

DULVERTON  
379 TOORAK ROAD  
SOUTH YARRA

## INTRODUCTION

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This report has been prepared by Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd and historian Di Foster. It investigates the significance of the property at 379 Toorak Road, South Yarra, in order to determine the appropriateness of its inclusion within the schedule to the Heritage Overlay within the planning scheme. The report builds on work carried out by Context Pty Ltd in the *City of Prahran Conservation Review*, 1993.

The *City of Prahran Conservation Review* graded the building as A2+ (almost certainly of regional significance). It is not presently listed on the Victorian Heritage Register or the Register of the National Estate, nor is it classified by the National Trust.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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This report finds that 379 Toorak Road is of high local significance and should be added to the schedule to the Heritage Overlay in the local section of the Stonnington Planning Scheme and nominated to the Australian Heritage Commission for inclusion in the register of the National Estate.

## HISTORY

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At the first Crown land sales in June 1840, six blocks north of the line of Toorak Road between Chapel Street and Williams Road, were sold to speculators. Between 1841 and 1852, the allotments were re-sold and houses were built on the high ground overlooking the river. Around 1846, lot 10, consisting of 21 acres, was sold to pioneer physician and naturalist, Dr Edmund C. Hobson who built the villa Bona Vista, standing on high ground overlooking the river. By 1856, six houses, all with sizeable estates were built on the high ridge. George Augustus Robinson built Blairgowrie and Rosemount on Lot 7 and Tivoli on Lot 8. Little Rockley stood on lot 9 and Como was built for Edward Eyre Williams who gave his name to Williams Road.<sup>1</sup>

From 1910 until 1917, Bona Vista was the home of artist, Frederick McCubbin. The house stands today as Grantham, 67 Kensington Road.<sup>2</sup>

In 1885 Bona Vista was subdivided<sup>3</sup> and the driveway became Kensington Road. Fifteen acres were offered for sale in thirty allotments, four having a frontage to Toorak Road. By 1895, most of the allotments in Kensington Road and Toorak Road were developed,<sup>4</sup> with many houses constructed in the boom years. On lot 3, a large residence, 'Kenwyn', was built in Toorak Road on the east corner of Kensington Road. Thirty years later, the house was demolished and 'Dulverton', a two-storey block of apartments, was built for the owner E. E. Wagstaff, to the design of architects F L & K Klingender.<sup>5</sup>

## DESCRIPTION

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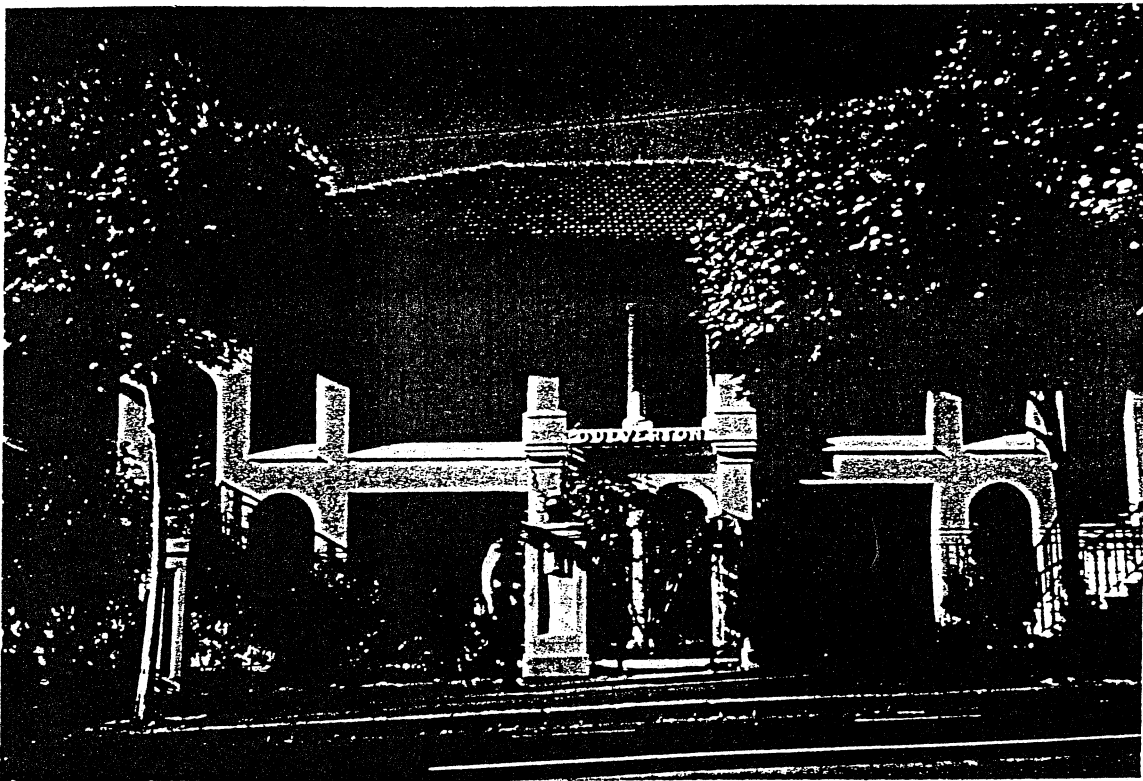
*Dulverton* is located at the intersection of Toorak and Kensington Roads in South Yarra. The area is predominantly occupied by flats varying in scale from small turn of the century developments to large multi storey blocks such as those on nearby Orrong Road. This section of Toorak Road is dense with trams and heavy traffic but calms quickly along Kensington Road to provide two distinct settings for the two principal facades of the block.

The boundary of the property is marked by an elaborate and recently upgraded decorative fence with fine steel railing between rendered piers that anticipate the decorative ironwork within. The two storey building draws from a range of stylistic sources. The simple arrangement of hipped roofs in Marseilles

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- 1 Betty Malone, Section 5, 'Como house to Como City - a study in diversity,' unpublished manuscript, Prahran Archives.
  - 2 See Context Pty. Ltd. Conservation Review, City of Prahran 1993, vol. 2, p. 61.
  - 3 Subdivision plan, Bona Vista Estate, Prahran Archives.
  - 4 MMBW plan 1895
  - 5 MMBW Cover. Drainage plan 16744.

tiles over prismatic building masses recalls Georgian Revival antecedents while the detail juxtaposes elements from the Regency and new fashionable Mediterranean vocabularies. The broadly symmetrical Toorak Road facade is notable for the bold penetrations in its smoothly rendered exterior that create its balconies and entries. Balconies are flanked by giant order pilasters and decorative Tuscan columns and are overlain with fine steel railings that draw inspiration from Spanish antecedents. Entries are distinguished by round headed arches with fine detached scrolls superimposed. Curving stairs with more steel railing ascend to the first floor entries. The longer, Kensington Road facade reiterates precisely the same elements.

While the place has recently undergone extensive refurbishment, it retains its external appearance and character.



*Illustration 1*      *379 Toorak Road, 1998.*

## ARCHITECT

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The architect of 379 Toorak Road was Frederick L. Klingender.

Frederick Louis Klingender was born in 1866, the son of Edward Klingender.<sup>6</sup> He attended Melbourne Church of England Grammar School and began to practise architecture in 1889.<sup>7</sup>

Klingender appears to have formed a partnership with E Leslie H Newbigin in 1905,<sup>8</sup> but it was his partnership with Rodney Alsop from 1906 which brought about his early success. The practice, with Alsop as designing partner, drew heavily upon the English vernacular revival and its medieval sources but evolved to combine English and American idioms in a distinctive Arts and Crafts oriented mode.<sup>9</sup> The partnership was dissolved in 1920 as a consequence of Rodney Alsop's continued ill health .

Two years later, Klingender formed a new partnership with Robert Bell Hamilton, recently returned from working and studying overseas, as the designing partner. Hamilton initially positioned himself within the same vernacular revival mode that Alsop had perfected over the previous decade but gradually eradicated any American influence to become the foremost designer in the Tudor Revival style in Melbourne. The partnership lasted until 1925 when Hamilton formed his own practice.<sup>10</sup>

From 1925 Klingender practiced with his son, Keith A'Beckett Klingender. FL & K Klingender were responsible for a number of houses in the inner eastern suburbs of Melbourne including 19 Evans Court, Toorak (1929), 30 Linlithgow Road, Toorak (1930), 16 Somers Avenue, Malvern (1935) and 9 Yar Orrong Road, Toorak (1929). The partnership continued until 1936. Klingender retired from professional life at the outbreak of WWII.

FL Klingender was a life fellow of the of the RIVA and served as its president from 1935-1937.<sup>11</sup> He was also a fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects. He died in 1960.

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6 Melbourne Church of England Grammar School, Liber Melburniensis, p. 39.  
7 Miles Lewis, University of Melbourne Architectural Index,  
8 Wilson & Sands, Building a City, p. 189.  
9 Bryce Raworth, A Question of Style, p.97.  
10 Peter Cuffley, Australian Houses of the 20s and 30s, p. 114.  
11 Wilson & Sands, loc cit.

## ANALYSIS

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Dulverton Flats are prominently sited on Toorak Road and in recent years have commonly been thought to be the work of Harold Desbrowe Annear or a follower of Annear. It is of some interest to discover that they stem from the office of an architect not generally regarded as a design architect, but well known for the very successful practices and partnerships within which he worked.

Built in 1928, Dulverton flats evidence an emphasis upon simple geometric forms which was becoming more common in the late 1920s, under the influence of the ever more popular Mediterranean idioms. The basic form has been overlaid with a rather simple, even crude Classical ornament, the quirkiness of which may have contributed to the suggestion it was a work of Annear's.

Dulverton flats derive the majority of their significance from their size and prominence. They are not an exceptional example of design from the period, nor are they associated with an architect of great individual note. Nonetheless, their external integrity and interest contribute to their valued role in the Toorak Road and Kensington Road streetscapes.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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Dulverton Flats were built in 1928 to designs prepared by F L & K Klingender, Frederick Klingender being an architect best known for earlier work completed during his partnerships with Rodney Alsop and Robert Hamilton. The flats are of high local significance as a prominent and substantial example of interwar flat design.

## REFERENCES

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Context Pty Ltd, City of Prahran Conservation Review, 1993

Peter Cuffley, *Australian Houses of the 20s and 30s*, Balwyn, 1989.

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MMBW plan 1895.

Melbourne Church of England Grammar School, *Liber Melburniensis*, Melbourne, 1965.

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Wilson & Sands, *Building a City*, Melbourne, 1981.