

DUPLEX

Address	21-23 Nepean Highway, Elsternwick
Significance	Local
Construction Dates	1937
Period	Interwar
Date Inspected	Late 2018 and early 2019



Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The duplex at 21-23 Nepean Highway, Elsternwick, is significant, especially the intact material palette and presentation of the house and its tall chimneys. In addition, the original low clinker brick fence and concrete driveway configuration with central islands are also significant elements.

How is it Significant?

The duplex at 21-23 Nepean Highway, Elsternwick, is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Glen Eira.

Why is it Significant?

The duplex at 21-23 Nepean Highway, Elsternwick, erected in 1937, is of historical significance as a reflection of the suburb's consolidation over the Interwar period. While Elsternwick had been predominantly built up mostly during the Victorian and Federation periods, a number of earlier estates associated with late 19th century mansions were subdivided and developed over the inter-war years, such as the property associated with the duplex. The building also demonstrates the increased appearance of multi-dwelling, often two storey developments, such as maisonettes and low-rise flats, in the district over this period, many of which were designed in fashionable domestic idioms; a testament to the desirability and general affluence of Elsternwick at this time. (Criterion A)

The duplex at 21-23 Nepean Highway, Elsternwick, is of aesthetic significance as a highly intact, substantial and well-resolved example of a multi-dwelling residence designed in the Old English Revival style. It features many aspects associated with the style such as half-timbering to much of the upper floor, a steeply pitched roof (clad in glazed terracotta tiles), use of Tudor and triangular arches and an oriel bay. Whilst appearing as a single-family house with an asymmetric composition, unusually it is comprised of two double storey residences. (Criterion E)

Description

The two storey late Interwar period, multi-dwelling residential building or duplex, was designed in the Old English style. It is a substantial building containing two separate residences (one to each half) that is partly obscured by planting – both trees and bushes. It is set centrally on the block behind an original low clinker brick fence with a glazed coping tile. A curved path in the front yard retains its original configuration.

There is an original concrete driveway to each side, evident on the 1945 aerial – the northern one has gravel to centre and the southern has grass. A garage, possibly original in a similar clinker brick exists at the south-east end which has a modern metal roller door. It is not clear whether the northern garage survives.



Façade/west elevation



The building has an irregular footprint though is broadly rectangular. The hipped roof with front gable ends is clad in glazed, variegated terracotta tiles and is steeply-pitched with minimal eaves overhang. There are four chimneys, three of which are visible and have a chimney pot – a squat chimney to the south end and two taller chimneys to the north side with a prominent corbelled cap. The ground floor and the south-west corner of the first floor is clinker brick in stretcher bond with two projecting bands to the lower section, whereas most of the first floor is rendered.

The northern half of the building features a prominent, street facing gable end and a minor gabled projecting bay that initially included a recessed balcony but now has been enclosed with aluminium-framed windows. The gable ends are distinguished by wide timber battens with some curved and angled members. Below the oriel bay, the wall projects slightly forward of the main wall and likely includes the entry to the northern premises (but is obscured). The entrance to the southern premises however is visible to the side wall and is defined by a pointed (Anglo-Saxon) arch, probably in tapestry bricks.

The windows are generally double hung sashes with multi-paned upper sashes, often grouped in threes. There is a Tudor arched window¹ to the south end of the façade that includes leadlight with a rendered upper frame. There has been some modification to openings above the southern entrance, evident in changes to the brickwork (the window to the façade may have been narrowed/relocated and an adjacent window to the side wall has been infilled). There are smaller and fewer windows to the side elevations. Windows to the face brick wall sections have soldier coursing to the lintels.

The timber elements – battens, window joinery, fascias, and corbels – have been painted a dark colour in keeping with the style of the building.



Façade, first floor, north end



Façade, first floor, south end

The Old English style, often referred to as the Tudor Revival style (which is a more specific subset of the Old English style), was one of several that were concurrently popular during the 1930s/late part of the Interwar period. Characteristics of the style evident at the subject site include a picturesque asymmetrical form, featuring prominent gables and steeply pitched roofs with tall chimneys. The walls were either rendered (often with half-timbering), face brick (sometimes including herringbone sections), or a combination of the two. Windows typically included some leadlight (such as diamond quarrels). The Old English style related to the interest in traditional or vernacular building and 'natural' materials that developed initially in England during the late 19th century as part of the Arts and Crafts Movement and influenced much building design during the early 20th century in Australia. The Old English style became popular after WWI especially in more affluent suburbs due to its strong associations with conservative elegance and British nostalgia.

History

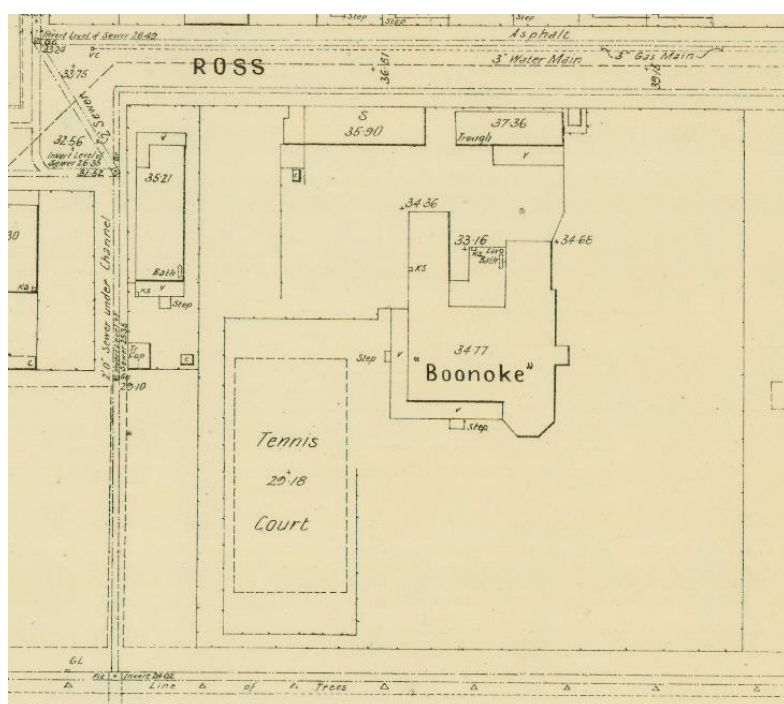
Elsternwick Village was surveyed in 1851 by Robert Hoddle, and again in 1856 by Henry B Foot and consisted of land bound in the south by North Road and in the north by Glenhuntly Road and Davis Street, with much of the western part reserved for a public park, now Elsternwick Park.² Although the village would later become part of the cities of Brighton and Caulfield, it was not included in the land administered by the Caulfield Road Board when the Board was established in 1857.³

¹ A Tudor arch has a depressed profile and is also referred to as a pseudo-four-centred arch

² Peter Murray and John C Wells, *From sand, swamp and health: a history of Caulfield*, Blackburn, J & D Burrows for City of Caulfield; and *Village of Elsternwick*, Parish of Prahran, Department of Crown Lands Office, 8 August 1857, SLV,

While initially situated on the periphery of suburban Melbourne, beyond the more settled environs of Prahran and St Kilda, the ready availability of considerable allotments in Elsternwick and the early private establishment of its railway station (1859) proved attractive to the genteel and affluent. Alongside dairies and market gardens, a patchwork of prestige estates, 'private houses of a superior character standing in pleasure grounds',⁴ were erected from the 1860s. The government takeover of the railway line (1878), which improved services, and speculative activities of the land boom stimulated a more intensive phase of subdivision and development in the suburb over the 1880s. Along the major roads and across the former grounds of handsome mansions, rows of generally high-quality detached houses multiplied and dedicated shopping strips emerged. Following the general building hiatus of the 1890s Depression, a decidedly middle-class suburb consolidated with little unused land available by the early 1930s.⁵

Land sales in the north-east of Elsternwick Village began soon after it was surveyed in the late 1850s, with some of the first sales being the prime lots facing Brighton Road/Nepean Highway.⁶ This included the subject site, which formed part of Crown Allotment eight, Section 22 of the first survey, part of the land acquired by T Watson in 1859.⁷ By the late 19th century, a mansion villa known as *Boonoke* had been constructed on part of Watson's land.⁸ *Boonoke* was set within grounds including a tennis court and stables, and is shown on the 1905 detail MMBW plan reproduced below.



MMBW plan no. 1810, Caulfield
The subject allotment as developed by 1905
(Source: SLV)

By 1912, Duncan Brown Fullarton was renting in the mansion, by then known as *Taybank*. He purchased the property – land equivalent to Crown Allotment 8, 9, and 10 – four years later in 1916.⁹ Fullarton was a Scotsman who had arrived in Australia in 1885 and worked in maritime industries being, for a time, Chairman of Directors of McIlwraith, McEacharn Ltd,¹⁰ a prominent shipping company known for having pioneered the export of frozen meat from Australia in the late 19th century.¹¹ Fullarton died in

<<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/156244>>, accessed 26 August 2019

³ Murray and Wells, *From Sand, Swamp and Heath: A History of Caulfield*, p109

⁴ Andrew Garran, *Picturesque atlas of Australasia*, Sydney, Picturesque Atlas Publishing Company, 1888, p148

⁵ Murray and Wells, *From sand, swamp and health: a history of Caulfield*, p110

⁶ *Parts of Cities of Brighton and Caulfield, Parish of Prahran, County Bourke*, PROV, P3416-6

⁷ *Certificated of Title*, vol. 6063, folio 129

⁸ *Review of Sands and MacDougall's Directory*, editions 1880-90

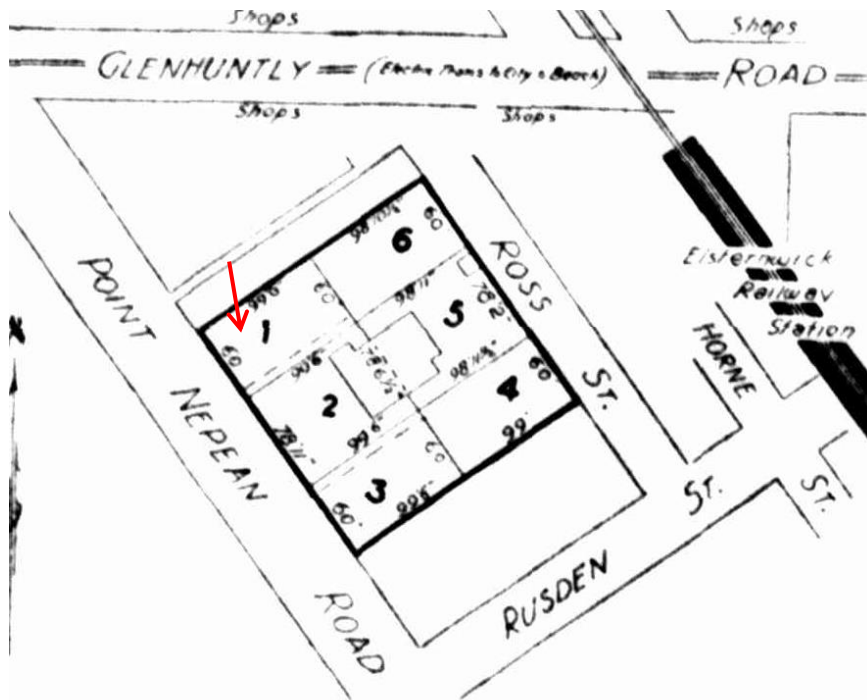
⁹ *Sands and MacDougall's Directory*, 1912; and *Certificate of Title*, vol.3988, folio 405

¹⁰ 'Obituary, Mr D. B. Fullarton', *Argus*, 5 December 1933, p6

¹¹ David Dunstan, 'McEacharn, Sir Malcolm Donald (1852-1910)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, ANU, <<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mceacharn-sir-malcolm-donald-7350/text12765>>, 1986, accessed 5 March 2019

1933, and his land was inherited by his wife Christina Fraser Fullarton by probate.¹² At the time he had been living in Mornington.¹³

During the following year, 1934, Fullarton's land was transferred to Clarence and Ruth Jackman of Elwood who subsequently subdivided it into six approximately equal lots – four lots were vacant lots while *Taybank* occupied the two middle lots.¹⁴ In June 1934, *Taybank* and the newly created adjoining vacant building lots were listed for sale.¹⁵



Extract from sales notice, with the subject land indicated
(Source: *Herald*, 23 June 1934, p34)

By 1935, *Taybank* was listed as 'vacant' in the *Sands and MacDougall's Directory*, and there were no nearby listings which indicates that the building lots had yet to be developed.¹⁶ In May 1936 John William Harding, a builder based in Caulfield, acquired the subject allotment (lot 1).¹⁷

The building was presumably constructed soon after, likely by Harding, as only a few months later (November 1936) the property was transferred to Ethel Lily Pinkney.¹⁸ In 1937, the directory listing was 'flats being built'.¹⁹ In 1938, two residents were listed at no. 23, Louise Roberts and J Taylor.²⁰

By 1945, as seen in the aerial photograph below, the four flanking lots in the 1934 subdivision had been developed, and the two middle lots were still occupied by the mansion *Taybank*. The concrete driveways and an associated garage to the rear corners are evident. The single storey semi-detached buildings at 3-5 and 11-13 Ross Street and the two storey flats at 27 Nepean Highway, constructed by this time, are still extant.

¹² Certificate of Title, vol. 3988, folio 405

¹³ 'Obituary, Mr D. B. Fullarton', *Argus*, 5 December 1933, p6

¹⁴ Certificate of Title, vol. 5900, folio 936; and *Herald*, 23 June 1934, p34

¹⁵ *Herald*, 23 June 1934, p34

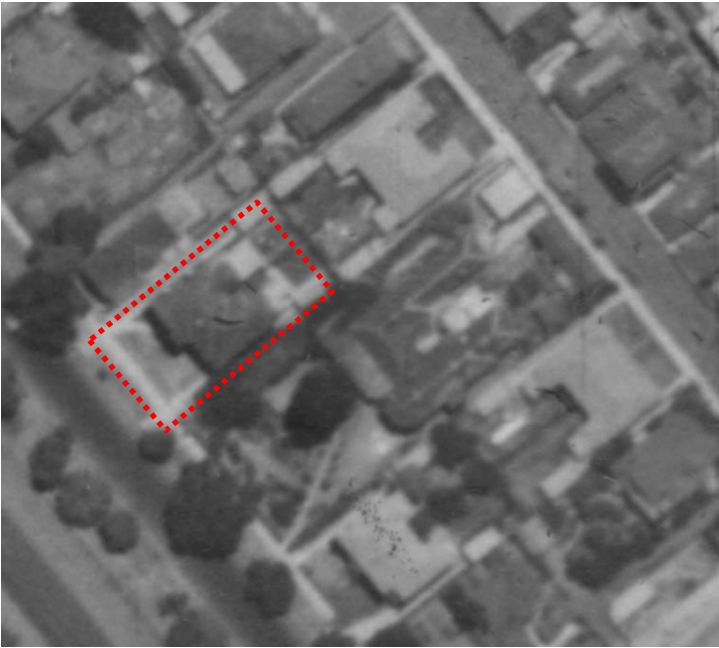
¹⁶ *Sands and MacDougall's Directory*, 1935

¹⁷ Certificate of Title, vol.6063, folio 129

¹⁸ Certificate of Title, vol.6063, folio129. Note it has not been possible to determine any details of the work of J W Harding.

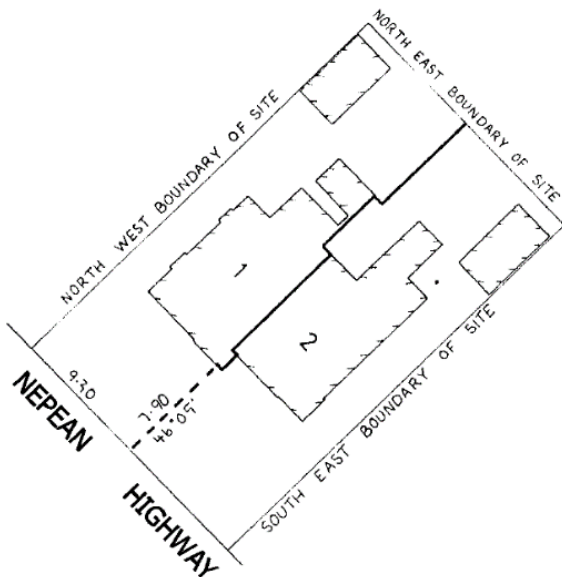
¹⁹ Typically, there is a delay between the compilation of the listings and the publication of the directory, such that the information provided often related to the previous year.

²⁰ *Sands and MacDougall's Directory*, 1937-38



1945 aerial photograph
Subject site outlined
(Source: Landata, *Melbourne and Metropolitan Area Project*, Run 15, Frame 57787)

Ethel Pinkney remained the owner until her death in 1975. By the following year, the property was acquired by Kenneth Julian Hoffman, bank officer, and Stanley Neville Hoffman, engineer both of Malvern, who subdivided it into two approximately equal lots equivalent to the two residences.²¹ The plan of strata subdivision from that year, reproduced below, shows the footprint of buildings at that time.



(Source: Landata, RP10146)

Thematic Context/Comparative Analysis

City of Glen Eira Heritage Management Plan – Vol. 1 (Historical Background):

- Suburban Expansion and Consolidation (1920s-1930s)

²¹ Certificate of Title, Vol. 6063/folio 129

Known comparable places in the City of Glen Eira

To date, only a small group of Interwar period residences have been included individually in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay and/or identified in the HMP as significant, though many are included within precincts. Within the first group, there are no other Old English style houses, though there are dwellings which conform to the Arts and Crafts aesthetic that underpins much early 20th century residential design in Australia, including the Old English style.

- 118 Jasper Road, Bentleigh (HO119) – a large Bungalow style house in red and brown brick with some render. Prominent front porch with paired arches. Date not known, but likely mid-1920s.
- *Avalon*, 8 Sidwell Avenue, St Kilda East (HO82) – a large brick and render bungalow including a prominent and unusual first floor terrace with paired columns. Built 1926-28, by builder/developer Charles T Suhr.
- 30 Elizabeth Street, Elsterwick ('significant' within HO72, Elsterwick Estate and Environs) – a substantial two storey, house built in 1937. Largely obscured from the street, it is mostly rendered with tapestry brick plinth, etc. It appears to be designed in more of a hybrid manner, not uncommon at this time as it displays some aspects of the Georgian Revival and Old English styles.
- There are several modest houses displaying the influence of the Old English style in the existing Interwar period precinct (Bentleigh Environs, HO69) – as well in two proposed precincts in the area, the Bentleigh Heights Estate and the Rose Hill Estate.
- *Moore Residence* (recommended for HO), 200 Centre Road, Bentleigh – single storey but sprawling clinker brick residence with a prominent high-pitched roof, multiple tall chimneys in the Old English style, designed in an accomplished manner by Marsh & Michaelson in 1936.

The Old English style was mainly used for residential buildings, though also for some commercial examples. One non-residential example has been identified as significant in the municipality to date as follows:

- E K Motors, 254-258 Glen Eira Road, Elsterwick (HO24) – a two storey former garage and shops, with upper floor residences. Designed in 1935 by Archibald Ikin in the Old English style, unusually for a garage. It broadly has a similar format and material palette in that the ground floor is clinker brick and the upper floor is battened and rendered, with a terracotta tiled roof.

Condition

Excellent

Integrity

Largely intact

Previous Assessment

C grade (local significance) – Andrew Ward, *City of Caulfield Urban Conservation Study*, field survey sheet 17, 1996

Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls

External Paint Controls	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or Fences	No

Extent of Heritage Overlay

The proposed extent of the heritage overlay would be the parcel of land associated with 21-23 Nepean Highway, Elsternwick.



Recommended extent of heritage overlay
(Source: Nearmap, depicting February 2019)