

## Larnook, 519 Orrong Road, Armadale



### History and Description

The mansion Larnook was built in 1881 for William H. Miller, son of Henry 'Money' Miller. It was rated in that year as a brick house of 20 rooms 'in progress', standing on three acres of land.<sup>267</sup> It was one of five substantial mansions constructed between 1880 and 1888 for a group of prosperous Melbourne professional and businessmen in the block in Orrong Road between Dandenong Road and High Street. MMBW plans dated 1895 show these buildings in their prime located in splendid Victorian garden settings on large allotments.<sup>268</sup> Only four of these mansions remain: Larnook; the former Lalbert (1880) built for Cornelius Job Ham, auctioneer and Melbourne City Councillor; Sebrof(c.1889) at 514 Orrong Road, the home of William Williams, merchant; and Redcourt(1888) at 506 Orrong Road built for Edward Yencken, merchant. The fifth mansion, Karbarook (now demolished) was the home from 1881 of the distinguished barrister and politician, Thomas a'Beckett, MLC.<sup>269</sup>

The four remaining mansions no longer stand in their Victorian gardens and their grounds have been drastically reduced by the subdivisions that created Karbarook, Larnook and Lalbert Crescents on the west side and Redcourt Avenue on the east side.<sup>270</sup>

267. City of Prahran Rate Book 1881 No.4228 NAV 300 pounds.

268. MMBW drainage plan, Prahran, No.46, 1895.

269. National Trust of Australia (Vic.), Research File No. 1561; No.1562.

270. Compare 1895 and 1933 MMBW drainage plans.

The elegant Italianate mansion Larnook has a protruding polygonal bay and cast iron verandah, both of two storeys. Its verandah columns are paired and, together with fine lacework in the balustrade, valence and brackets, embellish the facade. Eaves are supported on closely spaced decorative consoles around the residence and the corners of the building are quoined. Windows at the upper level feature arched heads, those below exhibit a slight curve only. The northern end of the verandah has been infilled on both levels. The designer and architect are unknown.

Following an auction of the Larnook Estate in April 1984 the old mansion and adjacent red brick buildings at 517-519 Orrong Road and three brick buildings at 1,3,5 Karbarook Avenue standing on over an acre of land became the property of the King David School Ltd. of 117 Kooyong Road.<sup>271</sup>

An inspection made at this time suggested that Larnook was intact externally but that the interior had been significantly altered.<sup>272</sup> A good view of Larnook is visible from Karbarook Avenue and the original gateway is intact in nearby Stawell Street.



### Significance

Larnook has State significance for architectural reasons, as a good example of an 1880s mansion house of the pre-boom period in Melbourne. It is typical of early mansion houses on large allotments on elevated sites built for affluent business and professional men and their families, which gave a distinctive character to residential areas in Toorak, parts of South Yarra and Armadale.

271. 1984 Auction Plan, Copy held by National Trust.

272. David Bick, 'Significance of Larnook, 519 Orrong Road, Armadale,' 8 August 1984.

## Sources

Bick, David, 'Significance of Larnook, 519 Orrong Road, Armadale,' 8 August 1984.

City of Prahran Rate Books. Windsor Ward.

Lewis, Miles, *Architectural Index Of Australia*, Univ. of Melbourne, 1990.

MMBW Drainage Plan. No.46 (1895).

National Trust of Australia (Vic.), File Nos. 1561, 1562.

## Analysis & Recommendations

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