.

Thomas O'Neill died in May 1921 at the age of 84 years. He was interred in the Melton cemetery beside his wife who died 13 years before him. His family included Miss Bridget O'Neill, Mrs Condon of Coimadai, Mrs Pattison, Mrs Devenny of Myrniong and Mrs George Coburn of Melton, John C. O'Neill of Melton and Thomas O'Neill of Rockbank.³

¹ *The Melton Express*, 4/6/1921

² Bernard Coburn (nephew), personal conversation with Judith Bilszta; Ryan/McGraine estate finalization.

³ *Melton Express* 4 June 1921

John inherited his father's land. The Express carries his obituary in May 1946:

‘Mr John O’Neill of Melton died at a private hospital in Bacchus Marsh after a three week illness. Mr O’Neill, a bachelor, was 75 years of age and a local successful farmer residing with his sister on the outskirts of Melton township. He leaves two sisters, Mrs H Pattison and Mrs M Devenny of Myrning. Brother of Thomas [dec.], Mary, Mrs Condon [dec.], Alice Mrs Coburn [dec] He was buried in the Melton cemetery.’⁴

The property, and house, has changed hands numerous times. The property was purchased by the Jongebloed family and later subdivided. Later Jim Shea and his wife Mavis renovated the house. In about the early 1970s years ago it was bought by Bernie Jongebloed who undertook further renovations. The owner advises that also during the early 1970's the property was purchased by Mr and Mrs Potter, the current owners, who carried out work on the rear of the property. The present occupant, Mrs Annie Mawson Potter's son, have undertaken further work.

The exact date of the construction of the building can not be known from ratebooks, due largely to insufficient recording prior to a new rate clerk taking over in 1915. From the time that O’Neill took over the property in 1905 until 1910 the Net Annual Value for the property was unchanged at £38. By 1915, when buildings begin to be recorded in the ratebooks, the site is marked as including ‘premises’. However the JC O’Neill name appears in Melton *Express* articles from 1905 so it is likely the building originates from that year.⁵

Thematic Context / Comparative Analysis:

Shire of Melton Historical Themes: ‘Farming’; ‘Community’.

Comparable Places in Shire of Melton:

Historical Comparison

Historically, the place is very rare early house in Melton town. It is one of only seven pre-World War One houses of heritage significance to survive in the town of Melton. These are:

- Place No.226, The Willows (c.mid 1850s)
- Place No.221, ‘Honey Shack’ (c.late 1850s), significantly altered
- Place No.228, Dunvegan, (c.early 1870s), relocated
- Place No.230, 32 O’Neills Road (c.1905)
- Place No.195, 56 Exford Road (c.1910)
- Place No.229, Macs Cottage (1913-14) relocated
- Place No.193, 2 Exford Road (1929-30) relocated.

⁴ *Melton Express*, 25/5/1946

⁵ Shire of Melton, *Ratebooks*, 1905-1915

It is the fourth oldest house remaining in the town.

It is the third oldest house in the town remaining in its original location.

It is one of only four pre World War One houses that survives in its original location.

Architectural Comparison

Architecturally, the house is a typical but altered example of a Late Victorian style, the design quality of the dwelling is unassuming. This appears to represent the socio-economic status of the original owners and this aspect of the design is also common throughout the Shire. Other comparable dwellings include:

- House, Leakes Road, Rockbank (Place No.403). Although altered with an introduced verandah and a carport at the side, this house shares a similar hipped roof form, scale and construction.
- Hickey, 30 Hickey Road, Melton (Place No.288). A more intact example, this house features a hipped roof form and a projecting front verandah with early timber fretwork valance (some components of the valance are missing however) and early timber posts.
- House, 1180 Exford Road, Exford (Place No.274). Another timber example of the type with a hipped bullnosed front verandah that has been altered. Only one of the early turned timber posts survive.
- House, 161 Bulmans Road, Melton South (Place No.174). A similarly constructed and designed dwelling, the front verandah has also been altered, with introduced timber posts and aluminium valances and brackets.
- House, 1374 Gisborne-Melton Road (Place No.030). A similarly unassuming Late Victorian example, the verandah has also been altered.
- House, 911 Melton Highway, Sydenham (Place No.127). A more intact example of the Late Victorian type, although of unassuming design quality.

Condition:

Good

Integrity:

Low

Recommendations:

Recommended for inclusion in the Melton Planning Scheme Heritage Overlay.

Recommended Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls:

External Paint Controls:	<i>No</i>
Internal Alteration Controls:	<i>No</i>
Tree Controls:	<i>No</i>
Outbuildings and/or Fences:	<i>No</i>