

Ilfracombe, 15 Forster Avenue

Architect: Sydney Wilson

1890: Wilson, Sydney. Architect o/o Bk. hse. in progress. Cnr. Hilda St. 122'x132' (Malvern Rate Books)

c.1892: Early photo shows house in original condition with new garden (copy held by Malvern Historical Society Inc.)

1892-94: Wilson, Sydney H (Sands & McDougall Directories)

1895-98: Cameron, Alexander, occupant (leased from Wilson). Malvern Councillor 1902-8, advocate of Municipal tramways, Chairman Prahran & Malvern Tramways Trust. (Source: Cooper, History of Malvern)

1899-1925: Wilson, S H

1930: Fahle

1935-50: Leaver, Sydney

1950: Jex - 1955-73: Jex. Tatham.

(Sands & McDougall Directories)

A substantial single storey Edwardian villa, it features a corner turret and a complex verandah which extends on both street facades of this corner house, as well as following the form of the corner bay with the turret above. It has a steeply pitched slate roof with decorative curved slates near the ridge line and iron cresting on the turret. The imposing red brick chimneys have contrasting rendered pedimented cornices. The building was constructed with facing red brick work which has survived on the chimneys but has been painted on the main section of the house. The original verandah design has been substantially modified from the unusual detailing shown on the early photograph. (This was of a distinctive Edwardian style with paired columns with fine, elegant foliated decorative iron surmounting them, the double verandah beam was otherwise open save for some widely spaced turned rods.) The building is asymmetrical and was constructed on a raised battered benched base. It had a front entry from the side street adjacent to a projecting gabled bay which featured vertical turned rods and a rendered sunburst design on a roughcast backing. Apart from verandah alterations, painted brickwork and rear extensions the building appears to be substantially intact. It has a Victorian style fence which may have had its pickets based on the design shown in the photograph. This picket fence has been reduced in extent to the corner section of the property.

Sydney Herbert Wilson, Malvern Councillor for 17 years and Mayor in 1913-14 was born in 1860. His father won the architectural prize for the Bourke Street Post Office in 1858 and practiced as Crouch and Wilson. As a prominent architect S.H. Wilson designed many Malvern buildings, including several of the early homes in Forster Avenue and All Saints Church Darling Road. In 1885 the firm of Wilson & Beswicke was responsible for the design of the Malvern Town Hall. His involvement in the local community included serving for 49 years as Churchwarden at St. Johns Finch Street and later at All Saints. He died in 1940. The lease of the property to fellow councillor Alexander Cameron is also of historical interest, as well as Cameron's role in the 'municipal socialism' of the Tramways Trust.

Ilfracombe is of regional significance as a restrained early Edwardian villa of note for the corner slate roofed turret and elaborate verandah form.