

Darnlee, 33 Lansell Road, Toorak



History and Description

This large Toorak house was built c1899 as a private residence for Charles McIntyre, manufacturer.¹⁹⁸ The designing architect was Leonard John Flannagan.¹⁹⁹ Rated in 1901 as owned by Charles McIntyre²⁰⁰ it retains many of its original features.

After 1913, when the property was owned by John Winter-Irving, there were alterations and additions to the rear of the building and the construction of a garage and chauffeur's quarters to house the family's two cars and the man who cared for them.²⁰¹ Drawings dated Nov. 1917 show additions to Darnlee, Lansell Road, for John Winter-Irving.²⁰²

From the 1920s, there were a number of changes in the ownership and name of the property. From 1924-27, it was owned by Harold Riggall of the firm of solicitors, Blake and Riggall, and briefly renamed Somercotes.²⁰³ Then from 1927-38, it was owned by Sarah McKay, widow of H. V. McKay of Sunshine Harvester fame. She lived there until her death, renaming the house, Rayo de Sol. This name referred to the 'McKays of Sunshine'.²⁰⁴ Finally, in 1949, the property was sold to the Public Works Department and called Sewell House. It was occupied by the Red Cross, the

198. *BEMJ*, 12 Aug. 1899. Described as 'recently completed'.

199. J. D. Taylor, 'L. J. Flannagan 1864-1946', Research Report, Department of Architecture and Building, University of Melbourne.

200. Prahran Rate Book 1900-1901 Toorak Ward No. 791.

201. Ann Reid, 'Darnlee Historical Notes and Anecdotes', n.d.

202. L. J. Flannagan, Contract drawings, WD HOU 203 Picture Collection, SLV.

203. Ann Reid.

204. Ann Reid.

Health Department and, in 1966, by the Education Department. From 1976 its name was changed back to Darnlee. From 1985 it has been the Toorak Professional Development Centre.²⁰⁵

A single storey red brick building, this 1890s residence shows the influence during that era of a revival of interest in Queen Anne architecture. It incorporates picturesque timber work in the bargeboards and brackets, plaster frieze in the round tower and tapestry brick inlay in the hipped gable end. The terracotta elements adorning the steeply pitched roof are flamboyant and include patterned tiles on the turret, finials, ridge tiles and gargoyles with pots on the corbelled chimneys, a circular corner tower and steeply roofed gable entrance. The heavy turned timber columns support the simple timber framing of the entrance porch. The polychrome tiled floor to the entrance is all intact. The front garden has been converted to a carpark for the present occupants, and the front fence appears to be original.



Significance

This substantially intact late 1890s residence with c1917 additions at the rear has state architectural significance as an excellent example of the revival of interest in Queen Anne Style applied to domestic architecture in Victoria at the turn of the century which was most marked in residences in affluent suburbs like Toorak. Details of architectural importance are the tower, the entrance porch, the high degree of ornamentation, and complementary front fence.

205. Ann Reid.

Sources

Building, Engineering and Mining Journal (BEMJ) 12 Aug. 1899.

City of Prahran Rate Books, Toorak Ward.

Contract Drawings L. J. Flannagan, Picture Collection, SLV.

Reid, Ann, 'Darnlee Historical Notes and Anecodes'. n.d.

National Trust File No. 6126.

Analysis & Recommendations

It is recommended that this property be retained at A1 level.