

30 Macfarlan Street, South Yarra



History and Description

Local gardeners, Thomas and Robert Morrison, were associated last century with the pair of double-fronted timber houses at 30 and 34 Macfarlan Street, South Yarra. Nearby, north of Toorak Road and close to Punt Road, the Ralston Nursery operated in the 1850s and 1860s.²²⁴

Crown Grantee in 1850 of Portion 38 (the site of 30 Macfarlan Street) was Peter Davis. He subdivided his 53 acres in 1854. Thomas Morrison, gardener, purchased Lot 19 in June 1858. This block faced Davis Street, the earlier name for Macfarlan Street.²²⁵ The following year, a five-roomed wooden and slate house was recorded on the site. It was owned by Thomas Morrison and occupied by Edward Ashford.²²⁶ In the 1860s a similar wooden building was erected next door for Robert Gavin (or Givan), labourer. In 1862, Gavin's house was described as 'building in course of erection'.²²⁷ By 1869 both houses were described as six-roomed wooden houses with similar valuations.²²⁸ Thomas Morrison owned both by the early 1870s.²²⁹

By 1881, Nos. 10 and 12 Davis Street, were owned and occupied by Thomas and Robert Morrison.²³⁰ By 1888, Robert was living still at No. 12.²³¹ By 1896 both

224. Betty Malone, *The North-West Corner*. See map.

225. RGO Search 38635.

226. Prahran Rate Book 1859 No. 839.

227. Prahran Rate Book 1862 No. 879.

228. Prahran Rate Book 1869 Vol. 1 Nos. 960-961.

229. Prahran Rate Book 1873 Vol. 1 Nos. 1222, 12223.

230. Prahran Rate Book 1881 Vol. 1 Nos. 1599, 1600.

231. Prahran RB 1888-89 South Yarra Ward No. 1913.

houses, still owned by Thomas and Robert Morrison, were let to carriers.²³² An MMBW drainage plan of that date shows the two houses with front and back verandahs. There are large stables at the rear opening onto a right-of-way.²³³

In 1910, Robert sold the site of No. 34.²³⁴ However, he owned No. 30 still, letting it in 1911 to William Dunn, carter.²³⁵ By the 1920s, No. 30 was still owned by the Morrison Estate.²³⁶

More recently, in February 1992, Nos. 30, 34 and 36 Macfarlan Street, which comprised two double-fronted wooden houses and a factory building, was auctioned and purchased by the City of Prahran. The factory had been associated with the Caslakes, major wrought-iron manufacturers. Nos. 30 and 34 were described in City of Prahran Valuers records at this time as five and six-roomed wooden houses, No. 30 still with its slate roof.²³⁷ A recent MMBW drainage plan shows the pair without their earlier verandahs.²³⁸

The house is a simple symmetrical cottage with hipped slate roof and hipped convex verandah still intact. The simple form of the house has not been altered and beaded weatherboards are in good condition. Further research of 34 Macfarlan Street is required in order to establish the level of intactness of that building which is of equal historical importance as 30 Macfarlan Street.



232. Prahran Rate Book 1896-97 South Yarra Ward Nos. 3145, 3146.

233. MMBW Detail Plan No. 949.

234. RGO Search No. 38635.

235. Prahran Rate Book 1911-12 South Yarra Ward No. 3955.

236. Prahran Rate Book 1925-26 South Yarra Ward No. 1884.

237. City of Prahran Valuers records Book No. 18SY.

238. MMBW House Cover No. 9506.

Significance

This timber house (one of a pair with No. 34) dating from the 1850s, has state historical significance for its early date of construction and association over a long period with Thomas and Robert Morrison, local Prahran gardeners. The house has associations with two important early industries - horticulture, which flourished in the South Yarra area in the 1850s and 1860s, and with the carrying trade, an important service industry. The house at 34 Macfarlan Street is of equal historical significance and further field research is required to establish whether it is in a comparable state of physical intactness and therefore design significance.

Sources

City of Prahran Rate Books, South Yarra Ward.

City of Prahran Valuers records, South Yarra Ward.

Malone, Betty, *The North-West Corner*, 1987.

MMBW House Cover No. 9506, Detail Plan No. 949.

Registrar-General's Office Search 38635.

Analysis & Recommendations

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