

PLACE NAME "Majoribanks"
 ADDRESS 137 Noble Street
 AREA 8 DATE/PERSON 13.5/RP

LEVEL: B
 NEG: 3.9 & 3.10



DATES Construction: c1909
USE Present Use: Residential
 Original Use: Same
 Alterations?: Fly wire door added

FORM	Detached Single storey Triple fronted	STYLE	Edwardian
DESCRIPTION	(I = Intact A = Altered	* = significant)	
ROOF	Slate	WALLS	I Brick
		ROOF FORM	I Chimneys ** Gable decoration
VERANDAH	** Form ** Decoration	FENESTRATION	I Doors * Windows Window hoods
		FINISHES	Paint colours I Unpainted: brickwork
INTERIOR		GARDEN & SETTING	
		OTHER COMMENTS	
CONDITION & INTEGRITY	Condition: Excellent Integrity: Intact	THREATS	

DESCRIPTION

A triple-fronted, hip-roofed, red brick Edwardian house, the right-hand front and the left-hand side bays set forward as gables with canted bays and with an octagonal hip pavilion on the corner. The roof is slate with terracotta hip and ridge-cappings and finials. The hip is crowned with another octagonal hip lantern. Chimneys are English Arts & Crafts influenced brick and roughcast, with high pots. Gables are roughcast and timbered. Verandah valences are very fine fretwork with both Chinoiserie and Art Nouveau sinuously curved fretwork. The verandah extends right around both sides beneath gables, corner pavilion and extended main roof in unbroken pitch between. There is a pressed copper nameplate and the entrance has fan and side lights. Elements of the early garden appear to be intact, including serpentine beds and mature trees. The corner octagon should be compared to the earlier tower at "Kirriemuir", 77 Prospect Road, for instance.

HISTORY

Wool owner's house with 135?, 139, 141 and 143 Noble Street²⁶⁸.

The house, now known as "Majoribanks", and earlier as "Yaralla" had associations with leading Geelong wool manufacturers almost from the start, and particularly with Basil Collins, whose family founded the Union Woollen Mills on the Barwon early last century. The section of Noble Street in which No 137 is located seems to have had a particular attraction for wool manufacturers. In 1928 for example, when Basil Collins was at No 137, William R. Redpath, who was associated in the 1930s with Redpath's Woollen Mill, was at No 139; A. M. Collins was at No 141, and Alexander Gray, promoter of the Albion Woollen Mill, one of Australia's finest, was at "Claremont" No 143 Noble Street.

The first owner of 137 Noble Street in 1909 was Margaret Boyd. The 1909-10 Newtown rate book described the property as a "brick home-constructing" on land 100 x 298 feet, NAV 24 pounds²⁶⁹. In 1911 Margaret Boyd's house had been completed, had an NAV of 85 pounds and was let to Arthur Henry Bell, woolbroker²⁷⁰. Bell continued to live at "Yaralla" until 1918, during which time it was owned still by Margaret Boyd²⁷¹. From 1919 until the middle thirties at least, the house was owned and occupied by Basil Collins, woolle manufacturer²⁷². Basil was the grandson of the original founder of the Union Woollen Mills, who died in 1890²⁷³. In building up these mills, which according to Brownhill, "contributed greatly to the stability of Geelong's industrial life and its reputation for efficient production"²⁷⁴, W. H. Collins had the assistance of his three sons, William Gilbert, Marcus Edward and Albert James. When William and Albert retired, Marcus was the senior proprietor with the assistance of his sons Arthur and Basil²⁷⁵. Basil changed the name of the former "Yaralla" at 137 Noble Street to "Majoribanks". By the middle 1950s the property was still owned and occupied by the Collins family, Gladys Collins being recorded c/o Equity

268. Mr Oral Smith and 141 Noble Street data sheet.

269. Newtown rate book 1909-10 South Ward No 819.

270. Ibid 1911-12 No 845.

271. Ibid 1917-18 No 917.

272. Ibid 1919-20 No 937; 1935 No 1090.

273. W. R. Brownhill, The History of Geelong and Corio Bay Melbourne, 1955, p.320.

274. Ibid.

275. Ibid.

Trustees, 472 Bourke Street, as the owner of a dwelling in land 100 x 298 feet, NAV 244 pounds²⁷⁶.

SIGNIFICANCE

Known earlier as "Yaralla", this house has regional historical significance (along with Nos. 133, 139, 141 and 143 Noble Street) for its associations with leading Geelong wool manufacturers, and particularly with Basil Collins, whose family founded the Union Woollen Mills on the Barwon early last century. Built in 1909 for Margaret Boyd, the house was occupied at first by Arthur Henry Bell, woolbroker, and from 1919 until the 1930s by Basil Collins, who changed its name to "Majoribanks". At this time William R. Redpath of Redpath's Woollen Mill was at No. 139, A. M. Collins was at No. 141 and Alexander Gray, promoter of the Albion Woollen Mill was at "Claremont", 143 Noble Street. It has regional architectural significance as an apparently intact, large characteristic Edwardian house. It is interesting for its eclectic range of influences, including Art Nouveau, Chinoiserie and the English Arts and Crafts Movement. Also significant are its corner octagon pavilion, and the early garden elements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Existing Listings	NONE	
Recommend'ns	RNE	LPS Area 8 Place

276. Newtown rate book 1955 No 1133.