



4 - 43 8 Geelong Road

### House, 8 Geelong Road, Footscray

#### History

John Robertson, partner in the large drapery firm of J. H. Hooper & Co., was the first owner-occupier of this house in 1901<sup>1</sup>. It was sited next to 10 Geelong Road, the home of John Hooper, also built in 1901 (q.v.). John, later Mrs. C. E. Robertson and, in the late 1930s, James Robertson, maintained some 30 years of occupation until the commencement of another long tenure by William Drever and family<sup>2</sup>. The family tennis court to the east was built on after the sale. Coincidentally Hooper's house next door was occupied by K. W. Drever in the 1950s.

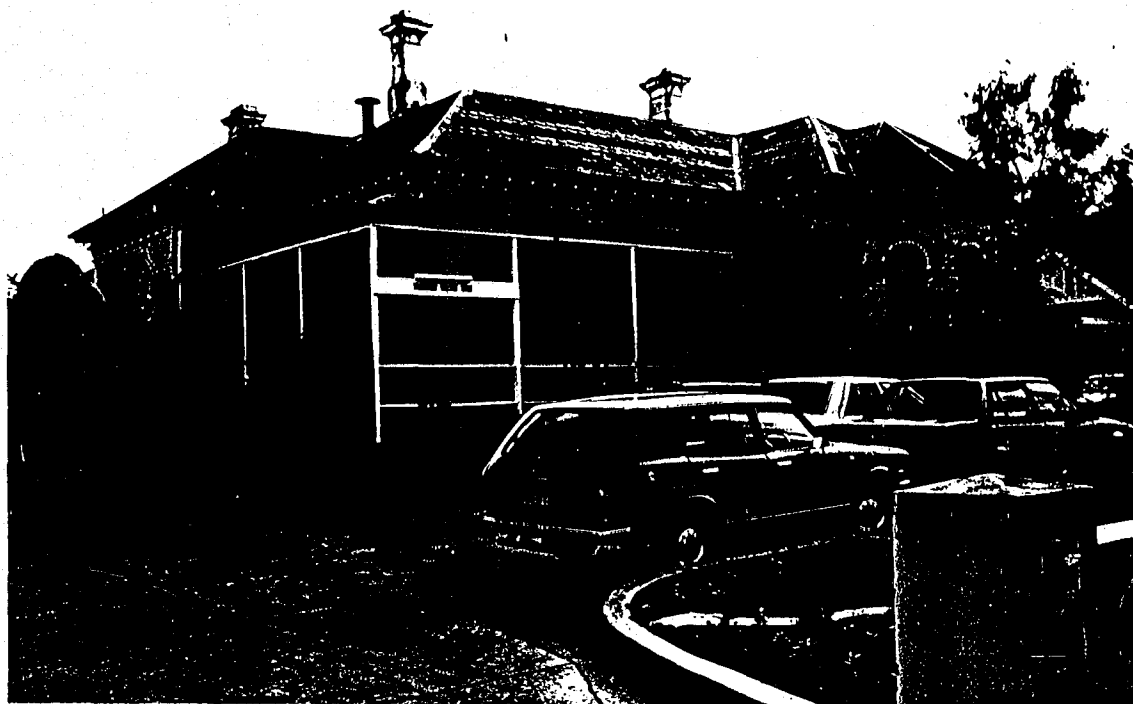
Robertson was a joint owner with John and E. T. Hooper of the Hooper business, providing a 'driving force' (in the words of John Lack) behind the firm's pressure for the shop assistants' half holiday early this

century<sup>3</sup> The neurologist and cast-iron enthusiast, Dr. E. Graeme Robertson was born into this house in 1903, his studies taking him to London and back to Victoria where he consulted to Melbourne's major hospitals and in the Royal Australian Navy<sup>4</sup>. His interest in photography and cast-iron led him to publish some five books on the subject.

#### Description

A brick Queen Anne style house, it was possibly designed by the Tompkins Brothers, and contrasts with the conservative but contemporary Italianate of Hooper's 10 Geelong Road (q.v.). Composed around the main hip roof, with gabled wings set at right-angles, the house is distinguished by an octagonal corner turret in the verandah. Otherwise typical timber slat, embossed wall cladding and half-timbered details make up the period ornament.

1 D1900-65; MMBW RP3 1910; verbal Wyn Carruthers. nce Drever  
2 ibid.  
3 Lack, letter to MPE 30.7.86  
4 Robertson. *Carlton*, Melb. 1974



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**External Integrity**

Verandah floor rebuilt, fence replaced and adjoining tennis court built on (6 Geelong Rd.).

**Streetscape**

Among and stylistically related to other houses built for Footscray's elite in this part of Geelong Road and linked historically, by its first owner, to the adjoining 10 Geelong Road.

**Significance**

Architecturally, an adept design in the Queen Anne villa manner but more important, historically, because of its association with one of Footscray's more famous commercial figures, particularly in his industrial relations role when Footscray led the State in obtaining uniformly more adequate working conditions. Also it is set among other houses built by leaders in other fields, both within Footscray and the State.

**Trenague House  
10 Geelong Road**

**History(Refer Hooper's Buildings, Barkly Street, for Hooper history).**

Prominent Footscray draper, J.H. Hooper, commissioned architect T.F.M. Smith to design this conservatively designed house prior to calling tenders in 1901. Hooper resided there into the 1930s, giving way to a long occupation by Charles Archibald Hoadley (1940s) and John Morgan (1930s). John Mitchell and K. W. Drever were later residents.<sup>1</sup>

Among the prosperous and famous individuals residing there, Charles Hoadley was at once an Antarctic explorer (geologist on Mawson's first Australian expedition 1911-13) and the first principal of Footscray Technical School (later College, later Institute), in 1916, and remained so until his death in 1947. During his time as principal, the school enrollment grew from 150 to 4000 when Footscray was the largest government

1 D1950-5