

St Mark's Anglican Parsonage Heritage Citation

2 November 2022

Place: St Mark's Anglican Parsonage, former (aka the Old Manse)

Address: 201 Melbourne Road, Brown Hill

Build date: 1871-74

Architect: Henry R Caselli

Builder: J. Thornton

Recommendation: Included in the Heritage Overlay to the cadastral boundaries.



History

Locality history

Brown Hill was part of the former municipality of Ballarat East, which also included the districts of Golden Point, Canadian and Eureka. In 1921 Ballarat East was amalgamated with Ballarat City. Brown Hill's main thoroughfare is Humffray Street North, originally known as Brown Hill Road and renamed Humffray Street in 1858 (Federation University 2020).

Brown Hill was established in 1851 as a small gold mining settlement on the eastern outskirts of Ballarat. It was founded upon the land of the Keyeet balug clan of the Wathaurung people, which had been occupied by squatter Peter Inglis from 1847 as the Warrenheip run (Federation University 2020).

The place name originated as Brownbill's diggings, named after an early gold discoverer, William Brownbill (*Victorian Places* 2015).

A school, named Eureka National, opened at the diggings in 1853. Four years later 'Brown's Hill' post office opened. The school became a common school in 1863 (*Victorian Places* 2015). In 1869, a Methodist church opened. The Brown Hill State School, designed by Henry Bastow, was built in 1877. It was later renamed Caledonian State School (*Victorian Places* 2015).

By 1924, a Methodist church, a Church of England, the Brown Hill Hotel (1857), two stores and a police station were in existence in Humffray Street (*Victorian Places* 2015).

Place history

The subject site is located at 201 Melbourne Road, Brown Hill, on parts of Crown Allotments 4 and 13, Section 210, Township of Ballarat East. Melbourne Road was also known as Victoria Street and Old Melbourne Road and was gazetted as the Western Highway in 1945 (*Ballarat East Township plan* 1957).

A survey in 1870 shows that the subject site originally comprised Crown Allotments 13 and 14, Section 210, Ballarat East Township (Reeves 1870). The 1870 survey shows two buildings in existence in that year on Crown Allotment 14 and one building in existence on Crown Allotment 13 (see Figure 1) (Reeves 1870). In later years, Crown Allotment 14 was renumbered Crown Allotment 4. Crown Allotments 4 and 14 have since been subdivided to form 201, 203 and 205 Melbourne Road.

Crown Allotment 13, approximately two acres, was first owned by C G Allanby and others in 1870. Crown Allotment 4 (previously Crown Allotment 14), approximately two roods, was surveyed on behalf of Albert Woodward in 1943 and owned by him in 1944 (Brown 1943; *Ballarat East Township plan* 1957). It appears that Crown Allotment 4 was occupied as a residence area as part of a miner's right and came to be owned by Woodward under the 1935 *Land Act* that allowed for conversion of residence areas to freehold (*Ballarat East Township plan* 1957). A parsonage to serve both St Mark's Church of England at Brown Hill and St John's Church of England at Little Bendigo (now Nerrina) was built on Crown Allotment 13 in 1872-74.

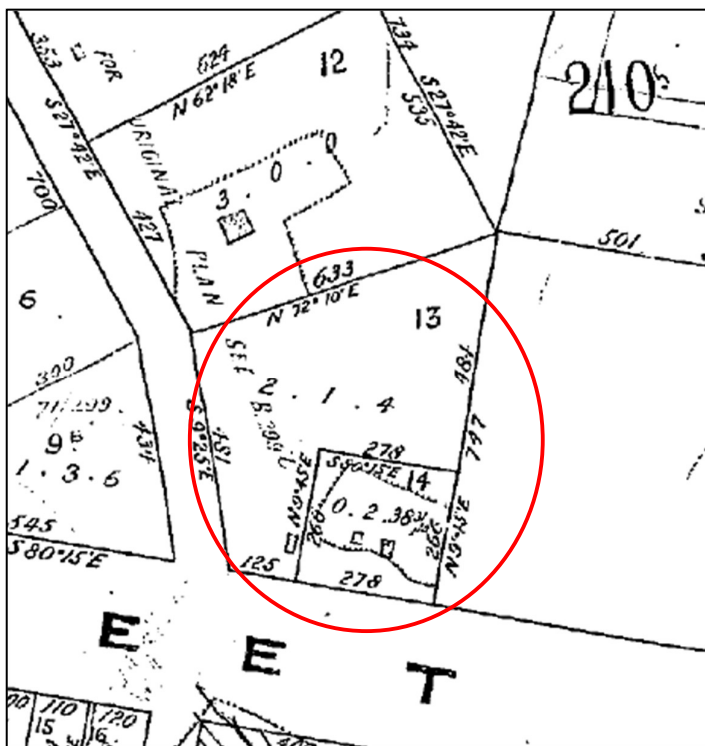


Figure 1. An extract from an 1870 survey plan showing two buildings in existence on Crown Allotment 14 and one building in existence on Crown Allotment 13. (Source: Reeves 1870)

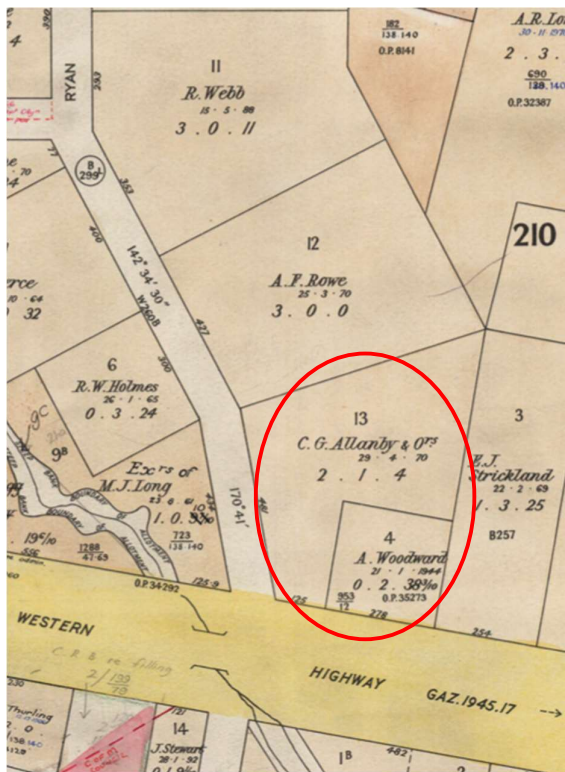


Figure 2. Showing the subject site, Crown Allotments 4 and 13, circled in red, and the names of the first freehold owners. (Source: Ballarat East Township plan 1957)

Land in Humffray Street North, Brown Hill, was reserved for St Mark's Church of England in 1862 and tenders for the construction of a timber church were called for in April of that year. Opening in the same year, the church functioned as the main church in the Church of England Brown Hill Parish (McKenna 2002:8). St Mark's was part of the Diocese of Ballarat, which was created in 1875 with Samuel Thornton appointed the first bishop. In 1862, Rev Christopher Allanby was made curate of St Paul's Church of England at Ballarat East, and in 1866 was appointed incumbent at St Mark's Church of England in Brown Hill (*Ballarat Star* 18 July 1912:5).

In May 1870, Christopher Gibson Allanby, John Philip Oscar Skogland, John Robert Lofven, Edward John Davy and Edward James Strickland, all of Ballarat, became the owners of Crown Allotment 13 (CT:V425 F834). The land was purchased with a view to building a parsonage for Rev Allanby on the site.

In 1870, the members of the Church of England at Little Bendigo and Brown Hill held a bazaar in aid of the parsonage fund (*Ballarat Star* 12 October 1869:2). The district in which the parsonage was to be built, reported the *Ballarat Courier*, was 'thinly populated and very poor'. The members of the church therefore felt compelled to appeal to the richer parishes for assistance (*Ballarat Courier* 15 February 1870:2).

In 1871, tenders were called by diocesan architect H R Caselli for the erection of St Mark's parsonage near Melbourne Road (*Ballarat Star* 20 October 1871:4). Later in that year, the *Ballarat Star* reported:

Operations will be immediately commenced to build a parsonage for the Rev. C. G. Allanby, who has charge of the two Episcopalian churches of Saint Mark, at Brown Hill and St John, at Little Bendigo. Mr H. R. Caselli is the architect, and the committee has accepted Mr J. Thornton's tender for stone and brickwork to the amount of about £200. The new parsonage will occupy a commanding position on the Melbourne road, between Messrs A. Rowe and E. Strickland's villa residences (Ballarat Star 7 November 1871:2).

In 1872, the construction of the parsonage, at the corner of Ryan Street, commenced. Caselli advertised in 1872 for tenders for carpenters and slaters to roof St Mark's parsonage (*Ballarat Star* 28 February 1872:3).

Additional fundraising events by church members were held in the early 1870s to raise monies for the completion of the parsonage, with a bazaar held in 1873 raising £75 (*Ballarat Courier* 17 May 1873:2). In 1874 Caselli called for tenders for the completion of St Mark's parsonage (*Ballarat Star* 10 August 1874:3).

Christopher G Allanby was listed as the owner and occupier of the subject building, which was addressed in Ryan Street, in 1872-73 (RB 1872-73).

The parsonage, described as 'delightfully situated', was advertised for lease in 1877 (*Ballarat Courier* 10 October 1877:3). It is believed that Rev Allanby was visiting England at this time. Minister William K Forbes and minister John Pitfield occupied the parsonage in 1879-80, when the site, described as a 'dwelling' in the rate book of that year, had a net annual value (NAV) of £24 (RB 1879-80). Allanby returned to live in the parsonage c1881.

Fundraising for the upkeep of the parsonage, including the organising of bazaars and concerts, continued in the 1880s and 1890s (*Ballarat Star*: 28 July 1882:2 and 3 October 1893:2; *Gippsland Times* 26 October 1883:3).

In 1891, Archdeacon C G Allanby married Alice Fletcher (*Sydney Morning Herald* 8 December 1891:5). This may have provided the impetus to enlarge the house, with a small addition at the rear (south-eastern) corner which contained a laundry and other utility areas.

This addition may correspond to a request for tenders in 1892 from architects Figgis and Molloy for additions to St Mark's parsonage for the Venerable Archdeacon Allanby, though these were described as weatherboard (*Ballarat Star* 1 June 1892:3). Alternatively, it is possible that the brick addition was somewhat earlier, while the 1892 addition was to the north-east corner of the house (NB: this timber lean-to was demolished c2000).

In 1900-01, the parsonage had a NAV of £30, a rise of £6 from 1891, evidencing the existence of the additions (RB 1900-01).

Allanby continued to be listed in the rate books as the owner and occupier of the subject property until 1911-12 (RB 1911-12). Rate books are not available for 1913 and 1914, but it is believed he lived in the parsonage until he retired and returned to England in 1914. By 1920-21, ownership of the subject property had passed into the hands of the trustees of St Mark's and St John's, Ballarat. The property had a NAV of £33 at this time (RB 1920-21).

In March 1940, Crown Allotment 13 passed into the ownership of the Ballarat Diocesan Trustees of Cathedral Buildings, and in May 1940 was sold to Henry Irving Pascoe. Sawmiller Albert Woodward and married woman, Ada Woodward, became the owners in December 1941 (CT:V425 F834). As mentioned above, in 1944 Albert Woodward also became the owner of Crown Allotment 4 (CT:V6682 F201).



Figure 3. Crown Allotments 13 and 4, in 1934. The Parsonage is indicated by an arrow. The western and southern boundaries are lined with trees and a driveway leads from Melbourne Road. The miner's right dwelling on CA 4 is visible just to the south-east of the Parsonage. (Australian Aerial Photography, MAP2803, Run 4, Frame 13338, 12 March 1934)

In 1952, Crown Allotments 4 and 13 were subdivided and divided between Donald Henry Woodward and John Wesley Woodward (CT:V425 F834 & CT:V6682 F201). Shortly after, that same year, sawmiller John Wesley Woodward of Ballarat became the owner of both Crown Allotment 4 and 13 (CT:V7766 F199). The occupiers of both allotments, a total of three acres, however, were listed in the rate books from 1941-42 to 1972 as Ada and Albert Woodward (Ballarat Heritage Services 2007).

Donald Henry Woodward proceeded to construct a new brick veneer house on his portion of CA 4, now 205 Melbourne Road. He gradually enlarged it, in 1969, 1973 and 1975 (City of Ballarat).

From 1972, both allotments were owned by schoolteacher Judith (Judi) Honor Francis Woodward of Bungaree. In January 1977, Judi Woodward applied to construct (presumably for her own use) a two-storey 'studio-residence for professional practice of artist-lecturer' at the northern edge of the block (City of Ballarat), but it appears this did not occur. Later that year, she married sheet metal worker James Michael Hill, and he was a joint owner until 1983 (CT:V7766 F199).

Together, in 1981 the Hills applied to construct a small glasshouse at the southern end of the property and to carry out extensive repair works to the former Parsonage. This work included: replacement of the existing slates with roofing iron, raising the level of internal valley gutter, replacement of windows (locations not indicated), underpinning the external wall in two places, inserting a dampproof course, making good floors, installing new ceiling joists, and making operative external drains around house (City of Ballarat). These works appear to correspond to photos provided by the previous owners that

shows the house with a new galvanized corrugated steel roof, window sashes removed, and a concrete mixer pouring a new floor slab in the north-west (front) room (see below). At this time, or somewhat later, three dormer windows were added to the original single dormer on the northern slopes of the roof (Pers. comm. M & C Sargent, 2022).



Figure 4. The former Parsonage undergoing works c1981. Note the new roofing, windows removed, and mixer pouring a concrete floor. (Collection of C & M Sargent)

In 1983, the property reverted to the sole ownership of Judi Hill, presumably following her divorce from James Hill (CT:V7766 F199). In 1993 Judi reverted to her maiden name (Ballarat Heritage Services 2007). According to local sources, the house was sabotaged due to an acrimonious divorce of Judi's father in the late 1970's, with all windows and doors removed (Pers. comm. M & C Sargent, 2022). Considering the building permit granted for the repair works, including window replacement, in September 1981, part of this dismantling may have simply been repair works that were started but not finished due to the relationship breakdown.

St Mark's Anglican Church in Humffray Street North, Brown Hill, was removed in 1985 and the associated hall was demolished. The land is now the residential 'Heritage Court' (McAlpin 2020:24).

The former Parsonage was purchased by Helen Jennings in 1995, and by Merrilyn and Colin Sargent in 2000 (McAlpin 2020:24; CT:V7766 F199). The Sargents carried out an extensive restoration of the house, which had been stripped of many elements and was in a poor condition by 2000.

They reconstructed the crenelated bay window to the front of the house on the basis of an old photo and a remnant piece of the parapet found on site.



Figure 5. Above: View of the former Parsonage from the south, with the original crenelated bay window visible at left and slate roof, n.d.; Right: The extensively altered bay window on the east elevation in 2000, prior to its restoration. (Collection of M & C Sargent)



The Sargents also replaced the previously removed windows with those salvaged from a Victorian house in Sturt Street. Mouldings were added to non-original external doors. The front verandah was long-gone, so was reconstructed in a simple design with tessellated tiles in a pattern typical for Ballarat.

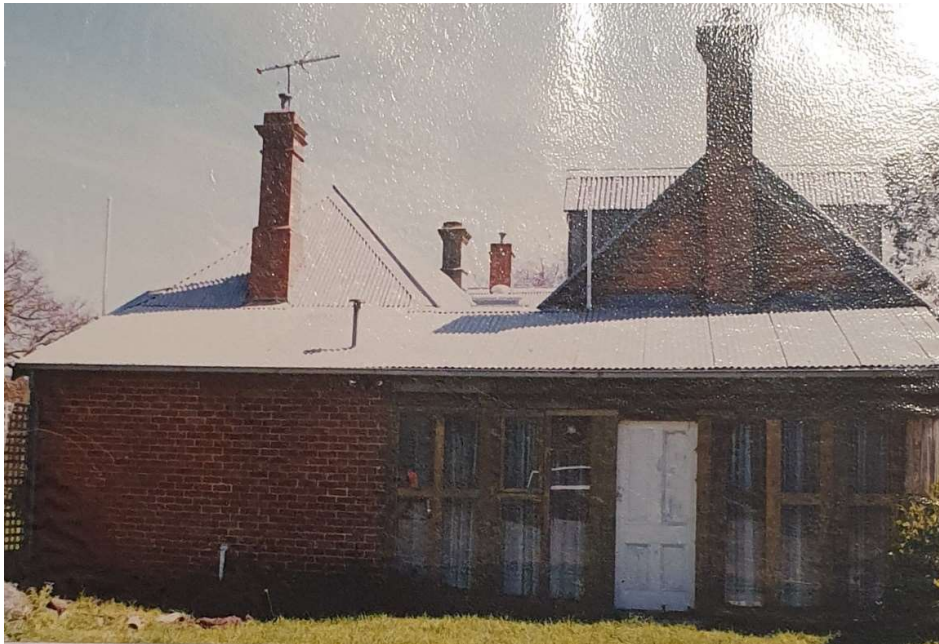


Figure 6. East (rear) elevation of former Parsonage in 2000, prior to demolition of the timber-framed part of the rear lean-to (at right). (Collection of M & C Sargent)

The Sargents removed the timber lean-to from the north-east corner of the house, and replaced it with a larger brick rear extension in 2003. A large garage-workshop to the south of the house dates to 2000 (Pers. comm. M & C Sargent, 2022).

Associations

Christopher Gibson Allanby, occupier 1872-1914

Born in Sorell, Tasmania, in 1836, Christopher Gibson Allanby came to Victoria aged 21 years. After working as a lay reader in Buninyong and St Peter's in East Melbourne, he became one of the first students trained for the Anglican priesthood at Moore College, then located at Liverpool, New South Wales. Dr Perry ordained Allanby and sent him as a curate to Ballarat in 1862 (*The Bulletin* 1917:14; *Herald* 29 July 1912:3).

On Allanby's retirement in 1914, the *Ballarat Star* summarised his life achievements:

A career of magnificent service to the Church and the Brown Hill parish will close on Saturday next, when the Ven. Archdeacon Allanby, who recently resigned from the charge, retires from active work of the Church of England. Archdeacon Allanby, accompanied by his wife and two daughters, sails for England by the R.M.S. Orsova on April 15, and intends to live at Croydon, near London, where they have many relatives and friends. The Archdeacon, who is now 77 years of age, has seen over 50 years' service in the church.

He was born in Tasmania, but came to Victoria in 1858, and after the usual preparation was ordained in 1862 by the late Bishop Perry. He was appointed to the incumbency of Brown Hill, at the same time acting as curate of St. Paul's Church for about four years. When he took charge of Brown Hill parish there was but the shell of the old schoolroom, the debt on which had not been paid off, and a tumble-down school at Little Bendigo.

During his incumbency he had built, and collected the money for, the erection of nine churches in the parish, viz., Lal Lal, Yendon, Warrenheip, Bungaree, Pootilla, Mollonghip, Brown Hill, and Nerrina (then called Little Bendigo), in addition to four schoolrooms and a parsonage.

In 1884 he was appointed Archdeacon of the Wimmera, which position he held for nearly 12 years, and was then made Archdeacon of Loddon, holding that important charge for some eight years. He still retained the charge of Brown Hill, although Archdeacon of the Wimmera and the Loddon dioceses. During the two archdeaconries the reverend gentleman was instrumental in building about 20 churches and several parsonages, most of the money of which was collected by him, travelling on foot. He regularly walked from 10 to 30 miles per day on rough roads, and told our representative, with a feeling of pride, that he had walked the whole of the ground from 10 miles beyond Stawell to the South Australian border. Asked as to the extent of his work in the Brown Hill parish, the Archdeacon stated that the parish comprised a wide area, being 30 miles long by 10 miles broad, and extending from Elaine to Meredith on the south, Daylesford on the north, and Moorabool on the east. He had walked every inch of his parish, and in the early days, when the roads were not roads, he had some trying experiences. Ballarat could only boast a few churches when he first arrived here...

He said he was very fond of England, and had been home on two occasions... (Ballarat Star 12 February 1914:6).

Allanby died in England in 1917. He had a small road named for him, Allanby Street, which is off Ryan Street and runs through to Bradbury Street. It is still shown on some maps of the area, but it has since fallen into disuse (McAlpin 2020:24).



Figure 7. Christopher Gibson Allanby, c1916. (Source: Photo by Walter Stoneman, National Portrait Gallery, London)



Figure 8. A photo taken outside St Paul's Anglican Church, Ballarat East. Pictured are Archdeacon Allanby (far left); Rev T A Colebrook; Canon Forster; Archdeacon Tucker; The Very Reverend Dean N Lindon Parklyn; and the Right Rev A. V. Green Lord Bishop, date unknown. (Source: Ballarat Historical Society 369.81)

Henry Caselli, architect

Henry Richard Caselli was born at Falmouth, Cornwall in 1816. The son of a naval architect, before Caselli arrived in Australia in 1853 on board the *Gazelle* he was apprenticed to a shipyard for seven years and later became a naval architect. On his arrival he stated his occupation as a ‘mast and block maker’. He worked for Lloyd’s Shipping Company as a surveyor in Geelong until 1854 then tried his luck on the Ballarat goldfields. After minor success digging for gold he returned to architecture, establishing an office in the Chamber of Commerce Buildings in Sturt Street, Ballarat. He designed many of Ballarat’s key buildings, such as the interior of the Ballarat Town Hall and Ballarat East Fire Station. He supervised the construction in Victoria of a number of churches designed by the English Gothic Revival architect Charles Hansom, and his church designs were strongly influenced by these. Caselli became the Ballarat Anglican Diocese’s architect, and designed for other denominations as well. He formed a joint practice with Charles D. Figgis in the early 1880s. Caselli died in 1885 at the age of 69 at Ballarat and is buried in the Ballarat Old Cemetery (Federation University 2022; Heritage Victoria 2008; *Ballarat Star* 4 March 1885:2).

Some of his religious designs in Ballarat and beyond include:

- Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Buninyong, 1861
- St James’ Anglican Church, Little Bendigo (Nerrina), 1864
- St John’s Anglican Church, Bungaree, 1869
- St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, 1872, designed with W.B. Tappin
- St Patrick’s Catholic Church, Gordon, 1872
- St John’s Lutheran Church, Ballarat, 1876
- Congregational Church (former), Ballarat Central, 1881 with Figgis
- St Alipius’ Catholic Church, Ballarat East, 1883 with Figgis (and the Presbytery of 1859, replaced in 1905)

He also designed churches in Snake Valley, Bacchus Marsh, Clunes, Creswick, Stawell, Beaufort, and at Lake Condah (Australian Christian Church Histories; M Lewis).

Description

Setting

The former St Mark’s Parsonage stands on a sloping site, in an elevated position above both Melbourne Road and Ryan Street. The current block is an irregular polygon which is narrowest along the Melbourne Road frontage and then widens out to the north. As shown in Figure 3, in 1934 the driveway extended directly south from the rear of the Parsonage to Melbourne Road. Since that time its southern half has been diverted to curve to a new entrance on Ryan Street. The original outlet of the driveway is visible as a gap in the row of trees along the southern boundary.

This row of trees continues from the Melbourne Road boundary along most of the Ryan Street boundary. They are a mix of mature Dutch Elm and English Oak trees. They are visible in a semi-mature state in the 1934 aerial photo, so were definitely planted during the site’s time as a parsonage. There are 11 trees in all, included in the Ballarat Exceptional Tree Register as they are considered to be important historically and aesthetically.

The former Parsonage, now a private home, faces east, toward Ryan Street. To its south, along the western property boundary, is a large brick shed/garage built in 2000.

There is a lawn and a densely planted garden border directly around the house, most of it planted by the current owners. One exception is a Golden Ash on the south side of the house, which the owners surmise may have been planted to commemorate Allanby's Golden Jubilee as a priest in 1912.

House

The former Parsonage has a complex hipped and gabled roof form, currently clad in new corrugated steel (but originally slate). The front rooms sit beneath a transverse gabled roof with a projecting gable to the front. Rooms to the rear are below a hipped roof with an internal valley gutter. There are two small dormers near the rear of the north roof slope, and another hidden in the valley.



Figure 9. Front section of the former Parsonage, showing the two gables and one of the rendered chimneys. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

There are several chimney types, indicating both hierarchy of rooms and build-dates. Near the front of the house are the two most prestigious chimneys, finished in cement render with a cornice resting on brackets. A rear chimney on the north side of the house has the same cornice type, but a face-brick shaft. The chimney of the c1890s extension, at the south-east corner of the house, is constructed entirely of hard red face bricks, with moulded “specials” forming a cornice at the top.

Walls are constructed of handmade red bricks with lime mortar jointing. They are set atop rock-faced bluestone foundations, except to the south-east corner extension, which has a brick plinth. All bricks are in a running bond, indicating cavity wall construction. The type of wall ties, if any, is unknown.

The front and side gables have a pierced timber bargeboards with a trefoil design and timber finial-pendant. The front gable features the carefully reconstructed canted bay window with a fine pierced trefoil detail to its parapet. A simple Victorian-style reproduction verandah shelters the other side of the front façade.

Most windows have flat brick arches and bluestone sills. As noted in the history, all window sashes are recent installations.

The 2003 rear addition imitates the form of the front façade, but is differentiated from the earlier parts of the house by a separate roof form and modern red bricks.

Comparative analysis

As noted in the History, the former St Mark's Anglican Parsonage was designed by prolific and esteemed Ballarat architect, Henry R Caselli. He was a skilled designer in a range of styles, producing fine classical banks, retail and office buildings, as well as Gothic Revival churches.

Among his oeuvre, the parsonages and other residential commissions are the most appropriate comparators. These include:

Dunvegan, 806 Mair Street, Ballarat Central (HO166) – A large rendered single-storey house of 1856-57 attributed to HR Caselli. It is elegant and restrained with an imposing masonry return verandah and pedimented entrance porch.



Figure 10. Dunvegan, Mair Street, Ballarat Central. (Google Maps, 2009)

El Tambo (Warringah), 80 Mercer Street, Queenscliff (VHR H1177) – A single storey stuccoed sandstone house with a hipped slate roof extending over the encircling verandah. Built c1860, its design is attributed to Caselli.



Figure 11. El Tambo, Queenscliff. (realestate.com.au, 2012)

Ceres, Coghlan's Road, Learmonth – A single-storey classical revival mansion of 1864. It has rendered walls and freestone detailing to the entrance porch and canted bay window.



Figure 12. Ceres, Learmonth. (Homestolove.com.au, 2019)

Kent Villa (Cairnhurst), 24 Webster Street, Ballarat Central (HO166) – Henry Caselli's home, built to his design in 1865 and extended c1900. It appears that the rear section is the 1860s part.



Figure 13. Kent Villa, Webster Street. (realestate.com.au, 2020)

Oaklands (Elsinore), 13 Hotham Street, Lake Wendouree (HO166) – A two-storey mansion of c1869 in a large garden with bluestone ground-floor walls and brick (overpainted) above. The roof form suggests it was built in two stages.



Figure 14. 13 Hotham Street, Lake Wendouree. (Google Maps, 2019)

Glenfine Homestead, Werneth (Golden Plains, VHR H1206) – a substantial, Gothically styled two-storey rendered bluestone residence designed in 1872.



Figure 15. Glenfine Homestead. (Pinterest, n.d.)

Congregational (Uniting) Church Manse, 505 Mair Street, Ballarat Central (HO90) – The adjacent church was designed by Caselli & Figgis and completed in 1882. The adjacent manse may also be their work, constructed around the same time. (Certainly, it does not date to 1862 as some sources suggest.)



Figure 16. Former Congregational Church Manse, Ballarat Central. (realestate.com.au, 2020)

Former Female Refuge, 183 Scott Parade, Ballarat East (VHR H1893) – A two-storey bichrome brick building of 1884 which is of state architectural significance as a notable example of the work of prominent Ballarat architectural firm Caselli & Figgis with unusual detailing around the windows.



Figure 17. Former Female Refuge. (Heritage Victoria, 2008)

In comparison to the other identified examples of Caselli's (and Caselli & Figgis') residential designs, the former St Mark's Parsonage is very modest, most comparable in this regard to El Tambo, Queenscliff. This is understandable, considering the straitened financial circumstances of the local parish at the time it was built, and also because it is more likely for more substantial buildings to have an identified architect (as they are researched in more detail when considered for heritage listing).

That said, the former Parsonage shares its Gothic Revival style with Glenfine Homestead, the Congregational Church Manse, and possibly with the 1865 wing of Caselli's own home, though no specific design details are shared across these four buildings.

Due to its modest design, and the loss of information about original details such as the front verandah, as well as replacement of much of the original building material, it is clear that the former Parsonage is not significant at a local level for its architectural design per se.

The construction technique used to build the walls of the Parsonage, however, are of particular interest and significance. As noted in the description, they are cavity walls, as indicated by the running bond and confirmed by a 1980s photo held by the current owners.

Miles Lewis (2014: 60.4) reports that the first true brick cavity wall first appeared in Melbourne in 1867 and then spread rapidly in rural areas of Victoria in the period 1868-71. Early examples he documents include the 1873 'St Albans' homestead near Geelong (designed by architect JT Conlon), and the 1875 'Springfield' homestead in Berwick (architect, George Browne). Bendigo architect Robert Alexander Love is credited with many of the earliest surviving true cavity wall buildings, in Bendigo and Stawell, and was most likely the person who introduced this construction technique to the region, following his time in the United States. Examples include the 1868 St Matthew's Church, Stawell, the 1868 Bible Christian Chapel (now St Jude's Church of England), Upper California Gully (Bendigo), and the 1869-70 Stawell Grammar School. Prolific Bendigo architect WC Vahland was also an early user of this technique, beginning with 'Euroma' in 1870. Lewis does not record any examples in Ballarat.

Other examples of early cavity wall construction that are noted as having heritage significance for this reason (among others) include:

- Bendigo HO51 Ascot Park, 66 Taylor Street, Ascot – A c1872 two-storey house in a simplified Gothic Revival style with a variation of English Bond brickwork (rows of headers and stretchers) noted in an 1888 sale notice as having 'hollow walls'.
- Bendigo HO261 All Saints' Master's Residence, cnr Mackenzie and Forest streets, Bendigo – A two-storey high style Gothic Revival building designed in 1873 by architect Frederick Wyatt and built in 1877. It is significant as an early example of the use of cavity walls in Victoria.
- Moorabool HO100 'Pentland' house and garden, 85-87 Main Street, Bacchus Marsh – A single-storey Italianate house designed by Shire Engineer DA Little as his home in 1892. It is significant for its incorporation of a relatively early cavity wall.

While the former Parsonage, designed in 1871 and completed in 1874, is several years later than the first known examples of cavity-wall construction in Victoria, it is of a comparable age to other houses recognised as significant for their "relatively early cavity walls". Furthermore, it is the earliest example identified to-date in the City of Ballarat. The only other example found in the Hermes database is a 1930s house in the Colpin Avenue Heritage Precinct (HO184). The relatively early adoption of this new construction technique by Henry Caselli also helps to build a picture of him as an architect with an interest in innovation.

Assessment of significance

The following statement of significance has been expressed in regard to the 'Model' or HERCON heritage criteria.

What is significant?

The former St Mark's Parsonage, 201 Melbourne Road, Brown Hill, is significant. It was designed by Henry R Caselli, who was both Ballarat Diocesan architect and designer of many of Ballarat's finest secular buildings, and built by J Thornton. It was originally intended to serve as the residence of the minister for both St Mark's Church of England at Brown Hill and St John's Church of England at Little Bendigo (now Nerrina).

The land was purchased by church trustees in 1870, and tenders to construct the parsonage called in 1871, but it was not completed until 1874.

The parsonage was occupied by Reverend (later Archdeacon) Christopher Allanby until 1914, and continued to serve as a parsonage until 1940, at which time it became a private residence.

The following elements of the place are of heritage value:

- The 1872-74 original extent of the brick house, and the c1890s addition to the south-east corner.
- The elevated setting, with views to the west to Ballarat Central, ringed by an avenue of mature Dutch Elm and English Oak trees planted prior to 1934.

The 2003 rear (east) extension, outbuildings and recent plantings are not of heritage significance.

How is it significant?

The former St Mark's Parsonage is of historical, technical and aesthetic significance to the City of Ballarat.

Why is it significant?

Historically, the former parsonage illustrates the early development of Brown Hill and the efforts of the local Anglican community to establish their infrastructure including housing for their minister. The modest size and form of the house, with its simple Gothic Revival details including a pierced bargeboard and trefoil design to the bay window parapet, is indicative of the limited financial means of the sparsely populated and poor district in which it took three years to raise enough money to gradually complete the building. (Criterion A)

Technically, the former parsonage is an early example of cavity wall construction in the Ballarat area. This early adoption by prominent and prolific Ballarat architect Henry R Caselli indicates that he was open to useful new technologies as they appeared. (Criterion F)

Aesthetically, the former parsonage in its generous hillside setting ringed by early tree avenue plantings creates an attractive composition that illustrates the rural origins of Brown Hill. (Criterion E)

Statutory recommendations

In recognition of the local heritage significance of the former St Mark's Parsonage, 201 Melbourne Road, Brown Hill, the place should be protected in the Ballarat Heritage Overlay.

Extent of overlay: an appropriate curtilage would be to the property boundaries, three of which (west, north, south) are consistent with the original site boundary. This extent encompasses the avenue of trees, along the south and west boundaries.

Tree controls: Yes – avenue of Dutch Elm and English Oak trees.

Reference list

Australian Christian Church Histories, www.churchhistories.net.au, accessed 26 September 2022.

Ballarat Courier, as cited.

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