

12 Mercer Road

1897: Part of allotment measuring 249ft valued at £145. Owner: Bowes Kelly (Malvern Rate Book 1897-98)

1899: 3 brick houses built Nos 12, 14 and 16. No 12 occupied by Frederick Skipper, estate agent. Value £100. Owner: Bowes Kelly (Malvern Rate Book 1898-99)

1900: Described as having 10 rooms. (Malvern Rate Book 1899-1900)

1902: 3 houses shown on MMBW plan

1903: Owner, Bowes Kelly, 70 Queen Street, Melbourne. Agent: H A Harrison, 13 Seymour Avenue, Malvern - Occupation of Harrison unknown (MMBW Drainage Plan 36709)

(This material was compiled by the National Trust)

One of three once identical houses constructed by famous mining magnate Bowes Kelly, an original director of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited and the principal developer of the Mt Lyall mine in Tasmania. Bowes Kelly lived nearby in Waiora in Glenferrie Road from 1888 before moving to Moorakyne, a mansion next to Stonnington. He also was involved in property development in Melbourne. It has not been established who the architect was for these three buildings. These houses are stylistically very similar to Nos 3, 5 and 7 Myamyn Street, also mediaeval influenced. Bowes Kelly was responsible for these and they are close to his residence Waiora.

These houses were designed in an eclectic manner with a mediaeval character to the gable facing the street which has a secondary projecting hip roof over a window bay. The mediaeval character was probably reinforced by the entry gablet on the verandah with wooden fretwork. They may have borrowed this detail from Sir George Verdon's hill station, Alton at Mt Macedon which was influenced by Verdon's association with leading English architects. The steep pitched roofs, tall chimneys and the lack of stucco ornamentation on these red face brickwork buildings represents a rejection of the Italianate and the more flamboyant Queen Anne styles. The plan form, however, with two projecting bays containing a return verandah is not uncommon for the period.



12 Mercer Road has apparently been modified with Edwardian details to the verandah including the removal of the gablet, the modernising of the gable barge boards and presumed removal of the finial. The high masonry fence further detracts from the original appearance of this building. In other respects, however, this house is generally intact.

12 Mercer Road is of regional significance as an integral part of a group of three which possess distinctive mediaeval character and restrained detailing that set these buildings apart from the prevailing fashions. It is also significant as one of a group of houses constructed by one of Australia's most famous mining magnates.