

11-13 CROMWELL ROAD  
SOUTH YARRA

INTRODUCTION

---

This report has been prepared by Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd. It investigates the significance of the properties at 11-13 Cromwell Road, South Yarra, in order to determine the appropriateness of their 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

---

This report finds that 11-13 Cromwell Road is of regional 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.



*Illustration 1*      *Detail of cast iron and stucco work, 13 Cromwell Road, 1998.*  
*Source: Author's Collection.*

## HISTORY

---

Cromwell Road, formerly Dunster Road,<sup>1</sup> was created as a long residential street. The subdivision of the southern section of Crown Allotment 34 extended from Malvern Road to the fence surrounding Vaucluse. The area had been part of Hobson's Vaucluse Estate until the railway cut a swathe through the allotment in 1878.

In 1890, land at 11 Cromwell Road was sold to Dr James Fulton,<sup>2</sup> a hydropathic doctor and registered physician and surgeon.<sup>3</sup> A brick and weatherboard house appears to have existed on the site prior to 1890 and Fulton, was the owner/occupier of the adjacent property, number 9 Cromwell Road. By 1891, two brick residences, each of 10 rooms with a net annual value of 100 pounds, had been erected on the site.<sup>4</sup> Fulton moved into the house at 13 Cromwell Road, and number 11 remained empty. By the following year, Fulton's executors are rated as the owners of numbers 9, 11 and 13 Cromwell Road.<sup>5</sup> In 1895 number 11 was occupied by John Warren and 13 by Donald MacDonald. In 1900 Mrs Harriett Riley occupied 11 and Mrs Isabella Hope number 13. Isabella Hope was the daughter of James Fulton. In 1862 Isabella had married Arthur Hope who built and lived in the two storey mansion 'Bonnington'<sup>6</sup> at the east corner of Cromwell Road and Toorak Road.

Occupiers of 11 Cromwell Road have included John Barry, Donald McLean, Morgan Abrahams and Hector MacLennan. Gregor Wood, Alfred Mendoza, Jacob Freadman and Henry Merrick are all former residents of 13 Cromwell Road. In 1940, 13 Cromwell Road was listed as Cromwell Flats.<sup>7</sup>

In recent years 11 Cromwell Road has been divided into two units with separate entries. 13 Cromwell Road is now occupied as a family home.

## DESCRIPTION

---

11 and 13 Cromwell Road are a pair of Victorian terrace houses located in the area between Malvern and Toorak Roads. They are set in a quiet tree lined residential area.

Each property is approached by way of a modest garden enclosed by a cast iron fence and gate, typical of many Victorian terrace houses. Overgrown plants partially obscure no. 11 from the street. Each house has a pair of entrance doors to its ground floor facade - one grand, one standard - in itself an unusual

- 
- 1 Dunster Estate, subdivision and sale notice, 1871, Prahran Local History Collection.
  - 2 City of Prahran Rate Book, 1890-1, Rate no. 1675.
  - 3 Betty Malone, South east section South Yarra, unpublished manuscript.
  - 4 City of Prahran Rate Book, 1891-2, Rate nos. 1703 & 1704.
  - 5 City of Prahran Rate Book, 1892-3, Rate nos. 1718-1720.
  - 6 Malone, South east section South Yarra, unpublished manuscript.
  - 7 Sands & McDougall Directories, 1905-1940, various years.

feature. 11 Cromwell Road has been divided into two flats. One flat uses the lesser entry as its front door, accessed via a central bitumen path. The other flat is accessed by the main front door on the south side. The two entrance doors to 13 Cromwell Road are still intact, as are the original tessellated paths to the verandahs of both terrace houses. On both verandahs, the paired columns and enclosed frieze cast iron work are significant features and embellish the facade, creating an exotic, filigree character.<sup>8</sup> The cast iron to the fences came from the Phoenix foundry, Elizabeth Street North, and it is likely the decorative iron to the verandahs and balconies also came from this source. The fenestration of the terrace houses are symmetrically distributed and the balcony has fine lacework in the balustrade. The parapets of both houses conceal the roofs from views in the street.

Externally, the terrace houses are substantially intact, however, both are in need of maintenance and the fence of 11 Cromwell Road is in need of repair. The Prahran Council Building Permits has no record of major alterations made to 11 Cromwell Road,<sup>9</sup> since records began after World War II. 13 Cromwell Road was altered in 1978<sup>10</sup> and this may have included the brick paving to the front garden to permit two off street car parks.

The architect of 11 and 13 Cromwell Road is not known. The richness of the ornament in these terrace houses has attracted suggestions that these terraces are the work of Norman Hitchcock,<sup>11</sup> but this is only speculative. Hitchcock lived and worked predominantly on the opposite side of the city and retired in 1895,<sup>12</sup> shortly after these terrace houses were built, factors which seem to weigh against such an attribution.

## ANALYSIS

---

Built in the early 1890s, these flats represent a very late example of high Victorian design and taste. In the general hiatus of building of the early 1890s, this style of development was to be supplanted by the new, Queen Anne Revival influenced domestic modes.

The extent to which the buildings are intact, the richness of their stucco ornament and the quality of their cast iron fences and decorative lacework, all contribute to place these amongst the finer examples of high Victorian domestic terrace design in Stonnington and, indeed, the metropolitan area. While 13 Cromwell Road appears to have been refurbished in a sympathetic manner in recent years, the facade and cast iron of 11 Cromwell Road could support a degree of repair, minor reconstruction and maintenance.

---

8 *Prahran City Council Data Sheet: 11 and 13 Cromwell Road.*

9 Prahran Council Building Permits.

10 Prahran Council Building Permits.

11 Context Pty Ltd, *City of Prahran Conservation Review*, Vol. 4, p 22.

12 Geoffrey Falk *Development of the architectural practice of Norman Hitchcock*, unpublished investigation programme held at Melbourne University 1972.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

---

The domestic terrace pair at 11-13 Cromwell Road is of regional significance as a distinguished and substantially intact example of high Victorian design. The quality and integrity of the cast iron and stucco work to these buildings, along with elements such as the tessellated tile paths and verandah floors, contribute to their distinctive appearance and overall significance.

## REFERENCES

---

City of Stonnington Council Building Permits.

City of Stonnington Data Sheets: *11 and 13 Cromwell Road*.

City of Stonnington Rate Books, 1890-1 and 1892-3, Prahran Local History Section.

Context Pty Ltd, *City of Prahran Conservation Review*, Vol 4.

Geoffrey Falk, *Development of the architectural practice of Norman Hitchcock*, unpublished investigation programme held at Melbourne University, 1972.

Betty Malone, *From Como house to Como city, a study in diversity*' Prahran Historical Society, 1989.

Betty Malone, *South east section South Yarra*, unpublished manuscript.

Sands & McDougall Directories.

Sally Wilde, *The history of Prahran*, Melbourne 1993.