

CAULFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 202, Caulfield South, 3162

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NEWSLETTER

December 1974
ISSN 0310-1703 20 cents

NEW CAULFIELD NEWSPAPER

Recently your editor attended a meeting convened to consider the establishment of a Caulfield Community Newspaper.

Caulfield is not well served by local papers (three papers circulate through small sections of the City but none covers the entire area) and because of this it was thought that a paper, circulating to every household, which could provide a forum for local comment, was needed. Extensive preliminary work by a joint sub-committee of Caulfield Community Services and Caulfield Youth Services resulted in a feasibility study and a sample of the type of newspaper recommended.

There seems never to have been a strong and continuing community spirit in Caulfield (although it is agreed that tremendous support was gained for patriotic activities during World War II for example) and this was typified at the recent meeting where less than 100 residents were present. Regrettably the work already carried out by the sub-committee was rejected by the meeting and the new sub-committee appears to be back at square one.

This Society commends the establishment of a Community newspaper in some form in the City as it believes that such a paper could provide a focal point for community activity which at this time is disjointed, and lacking in general support. At the same time, the Society recognises that such a newspaper must have sound commercial backing in order to succeed. Without good backing a new paper must ultimately join the list of the eighteen or so papers which for a time existed in the Caulfield district.

COUNCIL GRANT

The Caulfield City Council recently advised that it had considered a request by the Society for assistance and had voted the sum of \$75.00 for use by the Society in its work of recording the history of the City. Since the Society was founded it has received the consistent support of the Council and this grant is further evidence of this support. The Committee of the Society acknowledges the continued interest of the Caulfield City Council for which it is grateful.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

The state government's recently proclaimed REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS includes two buildings situated in Caulfield. They are:-

"GLENFERN"

cnr Inkerman and Hotham Streets, probably built in 1857 for Francis McDonell and subsequently owned by the Boyd family of artists and writers. The house is described in the novels of Martin Boyd.

"LA BASSA"

2 Manor Grove, built between 1887-1890 for A.W. Robertson, the Canadian partner in the firm of Robertson & Wagner, some-time proprietors of Cobb & Co. The house was previously called "ONTARIO".

The 'Historic Buildings Act, 1973' provides for, amongst other requirements, prosecution of owners or occupiers who sell, alter, or demolish a designated building without the authority of the Historic Buildings Preservation Council.

"ANSELM" HOME OF ROBERT HADDON

by J. O'Donnell, B.A., B.Ed.

The main historic claim of "Anselm" is not its age but its place in the development of architecture in Australia. In contrast to some of the older properties in Caulfield, "Anselm" was only built in 1906 by the architect, painter and craftsman Robert Haddon (2) as his home. Apart from Haddon, there have been only two owners, although there was a time when it was let to tenants.

Professor Freeland (1) considers the style of the house to be basically Queen Anne with Art Nouveau decoration applied. Boyd thought that the architect worked 'in a sort of neo-Art Nouveau style which was all his own'. (3) The most striking external feature of the house is a tower with decorative terra cotta panels and iron weather vane. The roof of the house is slate tiles, and three inch thick slate slabs are used as the porch and toilet roofs, on the chimney, and as capping for the pot stands at the front door. At the base of the tower is a hand made tile insert, which was placed on all Haddon's buildings: "This house was erected A.D. 1906 from designs by Robt. J. Haddon FRIBA (Lond.) FRVIA (Melb.) FSAIA, Architect." Also on the tile is the same motif as is found on the copper plaque over the gateway - an angel holding a church in its hand.



The fence and gate are those originally erected for Haddon. The gate has recessed hinges, and wrought iron decorative panel and latch, all hand made like the plaque. Nearly all the catches, window hooks, door knobs, latches and guttering brackets were designed by Haddon. Many of the other art work features in the house were also executed by Haddon from his own designs.

The window to the left of the front door was originally circular, like that seen in the rear wall of the garage, but was replaced by a rectangular window which harmonizes quite well with the bay window on the right of the door. All the windows in the house are composed of rectangular leadlight panes. The window near the back door has three panes of clear glass hinged to the otherwise opaque panes. The glass behind this clear section can be swung back to give a view of callers. The kitchen and master bedroom windows have wooden shutters with hand wrought iron latches and wall catches.

For a house of its period of construction, it is noted for the modernity of its design and use of space. The front door opens into the large lounge-dining room which is protected from immediate gaze by **timber** and 1906 vintage "bottle" glass screen. This same pattern is used in the front door so that continuity is achieved. A feature of the room is the full length kauri wood panelling around the fire place, and the carved crest above the fire. The built-in, dust-proofed wood box is an original fitting, as is the green tile hearth. The tiling used to be more extensive but was damaged by heat and had to be replaced.

The bathroom is approached from the lounge-dining room by a 'hallway' which is also part of the stair-well. Like the 'en-suite' designs of modern display homes access to the bathroom was originally provided for by Haddon from the master bedroom. The room is tiled, as is the current fashion, to the low ceiling, in white. Relief is provided by a frieze near the top of Viking ships on curling waves, in Haddon's favourite colour, green. A recessed area in the wall was for the old chip heater, and the shaving mirror is also recessed into the tile work.

The small kitchen has a large walk-in pantry which was also designed to serve as a separate food preparation area. At the rear of the house Haddon included a separate coal-house, entered by double arched doors, which also contained the coal furnace for heating.

Under the stairs is a small double-doored storage cupboard with an ingenious handle and catch, hand wrought in iron. The stairs themselves are approached directly from the living area.

Upstairs, Haddon's cunning use of space is most evident. On the half-way landing is a small room with 'cupboards' forming part of the wall lining on either side. These in fact provide access between the interior and exterior walls large enough for a man to walk almost around the house with ease. Romantic secret passage ways for children's dreams, but really to provide easy plumbing and electrical wiring facilities.

In the upstairs bedrooms, the slope of the high pitched roof, a feature of Haddon's architecture, is utilized to form built-in wardrobes and cupboards. The ceilings are actually the interior lining of the roof. Originally, there was a virtually unimpeded view across to Caulfield Park, but this has been somewhat spoilt now by houses.

The study is the most interesting room in the house, partly because it contains, on the upper part of its walls, oil paintings by Haddon of panoramic views of Port Phillip Bay. Around three walls are the original built-in cupboards and shelving. The fire place is rather intriguing. The surrounds are of brown tiles; the wood panelling of the chimney cuts off the corner of the room and besides the actual flue for the fire contains a room ventilator and the wiring for the brass light fitting mounted on it. The two carved heads, of Day and Night, are from one of Haddon's churches.

At the rear of the garden is a rather uninteresting looking fibro-cement building, where Haddon came to paint his water colours. It is unusual though, in that the windows were designed from the start to slide between the exterior and interior wall linings. Haddon also had

a special blind whereby he could control the intensity and angle of the light entering while he painted.

"Anselm" is a fascinating house, especially when one remembers that many of its features are still considered 'new' nearly seventy years later.

REFERENCES

1. J.M. Freeland, Architecture in Australia (Melb., 1968)
2. Robin Boyd, Australia's Home (Melb., 1961)
3. Robin Boyd, 'Walter Burley Griffin in Victoria', Vic. Hist. Mag. XXVI, 3 (1955)
4. Mr. C. Graham

CITY HALL

The new Caulfield Year Book indicates some of the many changes which are occurring in the administration of the City of Caulfield following the appointment of the City Manager at the beginning of this year. One minor change which indicates the 'progressive' element in the Council is the abandonment, after sixty-one years, of the term TOWN HALL. The title City Hall is now presumably here to stay. (Note: Caulfield was proclaimed a city in 1913.)

YEAR BOOK

The second annual edition of the CAULFIELD YEAR BOOK has been recently published by the City Council. The format of this edition has been changed from the previous one with more information regarding Council activities being included. The service directory provides the addresses of many of the charitable and other organisations in the City and a comprehensive list of Justices of the Peace is also included.