

National Bank of Australasia, former 66 Napier Street

History

Architects, Terry & Oakden, called tenders for a Footscray branch of the National Bank in 1875 and another for Yarraville, ten years later.¹ This firm designed all new Victorian National Bank branches in 1881, as well as those for the Oriental, London Chartered Bank of NSW and E.S. & A. at different periods in the 19th Century.² John Colhoun was an early and long-lived manager (c1880-90s), as was F.G. Armstrong (c1910), Edward Smith (c1915-20) and W.H. Stevenson (c1935-40).³ A Mr. Learmouth was the first manager to occupy the building, albeit soon to be replaced by Colhoun.⁴

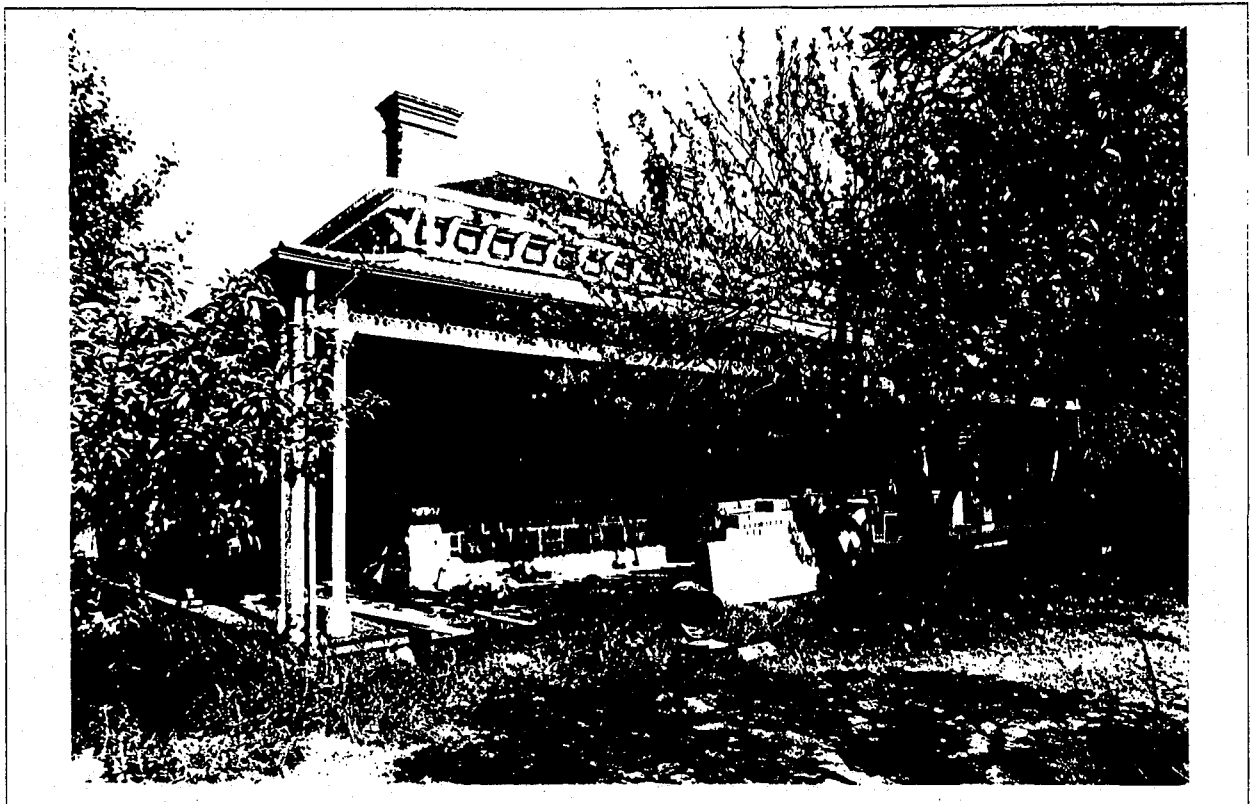
When Maie and Dermot Casey, Joan Lindsay, Allan Henderson and the Freeman Brothers published their influential *Early Melbourne Architecture* in 1953, this building was included among their carefully chosen examples for its '...well spaced openings in plain wall faces... crowned with a charming cornice.'⁵

Description

Positioned, as it was, in the old civic centre of Footscray, its contemporary competitor banks had a distinct advantage from their Nicholson and Barkly Streets locations. Not surprisingly then, the bank was gone by the 1940s, a Miss Phyllis Beers having taken residence.⁶ The Footscray Historical Society is now the owner and part occupier of the former bank.

Description

Following Terry's established Italian Renaissance Palazzo revival manner, the bank presents a conserva-



4-83 15 Newell Street

- 1 MUA
- 2 Trethowan, Banks of Victoria, 1976
- 3 D1880-1939; FFFY p110
- 4 FFFY p110
- 5 Casey, et al *Early Melbourne Architecture*, (Melbourne, reprint 1963) p98
- 6 D1945

tive juxta-positioning of openings set within blandly treated walls, all subtly enhanced with revivalist details in the manner so dear to the Caseys. Its fading wall colours and old signs (since removed) present a convincing testimony to its age although recent repainting has also recalled this period. Inside most of the fittings associated with banking remain as a further expression of the past. A photograph of c1909 shows the bank and its staff aligned on the kerb, the only differences to today being the absent capped corrugated iron fence and gas street lamp, to the west of the building.¹

External Integrity

Generally original except for removal of the fence.

Streetscape

On a traditional corner site and hence relates to other similar Napier Street structures such as the Exchange Hotel (q.v.) which today mark the old civic/commercial centre of the city.

Significance

Architecturally, an elegant and well-preserved (if typical) essay in the Italian Palazzo manner by its master practitioners. Historically, for a long period one of the city's foremost public buildings and may be viewed today as a precedent to the Nicholson Barkly Streets commercial precinct.

House, 15 Newell Street

History

Granted as a 42 acre Crown portion to William Donald, in 1849, this land and an adjoining portion to the south were subdivided by the 1870s, yielding main streets such as Newell, Donald, Moore, Ryan and Bowen.²

When David Newell was mayor, in 1877, the Borough and its buildings were surveyed by Gustav Tulk. Newell Street is shown dotted, east of Cowper Street and, north of Donald Street, only two structures are shown in the area of this house. Of these, one approximates 15 Newell Street's general position but is shown on the Donald Street alignment. The other approximates the site of 1 Newell Street.³ A further plan showing the original 1874 subdivision for William Donald Esquire (CA 8/15) has Newell Street as Frances Street and this house's site as a vacant lot⁴. A view of this subdivision is portrayed in a handbill of 1885 which shows this house, complete with striped verandah, on the edge of what was termed 'Newell's Paddock'⁵. A map of 1895 shows only 15 Newell Street in the Newell, Donald, Railway Place block with timber stabling on the Donald Street alignment. The house itself faced north, was verandahed on three sides and possessed the typical rear courtyard plan, linking with the stable yard to the south.⁶

Ratebooks of 1876 describe a stone house owned by Newell (contractor) in Cowper Street, valued at £54 (annual nett). Two years later a similar description appears but with stables and an annual value of £63.⁷ The address changes to Donald Street (north side, as in 1877 plan) in 1882-3 and the value £100, but the description lapses in 1883-4 and the value falls to 70 pounds; Newell's name is crossed out and his wife's name (Margaret) substituted.⁸ The *Melbourne Directory* of 1880-1881 lists Newell in Donald Street but at the Nicholson Street end. By 1882 he is east of Cowper Street on the north side while, in the same year, Newell Street listings are west of Cowper Street.⁹

A 59% valuation rise occurred in 1882 but for an address in Donald Street (Newell Street east of Cowper being unmade?). The first listing of the property as in Newell Street, was in 1883 and at a 30% lesser value. The Angus Maclean column patent of 1873 sets a lower limit to date speculation but it appears likely that either 1875-6 or 1882-3 was the construction date.

- 1 FFFY
- 2 Dunstan & Austin. Newell Street Urban Conservation Area, NTA (1984), p.4
- 3 M1877
- 4 RGO plan in draw for GS 6936
- 5 FHS
- 6 MMBW RPA, 1895
- 7 RB1876-7, 1279; RB1879-80, 734 from Kellaway, 15 Newell Street research notes, (NTA, 1984)
- 8 RB1882-3, 1139; RB1883-4, 967
- 9 D1880-2

Newell had come to Victoria in 1858 and moved to Footscray three years later. Apart from carting and road contracting, he invested in Footscray industry and land, leasing the Newmarket saleyards 'on several occasions.'¹ He was an Irishman and a road contractor, being listed in directories as resident at Francis Street (Yarraville) in the year he became a Footscray Councillor (1870). In that period he operated the Stony Creek Hotel (c1872) which was later run by a P.J. Newell².

He remained a councillor until 1888, being mayor in the periods 1875-77, 1886-7, and was among the first three councillors elected into North Ward, after wards were introduced in 1878. Newell stood for the Legislative Assembly in 1879 but lost to J.M. Clark. However he retained the privilege of being Mayor when Footscray was proclaimed a town in 1887.³ Newell died in 1906.

Other occupiers include William Johnson (c1915-25), Walter Derbyshire (c1930s), Horace Calvert (c1940s), T. Shields (c1950) and W.H. Clement (c1955-60s).⁴

Description

In appearance the house is similar to the residential section of Samuel Henderson's bacon curing establishment (q.v.) with its stone and cream brick construction, symmetrical Italianate villa form and attached cast-iron return verandah. It also resembles many other suburban and rural villas of the period.

It has a hipped and slated main roof with eaves brackets, interspersed with nail-head blocks, symmetrically placed chimneys and a return cast-iron and timber-framed verandah. The columns used are Maclean's patent iron circular section concrete-filled columns, complemented by a paneled cast-iron frieze.



4-84 45 Nicholson Street

- 1 Dunstan, Austin, op. cit., p.4f
- 2 D'Altera, Pooley 'Hotels of Yarraville', 1984, Footscray
- 3 FFOY pp.24.25; Lack
- 4 D1915-65

External Integrity

A new picket fence sympathetic to the construction period has been added at the frontage, the rear wings (part) and stables demolished and sympathetic additions made at the side and rear.

Streetscape

Identifiable as the oldest surviving house in the area by its period and size but complementary to the generally Edwardian houses around it.

Significance

Architecturally, a typical but near complete Italianate villa which achieves distinction from the wall material (basalt), as a minority 19th century urban construction-type and indicative of the Footscray area's contribution to the building materials of the metropolis, and the Maclean's patent concrete-filled iron column. Historically, obvious as the oldest house in the precinct and

thus the precursor of the surrounding resubdivision also long identified with the locally prominent contractor and councillor, David Newell.

House

45 Nicholson Street

History

Bertram Davis, a publican, was the first owner of this house in 1927, although he did not reside there. William Jones (c1927-1940s) a solicitor and local North Ward councillor¹ and, later H. Raynor (1960s), owned and occupied the house.²

Description

A Californian Bungalow in the manner of 57A Droop Street, it may share that house's architects (Schreiber & Jorgenson), given the distinctive detailing



4-85 49 Nicholson Street

1 ER1931; Lack, Footscray Councillors
2 MMBW CF 142437; D1935-65