

'BRAESIDE'

Prepared by: Context Pty Ltd

Address: 6 ALEXANDRA AVENUE, CANTERBURY

Name: 'Braeside'	Survey Date: Sept. 2016
Place Type: Residential	Architect:
Grading: Significant	Builder: Donald Mackay (attributed)
Extent of Overlay: To title boundaries	Construction Date: 1890-91



Historical Context

The suburb of Canterbury was once part of the City of Camberwell, located in the eastern half of (the current) City of Boroondara. The suburb is relatively small, comprising the area bounded by Mont Albert, Highfield, Riversdale and Burke roads, with Canterbury Road running east-west through its centre. Much of the land in Canterbury was first taken up by Henry Elgar in 1841 as part of the large Elgar's Special Survey, which was bounded by the Yarra River, and by present-day Canterbury, Burke and Warrigal roads (Built Heritage 2012:44). The land within Boroondara forms part of the traditional country of the Wurundjeri people, who utilised the landscape for its water access, large shady trees and grazing lands, fostering a rich ecosystem for indigenous flora and fauna (Blainey 1980:1). Elgar recognised its potential for pastoral needs, and subdivided his holdings into small farms and grazing runs that were auctioned off in the 1840s-50s (Blainey 1980:4).

For Canterbury, the opening of the Lilydale railway line through Camberwell in 1882 heralded an era of urban expansion for the outer suburb, previously deemed too close to Hawthorn and too far from Melbourne to foster concentrated development (Blainey 1980:50). The prosperous 1880s saw

a Land Boom occur, when speculative residential subdivision occurred across the municipality, beginning with modest ventures that grew to ambitious proportions by the middle of the decade. Those in Canterbury initially clustered around the railway station at the intersection of Canterbury Road and Railway Place, as well as around the planned East Camberwell Substation near Myrtle Road. Among the largest subdivisions of this time were 'Shrublands Estate' and 'Prospect Hill Estate' (both 1885), which were marketed specifically for their proximity to the railway.

Boom-era residential estates were comparable to others that developed around the metropolitan area at the time, comprising conventional rectilinear layouts with parallel streets alternating with night-soil lanes (Built Heritage 2012:53). The success of the subdivisions relied on the ability of developers and estate agents to promote a suburban lifestyle that was embraced by both middle-class and working-class purchasers. This was successfully achieved in Canterbury, where Victorian-era residences were constructed in a mix of mansions, villas and cottages.

History

The Victorian single-storey dwelling at 6 Alexandra Avenue is located on the east side of Alexandra Avenue, which sits between Mont Albert and Canterbury roads. During the boom period of the 1880s, grand houses were built along Mont Albert Road, earning it the title 'The Golden Mile'. These included 'Roystead' at No. 51 Mont Albert Road (1887), 'Frognall' at No. 54 (1888), 'Haselmere' at No. 137 (1889), 'Guilford' at No. 269 (1880) and many others (Built Heritage:127).

The sought-after residential area of Mont Albert Road was used to enhance advertising of surrounding subdivisions, as was the case for the Albert Estate, which was subdivided during the 1880s. Albert Estate included four allotments to Mont Albert Road, as well as the entire length of Alexandra Avenue. An 1888 auction advertisement for the estate reads: '28 Magnificent villa sites in the most aristocratic part of this charming suburb', and furthermore; 'Land in the now famous Mont Albert Road is increasing rapidly in value'. Prior to subdivision, the land comprising Albert Estate was known as 'Boulter's Orchard', with the advertisement highlighting that 'each allotment is an orchard in itself' (*Argus* 19 March 1888:2). Surveyor of the estate was John S. Jenkins ('Albert Estate, late Boulter's Orchard' 18--).

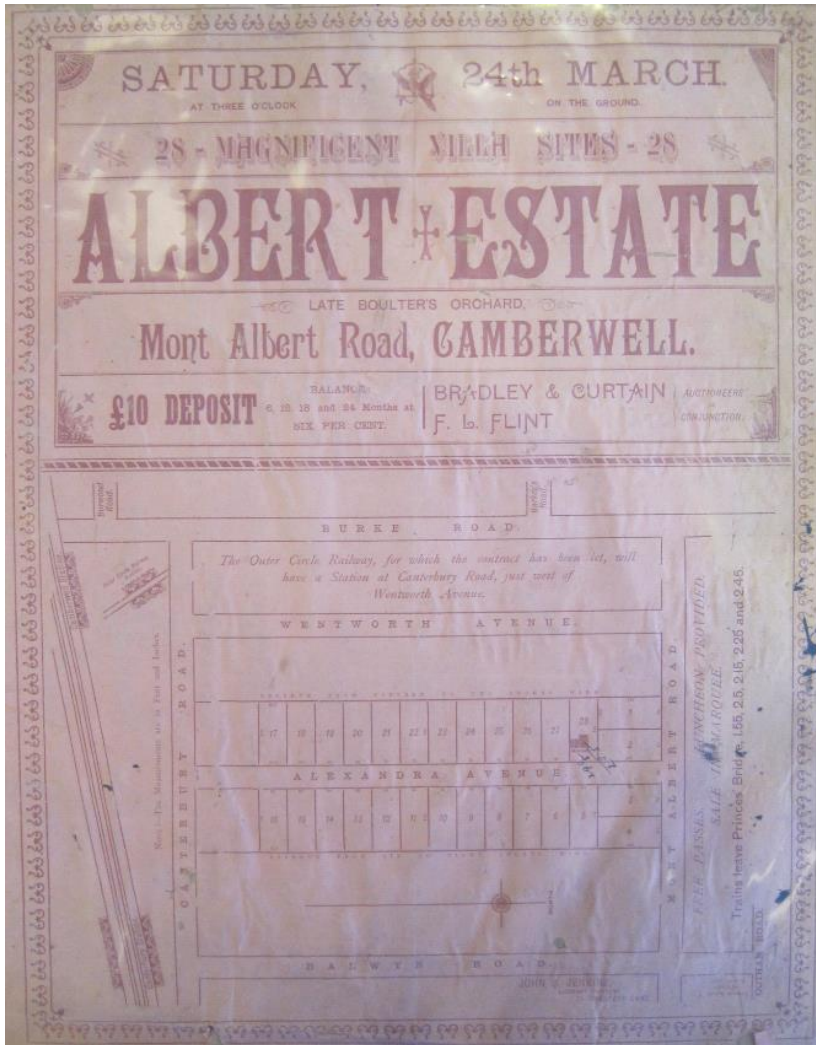


Figure 1. Albert Estate subdivision plan (Source: SLV).

The house at 6 Alexandra Avenue was built c1890-91 for owner Donald Mackay. Mackay, a plasterer, was rated £20 for the house and land in 1891 (RB). As a construction professional, it is likely that Mackay was the designer-builder of his house, based on the unique design of the chimney and his profession as a plasterer. Little is known of Mackay's career.

The Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works detail plans of the street dated 1905 (no. 1993 & 1994) show 6 Alexandra Avenue as one of only two residences on the east side of the street at this time. At this time, the house had a simple elongated rectangular plan with a front and back verandah. Inside, plumbing fixtures allowed for a bath in an enclosed part of the back verandah. An outside lavatory was situated at the rear of the site, and a detached laundry stood just behind the house.

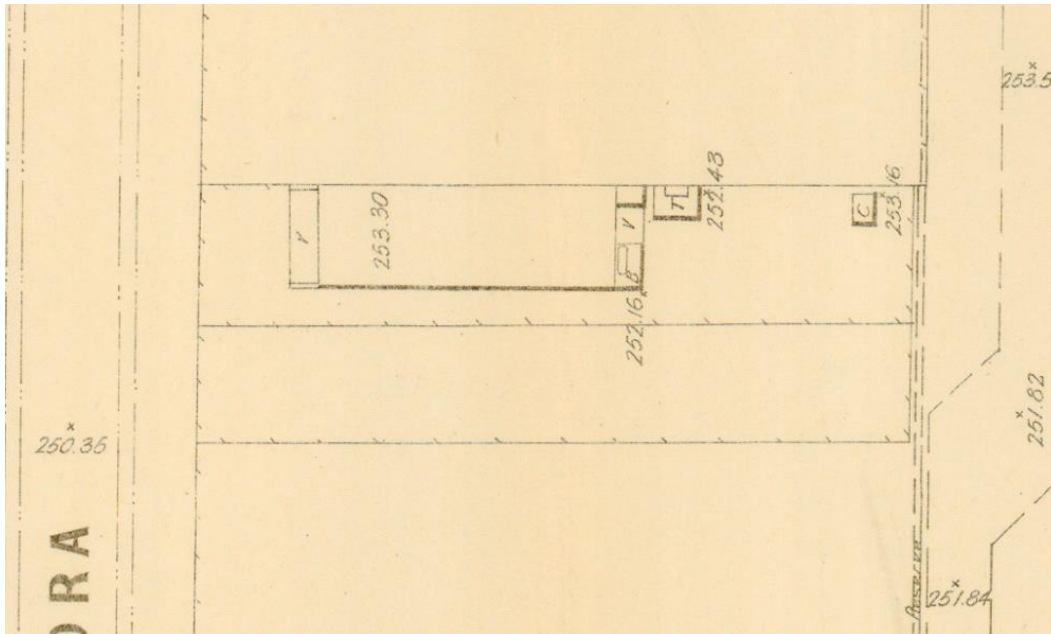


Figure 2. MMBW detail plan no. 1993 dated 1905 showing the original footprint of the house at 6 Alexandra Avenue (Source: SLV).

After residing at the address for a short time, a new owner, listed only under the surname 'Riddell', was rated £24 for the house in 1894 (RB). Shortly after acquiring 6 Alexandra Avenue, Riddell subdivided the lot, reducing its width by almost half in 1896 (RB). The reduced rates, from £20 in 1895 to £13 in 1896 reflects this change. Municipal rate books of the mid to late-1890s reveal relatively affluent residents along Alexandra Avenue, such as managers and accountants (RB 1895-96).

During his ownership, from 1894 to 1906, Riddell leased the property to a number of tenants. The first was William Henry Bucirde, who leased the dwelling from 1894. English-born Bucirde had a mixed career as a successful gold prospector, theatrical performer, railway storekeeper and then finally, a respected house and land agent in Windsor (*Mercury* 4 August 1911:5). Bucirde went on to reside at a house in nearby Wentworth Avenue with his wife Sophia, up until his death in 1911.

John Logan, a contractor, took up the lease of 6 Alexandra Avenue in 1899 following Bucirde's departure. In this year, the interior size of the brick house is described in the rate book for the first time as comprising six rooms. The last of Riddell's tenants was Mark Ross, a gardener, who leased the house from 1903 to 1905 (RB 1894, 1899, 1903 & 1906).

John McTurk Burr, a teacher, had acquired the property by 1906, under whose ownership the house was known as 'Braeside' (RB). John Burr lived at the house with his wife Margaret and celebrated the birth of their daughter at the address that same year (ER 1906; *Argus* 5 January 1906). The family remained at the house until 1909, after which time they leased the property to a number of different tenants until finally selling it in c1918-1919 (RB 1917-1918, 1918-1919). The rate books reveal a number of different owners and tenants during the early to mid-1920s (RB 1919, 1922, 1926).

The building permit index card for 6 Alexandra Avenue shows that a verandah was altered at the address in 1928 at the cost of £50. The drawings have not been retained (BP), but it appears that these works were to the back verandah, possibly enclosing it further. The owner and occupant at this time was engineer Edgar W Thomas (RB).



Figure 3. The original rectangular plan of 'Braeside' (Source: Age 9 November 1981:13).

The house was enlarged in 1989, with an addition to the rear which then extends southward, creating an L-shaped plan. The new southern wing copies many of the house's original details, including the distinctive round chimney stacks, and the front verandah detail (BP 88758). An illustrated auction notice dating from 1981 shows the pre-extension form of the house with its prominent chimneys (Age November 1981:13).

Description & Integrity

'Braeside' is a single-fronted Victorian Italianate house built in a terrace house form, though it is freestanding. Walls are constructed of Hawthorn brick with red brick dressing and tuck pointing, while the simple hipped roof is covered in slates. Cast-cement eaves brackets are decorated with an acanthus leaf pattern. A verandah with skillion roof runs between two wing walls which are decorated with vermiculation above scrolled console brackets. The original beaded verandah beam is evident. A cast-iron frieze and brackets are decorated in a vine leaf pattern. The verandah floor has been retiled sympathetically, though the bullnose edging appears to be cast-concrete rather than bluestone.

The entry door is located to one side of the façade; it is a four-panel door with bolection mouldings and fielded panels. It sits within a round-arched opening with ruby flashed glass to the sidelights and the border of the arched highlight. The central highlight is of etched glass. Beside it are two rounded-arched window openings with double-hung sash windows and moulded concrete sills.

The most distinctive feature of the house is its chimneys, which are both unusual in form and highly decorative. Each has a square red brick base with acroteria at each corner. Above this is a cylindrical chimney stack of tuck pointed Hawthorn brick with a moulded cement rendered base and crown. Moulded cement detailing at the top of the chimney includes a frieze with roundels, a dentilated cornice and projecting acroteria around the top of the chimney.

There are two original chimneys to the northern section of the house, as well as a reproduction at the south end of the 1989 rear extension.



Figure 4. Front chimney. (Source: Context 2016)

The house is set behind a new but sympathetic timber picket fence and a small front garden. A carport has been built more recently which adopts the materials and details of the house.

Rising damp is evident at the base of the brickwork along the front wall, and the associated salts are deteriorating the tuckpointing. A deciduous creeper is growing over the building including the chimneys, which may be damaging the decorative cement detailing.

Comparative Analysis

'Braeside', at 6 Alexandra Avenue, takes a form that was typical for inner suburban development from the 1870s to early 1890s: that of the single-fronted terrace house. Closer to the City of Melbourne, where land was more expensive, land was often subdivided into very narrow blocks and terrace houses were built in rows with shared party walls. Moving further east, into the middle suburbs, this form is more commonly seen as semi-detached pairs or free-standing dwellings. Individually Significant examples of this type of a similar scale that are in the Boroondara Heritage Overlay include: a single terrace house of 1896 at 69 Melville Street, Hawthorn (in HO20); a joined terrace row at 123-133 Wellington Street, Kew of the late 1880s (in HO150); and a semi-detached pair of c1892 at 66-68 Pakington Street, Kew (HO329).

Among these three examples, 'Braeside' is most comparable with 69 Melville Street. The two houses are the same size and massing (single-fronted terrace house with verandah wing walls and a simple hipped roof) – both of which are typical of the late Victorian period. What makes 69 Melville Street individually significant is its high level of ornamentation, making it 'the most elaborate single storey row house in Hawthorn' (Gould, 1992). The decorative element considered the most elaborate and unusual is the use of tessellated tiles between the eaves brackets and as a motif on the front chimney stack. In addition, the front verandah retains twisted cast-iron columns and a somewhat 'exaggerated' frieze. While a different type of decoration, the large round chimneys of 'Braeside' with their Greek-inspired ornament are a unique decorative element in Canterbury and the City of Boroondara, which make this house stand out from other Victorian houses.

The Victorian era was one of great eclecticism, as numerous historical styles were mined and reinterpreted for new buildings. The most common of these for dwellings in Victoria is the Italianate style, which traces its origins to the classicism of the Renaissance era. The Gothic Revival was popular in the early Victorian era, and a medieval influence was again seen at the close of the nineteenth century with the Picturesque Gothic style. Less common was the use of Greek Revival for dwellings, as temple forms were the most common inspirations and more suited to institutional buildings. One of the most influential architects in promulgating this style was Scotland's Alexander "Greek" Thomson. Thomson (1817-1875) designed in a variety of styles, but is best known for his austere Neo-Classical public buildings, many of which employed Greek temple forms as well as Egyptian-style motifs. Thomson's residential designs were even more eclectic, and became internationally influential through their publication in the architectural pattern book *Villa and Cottage Architecture: Select examples of country and suburban residences recently erected*, published by Blackie & Son in 1868. The chimneys used by Thomson for his Greek Revival houses had a square base and slender round shaft with a tall cap modelled on an Egyptian papyrus-leaf capital.

This pattern book was well known in Australia, with local buildings inspired by or closely modelled on Thomson's Greek residential designs ranging from 'Holmwood House', Walkerville, South Australia, of 1885; to 'Hybla' at 18 Wallace Avenue, Toorak, of 1889; and the Sale Supreme Court of 1889. In Boroondara, Thomson's freely treated asymmetrical houses are cited as a precedent for the proto-Federation neoclassical house at 9 Eglinton Street, Kew, designed by distinguished architectural practice Reed, Henderson & Smart in 1883-84 (HO298).

More commonly, a Victorian house might have a single decorative detail of Greek origin on an otherwise Italianate house. One of the most common was the use of a Greek key or meander pattern; used as a bas-relief beltcourse on 45 Chrystobel Crescent, Hawthorn of 1888-89 (HO237), and as a cast-iron verandah frieze at 22 Lisson Grove of 1887 (HO84) and at 49 Mangarra Road, Canterbury of 1898-99. The acroterion is a decorative element mounted at the apex of a Greek pediment. While it can come in many forms, the most common is a palmette with acanthus leaves. On dwellings, a simplified version is sometimes used at the corner of rainwater gutters, cut out of sheet metal, as seen at 35 Elm Street, Hawthorn. Otherwise its use on Victorian houses is quite rare. 'Hybla' in Toorak uses acroteria on pilaster capitals and as bas-relief at the apex of a gable, both made of cast cement. While 'Hybla' is highly embellished with cement-render detail on all of its surfaces, 'Braeside's' chimney is another very unusual example of Greek Revival ornament used for a Victorian house.

The closest comparable chimney that could be identified in Boroondara is at 17 Mary Street, Hawthorn (in HO152). It is an 1885 Early English Gothic house, believed to be designed by architects George de Lacy Evans and James Birtwhistle. A double-fronted brick villa, it is more elaborate in its overall design than 'Braeside' (note that the verandah is a sympathetic replacement). The chimneys appear to be of ashlar stone and have slender round shafts set on a square base. They are unusual in this cylindrical form, the material and their slender size (not much bigger than a chimney pot), but are finished with typical moulding profiles. While unusual, they do not have the extensive decorative details and interest of the 'Braeside' chimneys.

More generally, 'Braeside' reflects the changes in materials palette seen in the 1890s. There was a strong shift from cement render to the use of face brick, and a shift from the use of cream brick dressings to pressed red bricks. The combination of tuckpointed Hawthorn brown bricks with red brick dressings used at 'Braeside' is also seen on larger houses such as 29 Canterbury Road, Camberwell of 1896-97 (HO374); 75 Wattle Road, Hawthorn of 1898 (HO479); and 38 Maling Road, Canterbury of 1899 (in HO145).

In summary, 'Braeside' is a freestanding terrace house, of the type more commonly seen in Boroondara's suburbs nearest the CBD, Hawthorn and Kew. Its massing and form are typical of the late Victorian period, and the use of Hawthorn bricks with red brick dressings illustrates the changes in materials palette seen in the 1890s. The large round chimneys of 'Braeside' with their Greek-inspired ornament, however, are a unique decorative element in Canterbury and the City of Boroondara, and distinguish this Victorian house from others in the municipality.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criteria referred to in *Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay*, Department of Planning and Community Development, revised July 2015, modified for the local context.

CRITERION A: Importance to the course or pattern of the City of Boroondara's cultural or natural history (historical significance).

N/A

CRITERION B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Boroondara's cultural or natural history (rarity).

'Braeside' is one of a small number of Victorian houses in Boroondara that employs Greek Revival decorative details, in this case on the distinctive round chimneys. Mass-produced cast-ironwork for verandahs in a Greek key, or meander, pattern is the most common. This same motif is also seen on at least one house as a beltcourse executed in cast cement. The use of sheet-metal acroteria at the corners of rainwater gutters survives on a few houses, but no other examples comparable to the multiple acroteria on the chimneys of 'Braeside' are known.

CRITERION C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Boroondara's cultural or natural history (research potential).

N/A

CRITERION D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

'Braeside' is a freestanding terrace house, of the type more commonly seen in Boroondara's suburbs nearest the CBD, Hawthorn and Kew. Its massing and form are typical of the late Victorian period, and the use of Hawthorn bricks with red brick dressings illustrates the changes in materials palette seen in the 1890s. It is one of a small number of such houses in Canterbury.

CRITERION E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

The large round chimneys of 'Braeside' with their Greek-inspired ornament are a unique decorative element in Canterbury and the City of Boroondara, and distinguish this Victorian house from others in the municipality. It is also distinguished by the survival of a higher than average level of embellishment, including acanthus-leaf eaves brackets, vine-leaf verandah cast iron, and the arched entry that retains an arched highlight and sidelights of ruby-flashed glass and etched glass.

CRITERION F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

N/A

CRITERION G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

N/A

CRITERION H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Boroondara's history (associative significance).

N/A

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

'Braeside' at 6 Alexandra Ave, Canterbury is significant. It was constructed c1890-91 for owner Donald Mackay, a plasterer, who was most likely the designer and builder of the house.

It is a single-fronted freestanding terrace house. Walls are constructed of Hawthorn brick with red brick dressing and tuck pointing, while the simple hipped roof is covered in slates. Doors and windows have a round-arched form.

The front façade is highly intact, as are the two original chimneys.

The rear extension of 1989, the front fence and the carport are not significant.

How is it significant?

'Braeside' is of local aesthetic and architectural significance and rarity value to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

The large round chimneys of 'Braeside' with their Greek-inspired ornament are a unique decorative element in Canterbury and the City of Boroondara, and distinguish this Victorian house from others in the municipality. It is also distinguished by the survival of a higher than average level of embellishment, including acanthus-leaf eaves brackets, vine-leaf verandah cast iron, and the arched entry that retains an arched highlight and sidelights of ruby-flashed glass and etched glass. (Criterion E)

'Braeside' is one of a small number of Victorian houses in Boroondara that employs Greek Revival decorative details. Mass-produced cast-ironwork for verandahs in a Greek key, or meander, pattern is the most common. This same motif is also seen on at least one house as a beltcourse executed in cast cement. The use of sheet-metal acroteria at the corners of rainwater gutters survives on a few houses, but no other examples comparable to the multiple acroteria on the chimneys of 'Braeside' are known. (Criterion B)

'Braeside' is a freestanding terrace house, of the type more commonly seen in Boroondara's suburbs nearest the CBD, Hawthorn and Kew. Its massing and form are typical of the late Victorian period, with a simple hipped roof with bracketed eaves and wing walls around the verandah. It is one of a small number of such houses in Canterbury, which was characterised in the nineteenth century by freestanding villa forms designed for larger suburban blocks. (Criterion D)

Grading and Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Boroondara Planning Scheme as an individually Significant place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Boroondara Planning Scheme:

External Paint Colours <i>Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface?</i>	No
Internal Alteration Controls <i>Is a permit required for internal alterations?</i>	No
Tree Controls <i>Is a permit required to remove a tree?</i>	No
Victorian Heritage Register <i>Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?</i>	No
Incorporated Plan <i>Does an Incorporated Plan apply to the site?</i>	No

Outbuildings and fences exemptions <i>Are there outbuildings and fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted <i>Can a permit be granted to use the place for a use which would otherwise be prohibited?</i>	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place <i>Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006?</i>	No

Identified By

Context Pty Ltd

References

Age, as cited.

'Albert Estate, late Boulter's Orchard' 18--, State Library of Victoria map collection.

Argus, as cited.

Australian Electoral Rolls (ER), as cited, Australian Electoral Commission.

Blainey, G 1980, *A History of Camberwell*, Lothian Publishing Company Pty Ltd: Melbourne.

Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2012, 'City of Boroondara Thematic Environmental History', prepared for the City of Boroondara.

Building permit card for 6 Alexandra Avenue, Canterbury (BP).

Building permit 88758 for 6 Alexandra Avenue, Canterbury, dated 2 August 1989 (BP).

City of Camberwell Municipal Rate Books (RB), as cited.

Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plans, as cited, State Library of Victoria.

Mercury, as cited.

Sands & McDougall, *Melbourne and Suburban Directories* (S&Mc), as cited.

