

GREENWICH HOUSE



1 greenwich house irving road toorak front view



Main facade to Irving Road



75IrvingRoad.jpg



H0693 H0693 plan

Location

75-77 IRVING ROAD TOORAK, STONNINGTON CITY

Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0693

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO63

VHR Registration

August 24, 1988

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 24, 1999

What is significant?

Greenwich House is a large Toorak mansion built in 1869 for the merchant and politician James Lorimer, probably to the design of the architect Leonard Terry. The two storey house is an Italianate style bay-fronted mansion of eighteen rooms, notable for the central Roman Doric portico and restrained ornamentation.

How is it significant?

Greenwich House is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Greenwich House is of historical significance as one of the oldest surviving Toorak residences. Its associations with a number of important figures and its changes in use over a long period make it a valuable historical document through which many social and economic transformations can be traced. The house was one of the first built on the early close sub-divisions in the Toorak district, at a time when the area was becoming keenly sought after as a site for residences of the wealthy. Its original owner, James Lorimer, moved from the house in 1876 as his growing status demanded a more substantial residence. Subsequent owners made their own alterations, expanding the house with additions such as a ballroom, extended servants' quarters and more bedrooms. But by the 1920s its years as a family residence were numbered. Like many of Melbourne's mansion houses, Greenwich House underwent many changes of use in the 20th century, reflecting changing social and economic conditions. Much of its original grounds were subdivided and built upon, the house itself was converted to flats and then to hostel accommodation for the Navy, before becoming the Chinese consulate in the 1980s.

Greenwich House has been associated with a number of important individuals and families, emphasising the desirability of both the house and the area in which it was located. James Lorimer (1831-1889), its first owner, was a prominent contributor to public life from the 1860s to his death in 1889. He was a prosperous merchant and foundation commissioner of the Melbourne Harbour Trust (Lorimer Street in Port Melbourne commemorates his contribution to the development of Melbourne's port) as well as a noted banker and politician. In the 1860s Lorimer took an active role in opposition to protection, playing an important part in election campaigns on behalf of the Constitutional Party. Lorimer sold the house to William Halliday in 1876. Halliday, a grazier and member of the NSW Legislative Assembly, is chiefly remembered for his involvement in the battles between NSW

pastoralists and the emerging labour unions in the latter part of the 19th century, one of the most formative periods of Australian political life. Other notable owners or lessees of the house included the Austin family, prominent pastoralists, and the theatre director Frank Thring who leased the house to entertain actors and other theatre people. Although Greenwich House has been altered over the years, its basic early 20th century form remains intact as an excellent illustration of the lifestyles of Melbourne's business and political elite.

Greenwich House is of architectural significance as an example of the residential work of the prominent architects Leonard Terry and to a lesser extent Harold Desbrowe Annear. Terry (1825-1884), who is likely to have been the original architect, was the designer of many bank and church buildings in Victoria from the 1850s to the 1880s. Desbrowe Annear (1865-1933), who carried out substantial alterations to the house in 1918-20, was one of Melbourne's most innovative architects, making a significant contribution to the development of a uniquely Australian style of architecture in the early decades of the 20th century.

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Construction dates	1869,
Architect/Designer	Terry, Leonard,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	EILYER, FANE COURT, BROOKONG, THE CHINESE CONSULATE,
Hermes Number	1162
Property Number	

History

Contextual History:History of Place:

James Lorimer arrived in Victoria from Scotland in 1853. He founded a successful merchant and shipping agent company, Lorimer Mackie and Co. Lorimer was involved in politics from the mid-1860s. He was president of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce from 1868-70 and a foundation commissioner of the Melbourne Harbour Trust, 1877-86. He also held several directorships with various banks. Lorimer was elected to the Legislative Council in 1878 and was President of the Malvern Shire, 1878-80. In 1886 he became Minister for Defence in the Gillies-Deakin Ministry, and in 1887 represented Deakin at the Imperial Conference in London, where he was also knighted. He died in September 1889.

Associated People: Sir James Lorimer (First Chairman Melbourne Harbour Trust, and Minister of Defence (1886) in the Deakin Government)

Extent of Registration

AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 693.

Greenwich House, 75-79 Irving Road, Toorak

to the extent of all of the buildings and all of the land described in the Certificate of Title Volume 8049 Folio 415 according to the plan held by the Ministry for Planning and Environment.

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G32 24 August 1988 p.2561]

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>