

## 13 MERCER ROAD, Moorak, ARMADALE

Ho 214

**History**

1854-80

Crown Portion 23, consisting of 11 acres 3 roods 35 perches, with a frontage to present day High Street, was sold to Alfred Sikes for £490.14.5 on 25 April 1854.<sup>1</sup> Sikes sold the allotment the following year to Jacob Quiney for £957.10.0. Quiney then sold the land to Thomas Alston who brought it under the Transfer of Land Act in 1880.<sup>2</sup>

1881

In 1881, Mercer Road was created with the subdivision of the Mercer Estate.<sup>3</sup> Surveyor Thomas Muntz subdivided Crown Portions 23 and 4 into forty-eight building allotments with frontages to Mercer Road, Malvern Road and High Street.<sup>4</sup> The sale by Fraser & Co. invited 'speculators, investors, merchants, builders and others' to purchase half-acre allotments in the Mercer Estate.

*The situation is without doubt the grandest in or around Toorak and Malvern, being the highest position in the neighbourhood, and enjoying views not only of Melbourne and the Bay, but also of the Dandenong Ranges, the You Yangs, Heidelberg Valley etc.*

1888

In 1888-9 warehouseman and manager William George Walker purchased land on the west side of Mercer Road and immediately built a brick house of 9 rooms.<sup>5</sup> The house was later numbered 13 Mercer Road. In 1892 John H. Kitchen occupied Walker's house.<sup>6</sup> John Hambleton Kitchen, the son of Ambrose Kitchen, was the Managing Director of the Sydney Soap Co., later Kitchen & Sons, the forerunner of Lever and Kitchen Pty. Ltd. It was in 1892, the year Kitchen occupied Walker's house, that his father Ambrose Kitchen relinquished his large house in Kew and the family members resigned temporarily from the Company's board due to financial problems.<sup>7</sup>

From 1893 Sharebroker George Woodford(e) occupied Walker's house before purchasing the property.<sup>8</sup> By 1898 manufacturer, Julius Amschell owned 13 Mercer Road.<sup>9</sup> Amschell and engineer Walter Schmidt, then Schmidt, occupied the property until it was purchased by solicitor Lawrence Cadby in 1930.<sup>10</sup> During this time, the house was named 'Moorak'.<sup>11</sup> 13 Mercer Road was sold to Rocke a solicitor, in 1934 and in 1951 the property was purchased by Mrs Trenchard.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ian McLaren, *Malvern Crown Land Sales, 1840-1879*, (Melbourne, 1987), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Rob Bower, 'Malvern: A History of the Subdivision, 1840-1989, plan 3, (unpublished manuscript), Malvern Archives

<sup>3</sup> Lodged Plan 366, 1881, Bower, plan 3; Plan of subdivision, Mercer Estate, c.1881. SLV Collection.

<sup>4</sup> Plan of subdivision, Mercer Estate, c.1881. SLV Collection.

<sup>5</sup> 'House in progress', Shire of Malvern rate book, Western Riding, 1888 no. 275 & 1889 no. 464.

<sup>6</sup> Shire of Malvern rate book, Western Riding, 1892, no. 790.

<sup>7</sup> Colin Kitchen, 'John Kitchen, Chemical Industry Pioneer, a Soap Story', in *Victorian Historical Journal*, vol. 64, no. 1 April, 1993, p. 46.

<sup>8</sup> Shire of Malvern rate book, Western Riding, 1893, no. 676; Shire of Malvern rate book, Western Riding, 1896, no. 619.

<sup>9</sup> Shire of Malvern rate book, Western Riding, 1898, no. 631.

<sup>10</sup> City of Malvern rate book, North ward, 1930-1, no. 1420.

<sup>11</sup> City of Malvern rate book, North ward, 1928-9, no. 1370.

<sup>12</sup> *Sands & McDougall's Directory*; City of Malvern sales register.

13 Mercer Road, Armadale

## REFERENCES:

- Bower, Rob, 'Malvern: A History of the Subdivision, 1840-1989, plan 3, (unpublished manuscript), Malvern Archives  
 City of Malvern sales register.  
 McLaren, Ian, *Malvern Crown Land Sales, 1840-1879*, University of Melbourne, 1987.  
 Mercer Estate, Plan of subdivision, c.1881. SLV Collection.  
 Shire of Malvern rate books, Western Riding.  
*Sands & McDougall's Directory*.  
*Victorian Historical Journal*, vol. 64, no. 1 April, 1993.

## Description

A single storey Italianate villa, the building is distinguished by the side entry which consists of a low balustraded masonry tower with arched openings. This entry tower has an unpainted cement finish.

There is a return verandah facing the street, which extends around the projecting bay. The building has a slate hipped roof and a timber verandah with a tiled floor. There is a projecting bay window to the west of the entry tower with fenestration of an early date.

## Integrity

The main entry area, and roof structure remains intact. There have been extensive alterations to the fenestration of the projecting bay of the front elevation, with modern enlarged windows. In addition, the building lacks its verandah decoration.

## Analysis

The entrance tower is an unusual feature for such Italianate single storey villas, and has retained its original render finish. The building form with projecting bays provides a further aggrandisement of the basic Italianate villa required during the Boom in this area. The house represents the affluent and turbulent settlement of these boom era estates in this part of Armadale. The occupancy by John H. Kitchen of the famous soap company demonstrates this, as does his short occupancy due to financial pressures.

## Significance

13 Mercer Road is of regional significance as a distinctive Italianate villa with a small square entry tower of an unusual configuration and location. Significant attributes are:

- side entry masonry tower with arched openings with unpainted cement finish
- return verandah extending around projecting bay
- slate hipped roof
- timber verandah with a tiled floor.

## Criteria

The building meets the criteria for local significance as required by state government guidelines. This is defined by the *Local Government Heritage Guidelines*, Department of Planning and Housing, 1991, (p6)

*Places of local significance are of particular importance to a local community, or part of a community, which is usually defined by a local government area (this was pre amalgamation). The majority of places which are determined to be of cultural value will be of local significance. Relatively fewer places will be determined to be of state or national significance.*

*The normal means of management for places of local significance is inclusion ... in the local planning scheme.*

More recently, the Practice Notes to the Victorian Planning Provisions included *Applying the Heritage Overlay*, Department of Infrastructure, February 1999, confirm the 1991 criteria and also recommend the use of the AHC criteria.

*Under the Australian Heritage Commission's eight broad criteria, a place may possess significance or other special value for future generations as well as the present community.*

This property has been considered to meet the following AHC criteria:

**Criterion D:** *its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of:*

- i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or*
- ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments*

Demonstrates the elaborate Italianate villa of the Boom era

**Criterion E:**

*its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group*

The entrance tower and building and verandah forms have obvious aesthetic values

**ATTACHMENTS**  
**1 CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHS**



1 Entrance tower with projecting bay window beyond



2 View of main roof form and verandah

*13 Mercer Road, Armadale*



3 Detail of front verandah and altered windows

2 SUBDIVISION PLAN

PLAN

OF SUBDIVISION OF THE

MERCER ESTATE

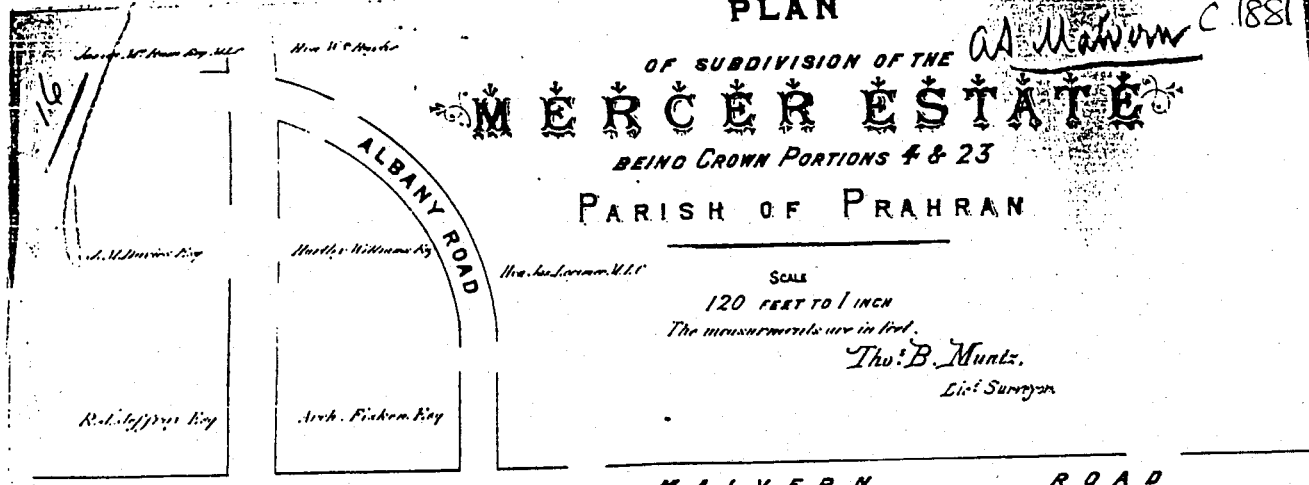
BEING CROWN PORTIONS 4 & 23

PARISH OF PRAHRAN

A. M. M. M. C 1881

SCALE 120 FEET TO 1 INCH The measurements are in feet.

Thos. B. Muntz, Lic'd Surveyor



BOUNDARY ROAD

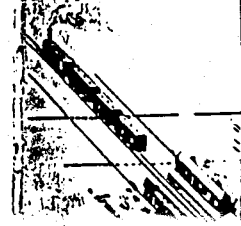
SATURDAY, JULY 9. At Three o'clock, on the Ground, IMPORTANT SUBDIVISION SALE OF THE MERCER ESTATE, Situated between Malvern Road and High Street, MALVERN, Having Frontages to Malvern and Mercer Road and High Street. To Speculators, Investors, Merchants, Builders, and others.

FRASER & CO. Have received instructions from the owner to sell by auction, on the ground, on Saturday, 9th July, at Three o'clock, The whole of Crown Allotments 4 and 23, parish of Prahran, subdivided into forty-eight half-acre allotments, having frontages to Malvern and Mercer roads and High-street, by depths of 254 ft. The situation is without doubt the grandest in or around Toorak or Malvern, being the highest point in the neighbourhood, and enjoying views not only of Malvern and the Bay, but also of the U. S. Army Camp, the Yee Yee, McCallery Valley, &c. The Armada railway station is within five minutes' walk of the estate, and omnibuses from the Prahran railway station constantly pass to and fro. For title, Terms, apply to Messrs. Darwin and Strongman, solicitors, Collins street west. Terms—One-fourth cash, balance 2, 4, 8, and 12 months, bearing 4 per cent. interest; or, One-fourth cash, balance 2, 4, and 8 years, bearing 7 per cent. interest; or, One-fourth cash, balance by monthly repayments extending up to 10 years, according to tables of the Australian Economic Bank, Limited.

City Library, Police Station, etc.

Table of 48 lots (numbered 1-48) with dimensions and bearings. Includes columns for lot numbers, bearings, and distances.

HIGH STREET



Small signature or stamp at the bottom right.