

# A HISTORY OF 26 PROSPECT HILL ROAD, CAMBERWELL, VICTORIA



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## FOREWORD: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

When Sam and I were looking for a house to buy in 1967 after we'd returned from Sydney, we looked in an arc from Eaglemont through today's Boroondara to Malvern. We were familiar with the area and it was within reasonable, I was going to write "striking", distance of Melbourne University where Sam was taking up the Robert Wallace Chair of Literature following the death of Graham Johnson (and much else in our own lives).

Barry Iles showed us No. 26 before it had come on the market. I don't know what about it attracted Sam, except that it did fit the pattern of large mansion-ish houses I'd seen him drawn to before. We once spent about two hours going minutely over a huge house (possibly "Auburn Lodge", now 242 Auburn Road), then divided into about six flats with another in a cavernous full-sized, free-standing billiard room, all wildly impractical unless you liked running up and down two sets of staircases often. (Fortunately that one was out of our price range, even before the renovations began.)

For me, that galvanised iron fence along Prospect Hill Road and the huge pepper tree gave the feel of the house-block of a farm – and perhaps that reminded me of the country towns in which I'd grown up where old houses, schools and churches had pepper trees planted for shade.

Inside, the room with the bay window (echoed outside by the return verandah) seemed to suggest "Tennis anyone?" and perhaps reminded me of the Shineberg's home where I had so many opportunities as a child and teenager, thanks to their generosity in sharing their large family, house, out-buildings, pony, tennis court and garden, (not to mention their books, records, strawberries, pipe-tobacco, board games, parties and trees-to-climb) with the entire neighbourhood. That was never Sam's and my lifestyle but it was part of the appeal for me. I envisaged the bay window with polished wooden seats where one could recline and read but despite the many different uses to which that room was put over the years, that image, that derived from 58 White Street, Tamworth, the home of my youth, was never realised.

The spacious house and block suited us well as parents of two young boys. It was close to schools and public transport; had sufficient rooms to permit a study; and the privacy afforded by the high hedge suited two inward-looking adults. Later there was ample room for Kate; and Jane, the dog; and the terrapin; and the guinea pigs; and much later, Grandma and Tenny and Ali and various follies of mine.

I think part of the impetus to look into the history of the house has been for me to check whether or not I was right about that initial impression of the farm house-yard. But there were many other questions to answer: why the different sizes of slates? why the varying floor boards? why blue-stone foundations under only two rooms? why the path from the back of the house ending in a fence? In short, I think the "prospect" drew us all.

J. Goldberg Sep. 2009

## ON WRITING

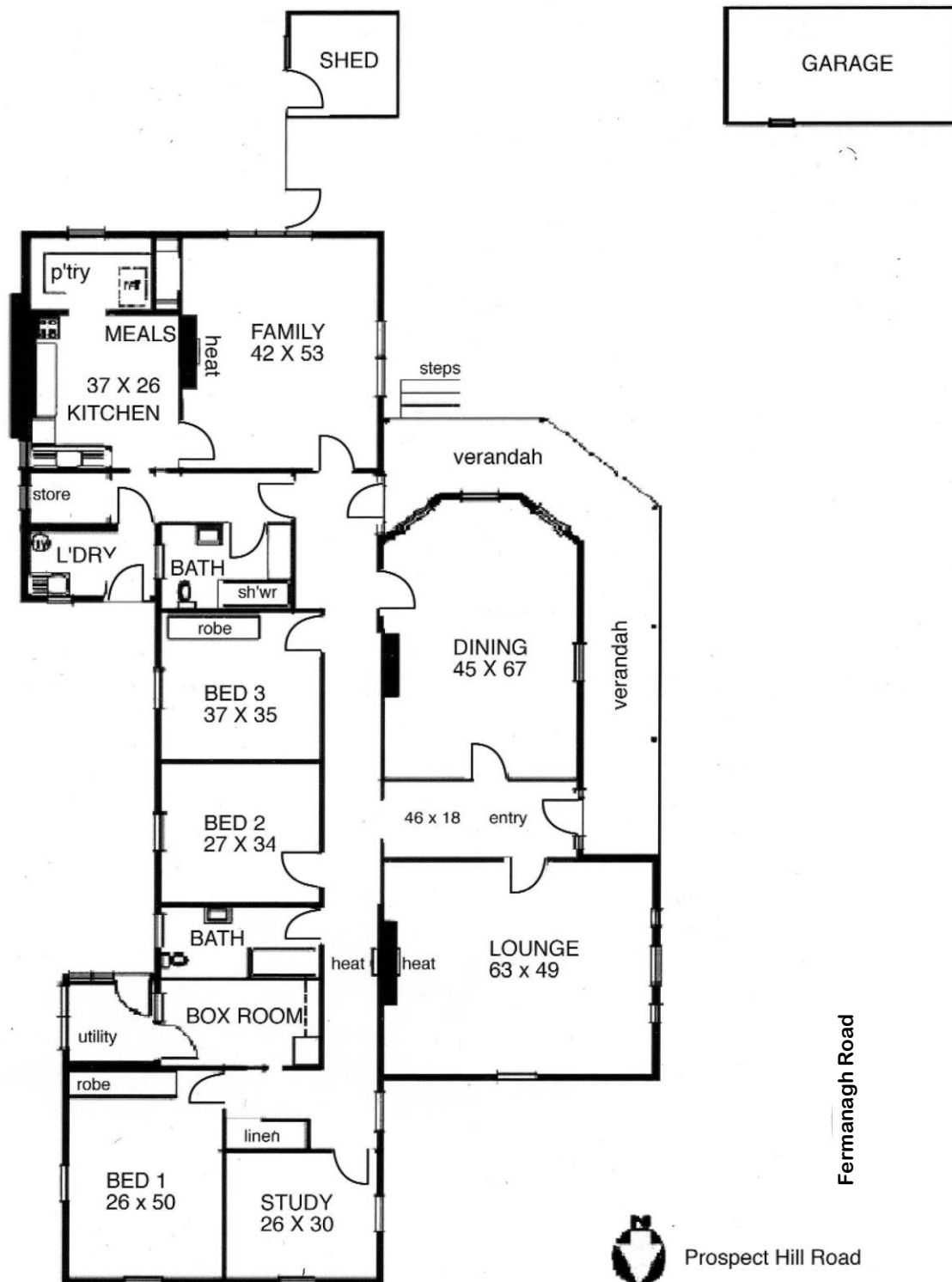
Thanks to all the people who've helped me put this together. You range from librarians to friends and family. Peter found out enough in the State Library in his lunch hours in 1996 to spur me to greater action and he has helped with interest and technical skills. Kate and Lizi have been my patient computer trainers, and judging from my last piece of writing, Richard will be the one to read it. Gwen McWilliam was especially generous in her help. Not only has her legacy as Local Historian been immensely useful but she also wrote to me in detail about my search: for which, much thanks. Elaine and Bruce Shields and, of course, Mrs Thomas when she was alive, have been locals who helped to relate the words to living. Tim Kelly and Pat Taylor have been my much-appreciated critical readers. Thanks to all.

Instead of doing a proper historical job, footnoting the sources of the information, I've settled for giving my arguments for thinking x to be the case at a level in which a general reader might be interested.

- By and large I have used today's names, e.g. Burke Road, but where chronologically relevant I point out the earlier versions. Camberwell became a Shire in November 1871 giving it control of its local affairs. This was when the rate books started to record houses, and street names were set, e.g. the "Government Road" became "Prospect Hill Road".
- I am assuming that readers remember the borders of Camberwell, Kew and Hawthorn as they were before their amalgamation into the City of Boroondara in 1994.
- In the sections where I try to give an idea of the spread of settlement to, and within, Camberwell, I've relied heavily on Blainey's *History of Camberwell*, (Lothian, 1980) – far beyond, I fear, what would be permitted in a published work. But he has done it so well, it seems inescapable.
- Some maps and documents are incorporated into the account but others are in two folders as indicated in the text: LF = Large folder and SF = Small folder
- I have given the dates of the legal transfer of ownership, but often, of course, that doesn't necessarily coincide with information in rate books and directories as they were compiled annually.

This is the plan of the house at 26 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell, when we bought it in May 1967.

*Figure 1: Plan of the house - 1967*



## I. BACKGROUND TO THE SETTLING OF CAMBERWELL

When the British settled the eastern part of Australia in 1788 the whole of that was called, and governed as, the Colony of New South Wales. It was planned to be a largely self-supporting penal colony. But by the 1830s the suitability of much of it for the grazing of fine-wool sheep and other stock led to an expansion of settlement. The early governors of NSW tried to restrict this to the Nineteen Counties (an arc of about 250 miles around Sydney). This was in accordance with the British government's policy of trying to ensure civilized living with an eye to curtailing expenditure as they knew that, once people moved into an area, services such as police and roads would be required. They wanted to keep control of the Crown's land in case of further free settlement and as a source of revenue (and very occasionally mentioning the needs of the indigenous inhabitants.) However, some graziers ignored this and settled illegally outside that area and that is what "squatter" means. Sometimes they were trail-blazers and sometimes they followed the reports of explorers such as Oxley and Hume and Hovell. When, in 1836, Major Mitchell, the Surveyor General of NSW, was sent to report on the land south of what is now known as the Murray River he pronounced it ideal – "Australia Felix". Henty had already brought his stock from today's Tasmania to land near Portland.

An abortive defence settlement and seasonal visits by whalers meant that something was already known of to-day's Victorian coast. But, essentially, what became the Port Phillip District of NSW was settled by squatters such as Fawkner and Batman bringing flocks from Van Diemens Land (Tasmania) and/or overlanding them. Needless to say, such a fertile and well-watered area had long been home to aboriginal people. Melbourne began as a small settlement on the Yarra River near a natural shoal that separated fresh from salt water and prevented ships from proceeding further upstream. It thrived as a service centre to the hinterland.

By the 1830s the squatters were keen to have security over their runs and the Land Question had become a pressing political issue. Governor Bourke established a licensing system. For £10 a year the squatter had legal recognition of his holding. The original high price of land of £1 an acre was retained but could be used only in specified districts (which were more than 5 miles from surveyed townships). Governor Bourke, on hearing that the Port Phillip District was already being settled, and being keen to have a model town, travelled there in May 1837 with Robert Hoddle and made him senior surveyor over the previously appointed Robert Russell and his assistants. The town plan was laid out and officially named "Melbourne". Hoddle presided over the first auction of land on 1 June 1837: the 100 blocks in Melbourne were sold for between £18 and £95. Bourke's efforts were so appreciated that the locals asked that the first county be named after him.

The settlement grew rapidly. According to Blainey (p3), when Bourke visited, there was a cluster of "30-40 tents, huts and bark-roofed sheds; three years later Melbourne had 4,000 people, thirty hotels and three newspapers". Further auctions followed in the surrounding acres as market gardens, country residences, industries and sites for speculation became desirable.

John Gardiner, a banker and storekeeper from Tasmania, and two other enterprising men overlanded cattle from the Murrumbidgee area in 1837. They crossed the Yarra at Dight's Falls and took up much of Camberwell, with Gardiner's homestead near Gardiner's Creek. The 1836 map of the Parish of Boroondara shows this and three other large runs held by R. Allen, J. & W. Wood and A. Wright. Hugh Glass and Thomas Power grazed sheep and cattle in Hawthorn. (Blainey p2)

The Parish of Hawthorn was not much settled until the Yarra could be crossed easily. In 1842 James Palmer began running a punt near the end of Denham Street, permitting horses and carts, often laden with timber, to cross between Hawthorn and Richmond, and John Hodgson ran an equally profitable one connecting Abbotsford and Kew. In December 1843 the first of the now surveyed blocks in the Parish of Hawthorn were put up for sale. The allotments varied in size from 10 to 200 acres. During the 1840s some blocks were bought in Kew, Hawthorn and Glen Iris. But poor roads meant the Parish of Boroondara, i.e. today's Camberwell, remained rural. However, it was then that an odd Special Survey led to one, Henry Elgar, using his agent (Dacre), buying a parcel of land (of 8 square miles), bounded by the Yarra River and Koonung Creek; Elgar Road; Canterbury Road and Burke Road for £5,120. (Similarly, Dendy did this in Brighton, and Unwin in Bulleen.) The practice was then stopped. Nevertheless, despite not being able to buy the land, some people were already farming in the area.

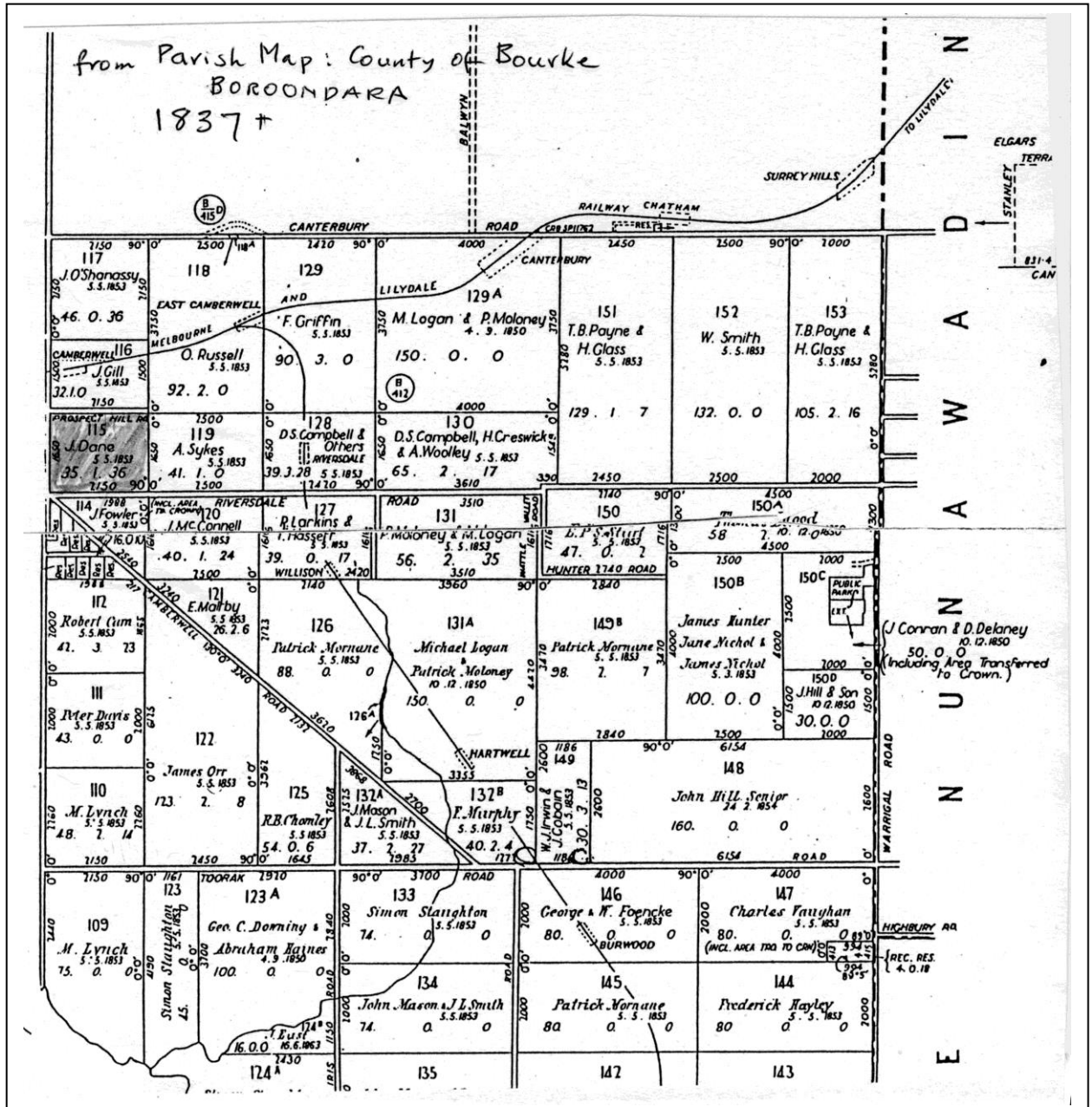
Here is Blainey's idea (p 5) of the area of old Camberwell. "There were probably less than one hundred people in the area in 1850. A contemporary plan of the Settled Districts of Melbourne filled the space bounded by the present lines of Burke and Warrigal Roads with the remark: 'Light sandy country timbered with Gum and Oak.' From Arundel Wright's station on the banks of the Koonung Creek to George Downing's farm in Glen Iris there were perhaps no more than a dozen properties, and the immigrant who walked east from Melbourne ... would have been troubled to find them. Hills and belts of timber isolated the properties."

The Gold Rushes, which began in 1851, brought many people and put great pressure on the areas near to the Town. They also brought prosperity to many, especially those in business, government and the professions. This led to an increase in occupation of the village of Hawthorn as people sought the fresh air of the country, and the provision of a bridge to replace Palmer's punt made it more easily accessible. Many mansions with orchards and gardens were built and many diligent small settlers found a living in the area. One main road ran from the new Christ Church (1854) north-east through Kew to Doncaster and the Warrandyte goldfields; the other east through Camberwell to the bushlands of Burwood.

## II. THE BEVANS

The house at 26 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell, now re-named “Chesney”, is built on a block that is part of Crown Allotment (CA) 115. If you look at figure 2, Parish Map, County Bourke 1837 with additional information (LF), you see the blocks put up for sale and who bought them at the first auction of land in Camberwell, held in March 1853.

Figure 2: Parish Map, County Bourke - 1837



John O’Shanassy, later three times premier, bought Lot 117 with frontages to Canterbury and Burke Roads but did not build “Tara” there till the 1860s. CA115 went to John Dane (35.25 acres at £25 per acre) and 119 to Alfred Sykes (41.25 acres at £20 per acre). These are the two most relevant to our purposes. Some of

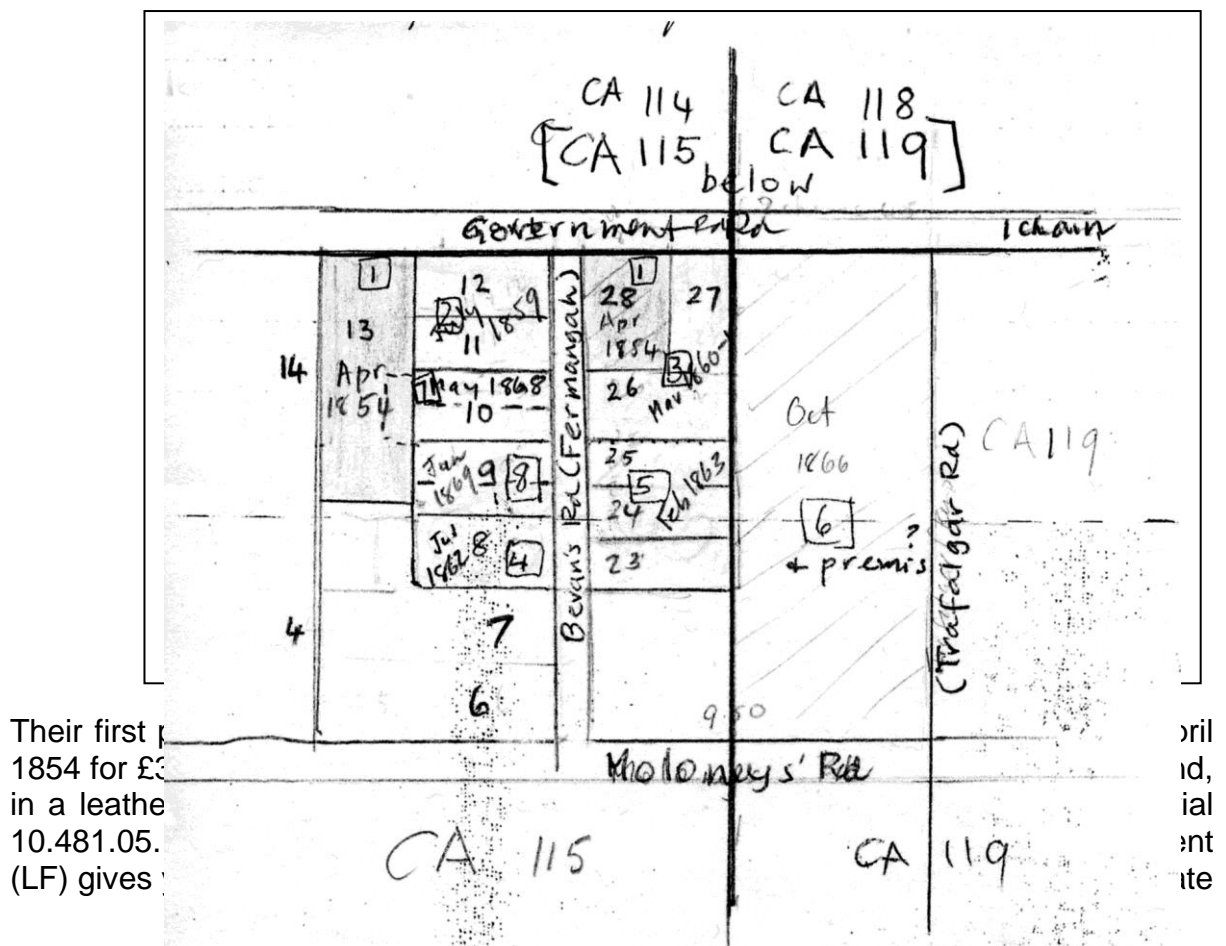


the people already farming and grazing in this area bought their land, e.g. Moloney and Logan near Canterbury station. Dane already owned blocks in Hawthorn, though he may have been only a speculator. Both Dane and Sykes (Sikes) began subdividing in the next year. Dane sold the southern part of CA115, where Burke and Riversdale Road meet, to George Eastaway who "built a hotel of corrugated iron which he named after a similar junction in London, the Camberwell Inn. This soon attracted a forge and a store, servicing the road to Hartwell and beyond." But according to Blainey the name "Camberwell" applied just to this area around the inn. "Upper Hawthorn" where Victoria Street leads up to Canterbury Road was far more sought after.

On these old maps, Canterbury Road is named "Delaney's Road" after the pub Delaney ran there. Similarly, Burke was "West Boundary" or "Boundary" or "Glass Creek Road" and Riversdale was "Moloney's" after people living or farming in the area. The Government Road running for a chain eastward up the hill from Burke Road to the end of CA 115 was variously referred to as "Carriage", or "Carriage Hill" or "Murray's Road". (William Murray lived on the northern side, probably near today's Lorne Grove.) This is what was later called "Prospect Hill Road", no doubt because of its excellent view of Melbourne and even the bay.

Amongst those already in the area who took this opportunity to buy land was the Bevan (Bevin) family who also held blocks in Hawthorn. Figure 3 (SF) shows all the blocks that Louisa and Thomas bought and the order in which they acquired them. The number in the box shows the order.

**Figure 3: Blocks bought by Bevans**



north-south road running from today's Riversdale Road to Prospect Hill Road (then "the Government Road.") The purpose of the Memorial was to record the sale of the two blocks and to bind the owner in future to allow "free ingress egress and regress to tenants and lessees" and "all and every other persons and person from time to time and at all times and ever hereafter and all for all purposes with horses and other beasts carts wagons and other carriages laden or unladen in through along and over the private road of one chain width". The land for this road was reserved from Lot 28. This was already known as "Bevans' Road". This is the road referred to by James Bonwick in his *Sketch of Boroondara* (1858) and other early references. This points to the Bevans already working the land in this area, using the road and probably living nearby, even before the first auctions. So we can say that Thomas Bevan had been already using the land on which our house was built -- and owned it from April 1854.

One teasing problem for me has been to try to ascertain where the first or other Bevan houses were located. We know from the titles (LF) that Louisa owned the house that is shown on the Riversdale Subdivision of May 1882 at the spot that became 26, but was their original house on this block or further east, on or towards CA119? It seems to me that if you had a house in the area, you would buy it first when it became possible. But, of course, it's possible to be outbid at an auction. That Lot 28 was bought first and on "Bevan's Road" suggests that they had a house there but that is just surmise. (Incidentally, the hitherto private Bevans' Road was re-named "Fermanagh" in 1871.)

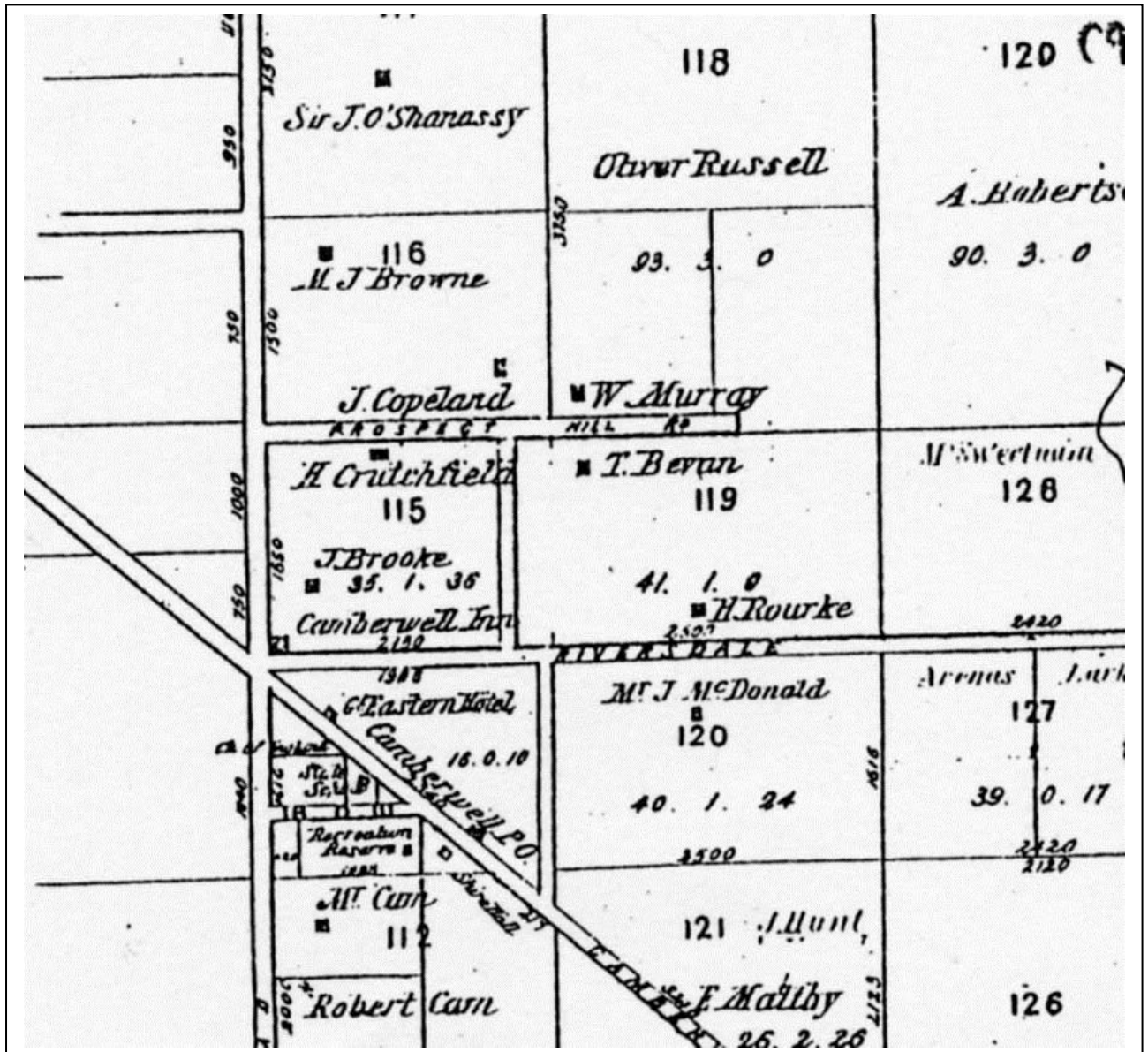
The Bevans, Thomas and his wife Louisa, continued to buy blocks close by. By the end of 1869 they held a sizeable consolidated part of CA115 to the west of Bevan's Road (with one half-block exception), and even more blocks facing it on the eastern side, all except a large block on the north eastern corner of Fermanagh and Riversdale Roads. In addition they owned the portion of CA 119 up to and including what became Trafalgar Road i.e. all the land that constituted the Riversdale Estate which was auctioned in 1882 following the death of Thomas in March 1879 and Louisa in August 1880.

One source of information about early residents is the street directories (SF). The first appearance of the Bevans' name that I could find was in Bailliere's *Victorian Directory for 1868* (LF). Thomas appears in Camberwell as "Bevin, Thos, farmer, Moloney's Rd" as does Murray, William, farmer. Copeland, merchant, is sited in Boundary Road (Burke) although his land ran eastwards (along Prospect Hill Road, far enough to be opposite the Bevans'. In the Sands and McDougall *Gazetteer* (SM) for 1871 he is named but alphabetical listing is used without addresses; ditto for '72, '73 and 1874.

Where the Bevans lived before building the villa so fulsomely described in the Riversdale Estate Auction Notices of May 1882 is a real puzzle. In the 1867 Camberwell Rate Book (SF), the first, so far as I've been able to ascertain, Thomas Bevan is shown as paying rates on two separate blocks valued at £50 and £40. In

the Rate Book for 1870-1871, in Bevan's Road we have Bevan, Thomas (£50/40); and in Carriage Road (i.e. Prospect Hill Road) Crutchfield, Henry (£23/20); Murray, William; and Fulton, Elizabeth. The 1871-2 Rate Books (LF) are the first to take explicit notice of houses. No. 200, Bevan, is rated for "house and land". In 1875-6 Bevan paid rates on a house and 7 acres and on 2 acres (£60/30) and on 8 acres (£35). Crutchfield, Murray, Fulton and Copeland also had houses nearby.

Figure 4: Boroondara Shire Map - 1871



The Boroondara Shire Map of 1871 (figure 4) shows the Bevans' house as being opposite William Murray's house close to the border of CA 115 but on CA 119. Using the scale on the map, I make that to be about 175 yards from Fermanagh. Nevertheless, rate assessors always regard the Bevans as facing Bevan's Road. When on 1/2/1872 Thomas Bevan signed a lease of five acres west of Fermanagh to Samuel Dunne (for five years for £20 a year paid quarterly), for market gardening, it was described in Memorial No. 099 Book 217 (LF) as "five acres situate opposite the residence of Thomas Bevan". All we can say definitely from this is that the Bevans'

house (or houses) was on the northern part of his property east of Fermanagh Road. Since he bought this block first, and none of CA 119 till 1866, I think we can surmise that they had been building a new house there some time in the intervening period and that that is probably the house noted in the 1875-6 Rate Book. However, it might be that they had lived in an early house on CA119 and leased it from Luke Chambers and then Colin Campbell, having failed to secure it from Sykes in 1854. This is made more believable by the fact that in Gwen Kemp's summary of the subsequent sales of blocks in CA 119, section 12821 carries the hard-to-decipher inscription "Ag & premis" (LF). This is the block the Bevans bought in October 1866. Still, as I said before, to say that something is "opposite the Bevans' residence" does seem a bit of a stretch at 175 yards – but perhaps not in a sparsely settled rural area.

A note on the Bevans. Gwen McWilliam, the pioneering local historian, told me that James, Samuel and Thomas Bevan were on the electoral roll for Red Gum Flat (Auburn) in 1856. According to The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Thomas Bevan and his wife Louisa (daughter of James Derrick and born in Bristol in 1827) had five children born in Camberwell: Mary Ann 1857, Emily 1859, George 1861, Ellen 1863 and Thomas 1866. G.W. wrote:

*"The Bevans had two houses at least in the vicinity in 1868, and Thomas Bevan probably lived on that [our] corner – highest spot, main road etc. There could be outhouses, underground water tank nearby, on your property. The family could have been inspired by 'Fairholme' in the 1870s to rebuild."*

*"To be 1870s or early 1880s I would expect it to be low (even chimneys), symmetrical, be either cement-rendered or black/brown bricks, with narrow eaves and without much fancy decoration. However, as it was a fairly superior address in the 1890s, it could well have been extended and glamorized, as I believe 'Fairholme' was".*

This description of a pre-1880 house fits very well with the photos I took of the one that used to be concealed behind Dr. Craig's Edwardian house on the corner of Prospect Hill Road and Lorne Grove, and that I suspect was the Murray residence. I will try to check that. Not really relevant to 26, but one can't help becoming interested in the Bevans. G.M. volunteered: "one changed his name to 'Beavan' and stands for Council, another builds the first shop I fancy on the Country Road corner (SBS24/12/1869)." I noticed that Samuel is described somewhere as "gentleman". I can't help wondering about Louisa's will. To whom was her estate left? Presumably, it was divided amongst the children who would have ranged in age from 14 to 23. Or had Louisa already set in motion the sale of the rest of the property to Waters in consultation with her heirs?

What was Camberwell like in the 1860s and '70s? Here I'm again leaning heavily on Blainey. Maintaining viable roads was a pressing problem. The most important in Boroondara were the east-west ones along which drays and carts carried timber and food produce to the city and water to the locals. The Boroondara District Road Board (covering Hawthorn, Kew and Camberwell) was set up in 1857 to deal with it. Among the first improvements were drainage work at Auburn Road, the building of a bridge over West Creek on Camberwell Road (at Hartwell) and the forming of 65 chains of road east of the Camberwell Inn on the "almost impassable" Riversdale Road. The

Board's activities were financed from rates on property and some government grants, but mainly from tolls – on bridges and roads. In the 1859 elections for this first form of local government in the area, quite a few representatives came from distant Canterbury and Warrigal Road and this was much resented by the more densely settled Kew and Hawthorn who paid the most in rates. As a result, in 1860 Kew and Hawthorn seceded and, having sufficient population, became municipalities, leaving the sparsely settled and slow-growing Camberwell to deal with its own problems as Boroondara Shire. Boroondara's population in 1861 was 1,100 and grew only a third by 1887.

The village of "Camberwell" clustered around the junction: meetings were held at the Camberwell Inn; there was Andrew Murray's butchery, two stores and a bakehouse and five other shop/houses. Other villages such as Hartwell, Canterbury and Norwood had their own pubs and facilities. Indeed, Camberwell Junction suffered from being too close to Hawthorn. Hartwell was far enough off to be a stopping place and had a school, church and flourishing community before Camberwell. In 1863 Camberwell village had a population of 140 people and 26 dwellings. Kew and Hawthorn flourished because they were closer to the city and because a train line was laid to Hawthorn in April 1861. People from Camberwell rode to the terminus or caught the problematic horse-drawn omnibus.

However, Canterbury Road was a fashionable rural retreat for city men: solicitors, bankers, auctioneers, a dentist, merchants and so on. Here's Blainey's picture: "The vanguard of suburbia arrived in the [18]60s but it consisted of city men who wanted a comfortable estate of ten or twenty acres. They built roomy houses and wide verandahs looking out on lines of pines or elms or oaks and were proud of their fruit trees and vines, their trim English lawns, kitchen gardens, and strawberry patches. They had a domestic servant or two and a gardener who put a cap on and drove them daily in the buggy to the city or the Hawthorn railway'."

The Education Act of 1872 made education compulsory, free and secular. Camberwell already had a National School of 180 children and a private school. Lectures and readings were well attended, and there were various sporting, religious and cultural groups. The first Shire Hall stood on the site of the later one. The Post Office was in a newsagent's in the Council Reserve, but there was no postal delivery till 1869 and then only to Burke Road. Water-carts formed a large part of the traffic. Houses had their own tanks and wells, but water had often to be carted for agricultural purposes. Water from Yan Yean Dam was first available in Hawthorn in 1868 from a standpipe at the corner of Auburn and Burwood Roads. Pipes were not laid to Camberwell till 1872 and Hartwell 1880. Carts with iron tanks paid for their load at the Junction standpipe and delivered to houses. When the Victorian Government forbade tolls in 1875, the Council's revenue was cut by a third, but there was some increase in government finance.

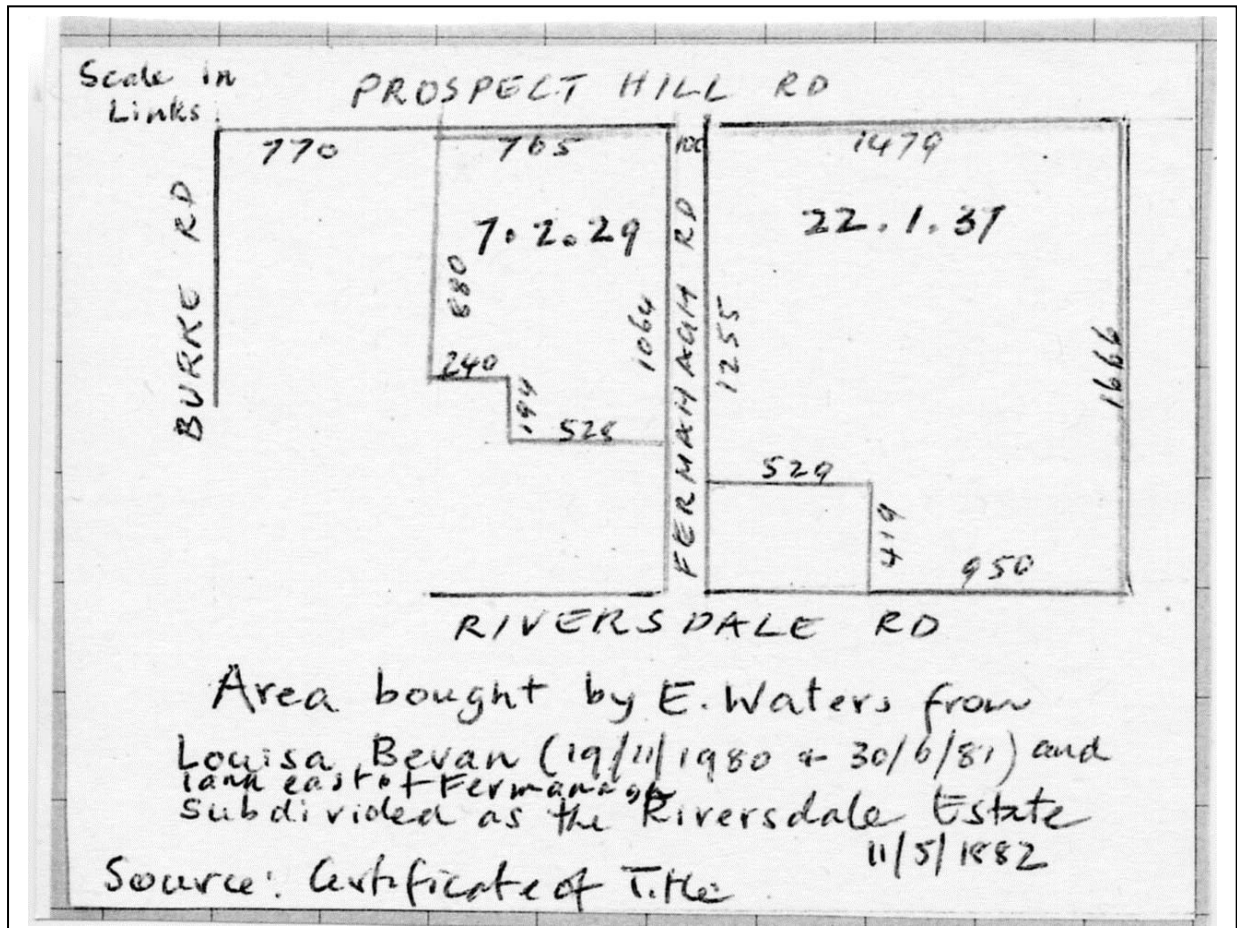
The Railway Construction Bill of 1876 led to a proposal for the extension of the line to Camberwell. The route was for years a matter of discussion. The station was finally opened 3 April 1882. The line involved a stiff gradient from Auburn with an inconvenient level-crossing at Burke Road. It was extended to Lilydale by 1883. It was the railway and the general financial euphoria of the time that led to the rapid growth of Camberwell. Much was genuine growth but in part the land boom was speculative, so while many houses were built on the many blocks sold in the 1880s,

others remained vacant for years when the bust of the 1890s followed. The Palace Hotel (1889) and two storeyed shops were built. Gentlemen sold off some of their estates, sometimes, as with 'Tara' for amazing prices. Free transport and champagne fuelled the sale of the multitude of subdivisions. This prosperity brought gaslights to streets in 1884 and tree planting to main thoroughfares such as Riversdale and Canterbury Roads. The Council's revenue leapt and financed the new town hall with its stucco clock tower, (now being renovated as I record this in 2009.) Blainey concludes that Boroondara also attracted because of "the commanding views of ranges and bay, views which have long ago been obscured by tall trees and houses on the hills". All of which make one sorry for the Bevans dying at a time when their holdings were to change from market garden to suburb.

### III. THE RIVERSDALE SUBDIVISION

Thomas Bevan died on 29 March 1879. His and Louisa's holdings amounted to a house on 30 acres 26 perches of CA 115 and 119 (LF). So far as I can tell, all became the property of Louise (finalized) 26th August 1880. They had lived in a house east of and close to the corner of Fermanagh and Prospect Hill Roads. Their land opposite the house and west of Fermanagh was let to Samuel Dunne for market gardening. Across the old Government Road, merchant John Copeland had built "Fairholme" in 1873 at a cost of £2,358 but from 1878 it belonged to George Anthoness who carried out repairs, painting and additions (possibly a balcony) in 1881. William Murray had a house and 22 acres on the north side of the road. Louisa sold the approximately 7 acres west of Fermanagh to Edward Waters, a Hawthorn real estate agent and business man, on 16th November 1880. Louisa herself died in December 1880 (aged 53). Her "Appointee" solicitor, Lynch, presumably following her instructions, sold the house and remaining land (approximately 20 acres) also to Waters.

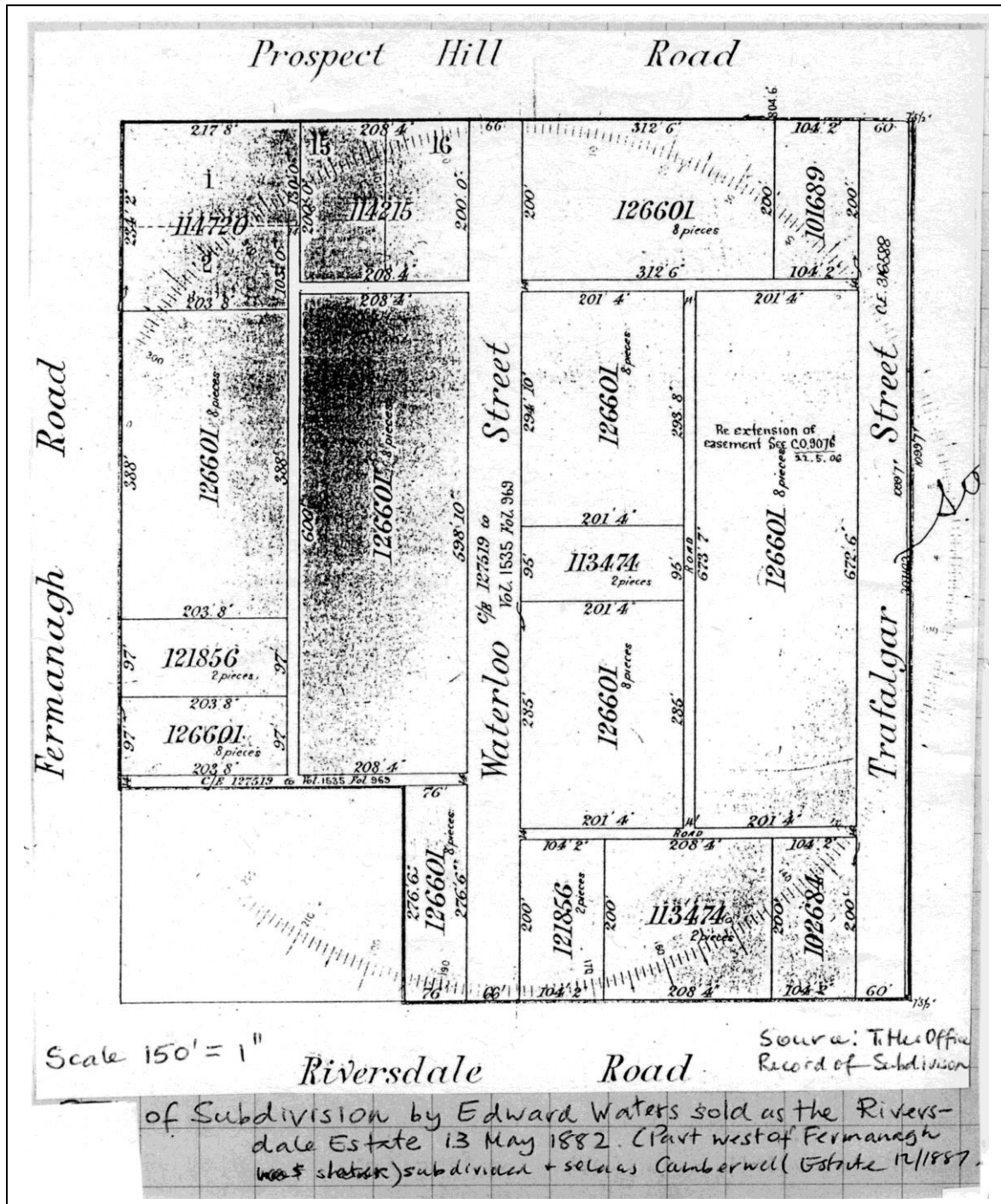
*Figure 5: Bevans' land sold to E. Waters – 1880-1881*



In the 1880--1881 Rate Books (SF), the house and 11 acres in Prospect Hill Road were valued at £100; another 2 acres at £10; the 3 acres rented by Samuel Bevan ("gentleman") at £15; and Samuel Dunne was now leasing two parcels.

The expectation of the extension of the railway line from Hawthorn to Lilydale meant the price of land near stations rose, as no doubt, Waters had expected. He had the Riversdale Estate (LF) prepared and it went up for sale by auction on 13th May 1882. It consisted of the Bevans' land east of Fermanagh. If you look at the records of the transfer of titles (LF), you'll see that Waters created the streets, Waterloo and Trafalgar, and the various lanes required to provide access to the rear of blocks.

Figure 6: Waters' subdivision of eastern holdings for the Riversdale Estate –1882





One anomaly was the presence of a house on Lot 1. The advertisements of the auctioneer G.W.Taylor in the *Boroondara Standard* of 11th May and in the *Kew and Hawthorn Express* of 11th May 1882 sing the praises of the block: "The very Pick and Choicest Spot in UPPER HAWTHORN". The house is described as "a Modern and Well-appointed BRICK VILLA RESIDENCE with 130 foot frontage to Fermanagh Road...replete with every convenience". Had the Bevans built this house to show they had arrived? Or was it built after Louisa's death as a display villa for the Riversdale Subdivision? Or was there some intermediate stage where the Bevans built a timber house on the block and tizzied it up with two brick and slate rooms at the front? Or was it just the timber section that was brought up to date? I haven't been able to come to a definite conclusion on that. Once they stopped buying blocks, perhaps they had the financial resources to build.

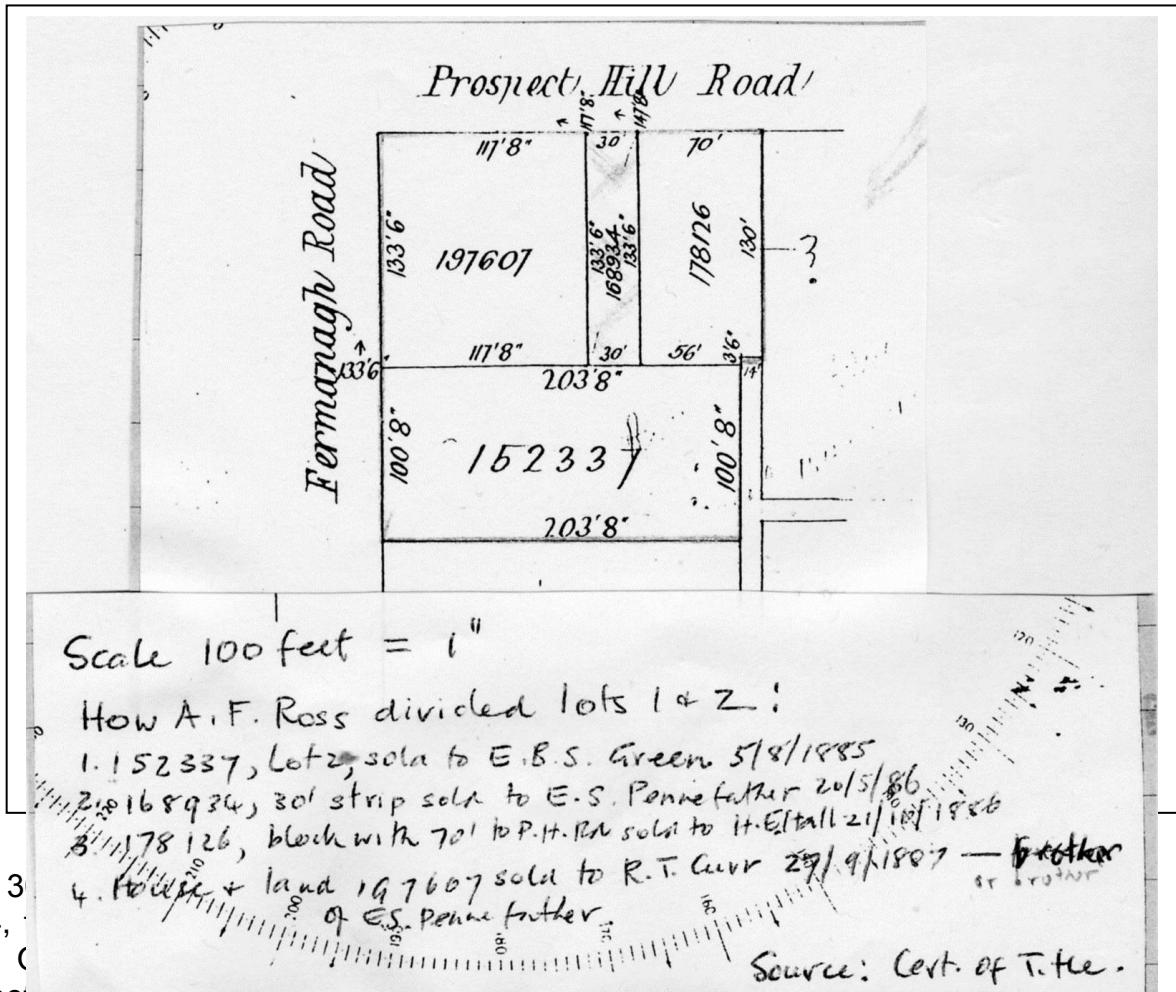
In addition "40 GRAND BUILDING SITES" were offered "with noble frontages...and great depths"(LF). It's well worth reading the claims made in the advertisements: they emphasize the views of Melbourne, the Bay and the mountain ranges; the presence of Gentlemen's mansions in the area; closeness to the Railway; and the Healthy and fertile undulating land ideal for creating a garden.

At the auction all blocks sold. The *Kew and Hawthorn Express* reported that "The house and land (lot 1) realized £1050" and the allotments for amounts ranging from 49 shillings a foot to 74 shillings. "...[T]he result of the sale was the satisfactory total of £10,614. 6s and 2d". To complete the story of the Bevans' land, Waters sold the western section as the Camberwell Estate in 1887.

[One newspaper extract is to be found right at the end of the Sources, p32. All are in SF]

The house and lots 1 and 2 -- the site of our house -- were bought by Alexander Fraser Ross, a Melbourne real estate agent (14/2/1883). Diagram (LF) shows the variations in size over the years of this purchase. It had a frontage to Prospect Hill Road of 217'8"; of 234'7" to Fermanagh; and the eastern side of Lot 2 is shrunk by 14' for the right of way which gives rear access to both Lots 1 and 2. It had an area of 1 acre 21 and 4/10 perches. The rate books show Ross leasing the house to G. Simbert, civil servant, from 1884, and then to another civil servant, Favell Buxton Lincoln till 1887 (LF). Figure 7 (p.13) shows what was done next. During this time Ross sold Lot 2 to E.B.S. Green (5/8/1885). It had a frontage of 100'8" to Fermanagh. He also subdivided Lot 1, reducing our block to 117'8" by 133'6"; making a separate title to a strip to the east of it, 30' by 133'6"; and an easterly block with a 70' frontage. (This cut off the access to the right of way for our corner block.) He sold the strip to Mrs Elizabeth Sara Pennefather (20/5/1886) and the easterly block to H.E. Hall. The latter is today's No. 28. Finally, on 27/9/1887, the house and its shrunken block was bought by Richard Taylor Curr, who turns out to be one of Elizabeth Pennefather's brothers. Who knows what lies behind these various changes? Mrs Pennefather took out a mortgage to buy the strip. Her husband, Daniel, died some time between that and her brother transferring the ownership of the house to her on 25th June 1895.

Figure 7: A.F. Ross' subdivision of Lots 1 & 2 of the Riversdale Estate - 1885



That 3  
1904,  
title? (

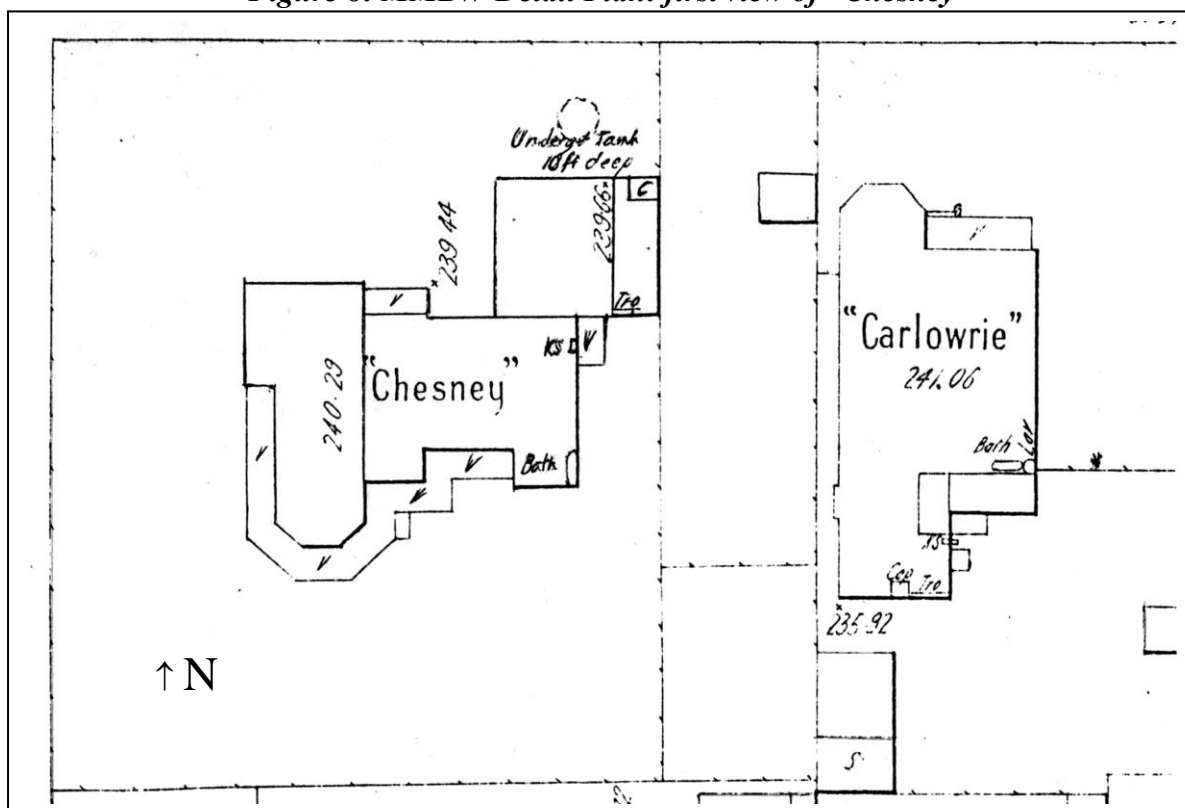
Pennefather is shown in the rate books from 1886, not 1885, as the Owner/Occupier. (And, an irrelevant aside, the Halls' house was being lived in already in 1886.) And though on different titles, the frontage to Prospect Hill Road became effectively 137'8". She continued to own the property till April 1909.

#### IV. THE HOUSE: "CHESNEY"

We have the glowing description in the advertisements of 1882. Surprisingly low down the list of virtues, well after the names of Gentlemen who live nearby, is the information that all blocks had gas and water laid on.

- In the rate books and directories even in the 1890s it is often referred to as facing Fermanagh.
- The rate books for 1904 (first year this information was recorded) show it as having 7 rooms and being built of brick. (The Halls had 8.)
- The MMBW Sewerage Plan for 1904 (below) gives our first bird's eye view of the layout of the house and its neighbours. Some large residences, such as "Tara", had names from the beginning. But around this time there seems to have been some sort of push towards naming, perhaps to facilitate the delivery of mail or perhaps it was just a pretentious fashion. Nearby were "Crendon", "Carlowrie" and "Waverly". The name "Chesney" appears for our house in the Sands and McDougall directory of 1905 and on the MMBW Plan. When the blocks were numbered, in 1907, ours was 28 but became 26 after a revision in 1916.

*Figure 8: MMBW Detail Plan: first view of "Chesney"*



- Only recently I've discovered that the Old Series (160') Plans show the building's construction material and whether it's publicly or privately owned by the pattern of the hatching (see figure 14, p.28). This

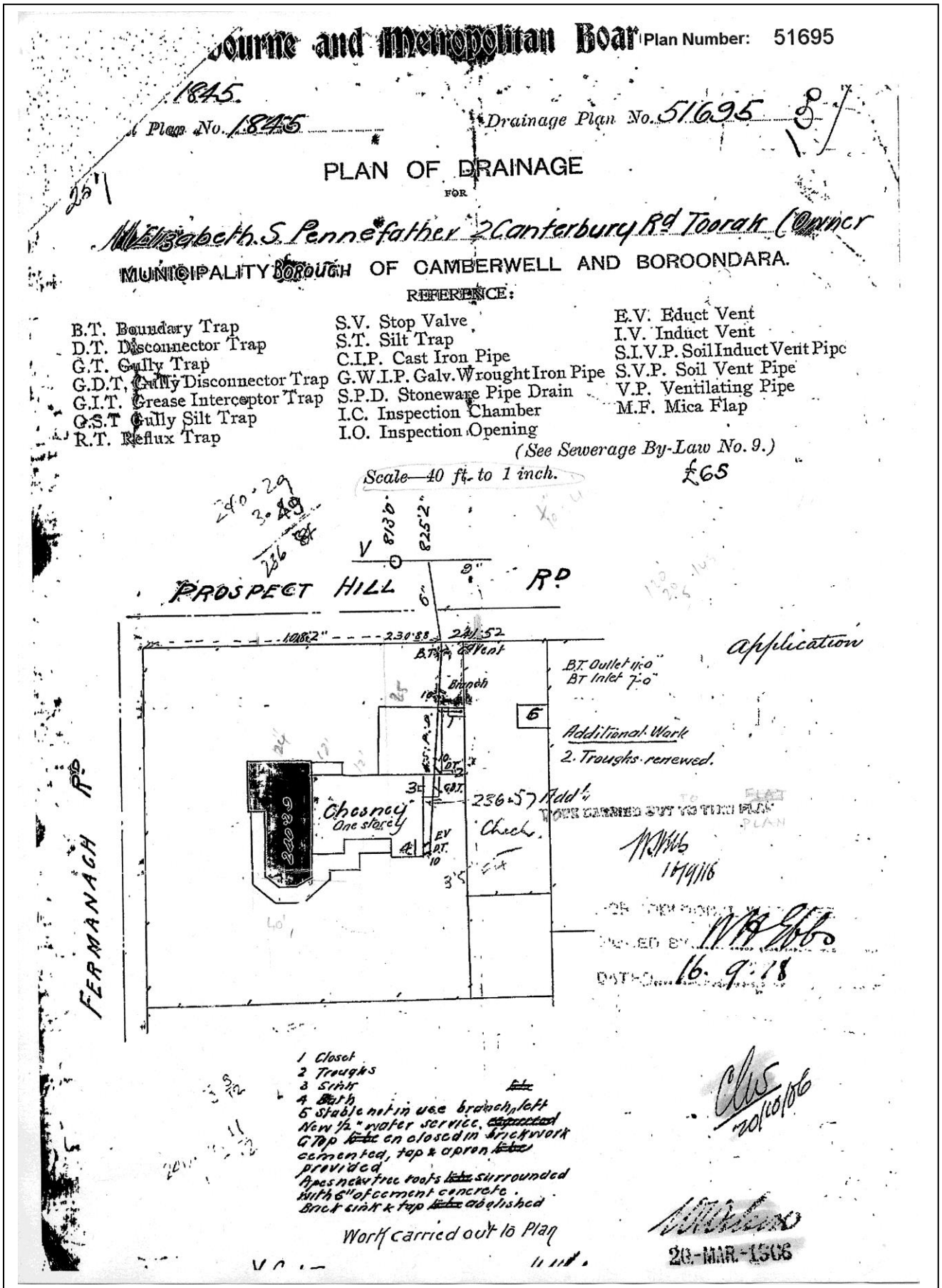
information was not made clear by the MMBW Drainage plans for a particular house; nor by later Sewerage Plans. So I was very surprised to find that our much vaunted villa had two brick and slate front rooms, but that the rest was timber. This has led me to wonder, once again, whether or not the Bevans constructed a timber house on our block after purchasing it first in (in 1854) and before 1870 when Dunne's lease was described as being "opposite Bevan's house". Perhaps the two front rooms were added and the house modernized, with gas and water supplied, ready for the Riversdale Subdivision. Or perhaps it was a completely new show house for Estate publicity, and all brick. I'm repeating myself here but it's this map with hatching of the houses that has belatedly raised the question.

- The yard for the 30' strip has a small building, the stable, on the east boundary, and a small southern portion fenced off. An underground tank, "10 feet deep", is shown on the north side of the house. The two front rooms and return verandah facing Fermanagh are recognizably the same as when we lived there.
- However, the rest of the structure ran back along Prospect Hill Road almost to the horse yard, with the verandah continuing along the southern side to where the bathroom was located. There was a tiny verandah presumably over a doorway to the north and another at the back (east). Another structure juts off to the north. It is shown in outline as the verandahs are. That suggests some sort of covered, or perhaps concreted, work area. This part is right near the well. A closet and laundry trough are housed in a small rectangular building between it and the fence of the horse yard.

We have (see figure 9, p.16) the Plan of Drainage for "Chesney" showing work to be done for Mrs Pennefather of 2 Canterbury Road, Toorak (Owner) in March 1906 (SF): she'd moved on to a better area? The rate books show Mrs F.A. Buxton as renting it from 1904 but Sands and McDougall show it as rented to Mrs Buxton from 1901 to 1905. (Was she related to Favell Buxton Lincoln who had rented it earlier?) The building on the strip is identified as the stable, "not in use". It was amusing for me to see that "Pipes near tree roots [were] surrounded with 6" of cement concrete" even then, as we often needed the services of the root-clearing plumber in the 37 years we lived there. The closet and troughs in the outbuilding were updated. (Another point of interest, apparently "WC" means two holers.) A sink was installed, presumably, in the kitchen (KS). There is no reference to it in the *Building Register* as early as this, but since the house seems to have been vacant during 1906, I conclude that the property was being connected to the sewerage system, which had only recently been extended to Camberwell. Would the well have been filled in at that time? It is not shown subsequently, but that might be due to a change in the information collected.

Sands and McDougall show "Chesney" as let to Frederick Fonsard during 1907 and to Robert Jarrett in 1908-9. Mrs. Pennefather sold the house to Robert Purvis, 8th April 1909, and he is shown in S&M as living there from 1910 till October 1918 when it was bought by Mrs Florence Ada Salmon.

Figure 9: MMBW Plan of Drainage - 1906 and 1918



## V. TENNIS ANYONE?

It was the Salmons who made the big change/s to “Chesney”. Sands and McDougall show it to be vacant in 1919 but occupied by Phillip Salmon in 1921. *The Building Register for the Shire of Boroondara 1899 –1918 (SF)* has an application by the owner, F. Salmon, using a builder, A.M. Frencham, to erect additions of one storey, of brick and slate, of 1215 square feet and 10’6”in height. It was approved 26/4/1918. Using my own measurements of the rooms in the house as we knew it, but excluding the two front (1880’s) rooms and the two rooms jutting out to the north (known to have been built later), I made the area 1220.25 square feet. They must have demolished the eastern part of the old house.

This seemed to confirm what I had always thought about the obviously various times at which the house had been constructed. This was made clear by the shape of the house on the 1929 MMBW Plan of Drainage (SF) (figure 10, p.18). The shaded area indicates the existing house -- the result of the “additions” -- where the original house had been. Perhaps the fact that it is all shaded records the replacement of the original timber or, anyway, original structure with brick. [It also has a planned extension sketched in, the reason for the 1929 plan. It has actually been constructed by the next Sewerage Plan we have for 1933 (or possibly 1936).] The overall effect of the Salmons’ rebuilding of the rear of the house in 1919 is to have it run north south, creating a greater distance to the fence of the old horse yard. The “little house” (closet) still appears on the horse yard fence, perhaps with a storage tank beside it. I now see that whether or not they were replacing a timber part of the house with something the big bad wolf would find more challenging, they were definitely keeping up with the 1920s’ Joneses (to mix a couple of metaphors). The existing drains still seemed to be giving trouble!!

Why was this done? I can only surmise. The house was perhaps 40 years old and some of it even more than 50; the area was more densely settled and if land values were rising, perhaps the opportunity to make another building block out of the large garden was a consideration. Peel, Zion and Yule: *A History of Hawthorn* point out that many of the big houses built in the 1880s and earlier, when passed on to younger relatives, were often divided into flats. Often, too, to quote them, “Tennis courts were cut from villas which were then demolished to make way for cul-de-sacs such as Corsewall Close” and for the new bungalows. In other cases, tennis courts were carved out of their grounds. “The modern house of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – with internal bathroom, spacious kitchen, lower ceilings and no servants’ quarters – emerged in the 1920s.” They also note that more property was in the hands of women than ever before (40% of large ones in 1930.) We seem indeed to have, at 26, an example of much of this as a tennis court was put in behind the house, owned by, for the third time, a woman. (Admittedly, Louisa Bevan, perhaps only for a short time. I made the fourth.)

Figure 10: MMBW Plan of Drainage - 1929

# Melbourne and Metropolitan Board

Plan No. 1845

Detail Plan No. 1845

Drainage Plan No. 51625

## PLAN OF DRAINAGE

for  
W.M.M.  
M. Florence P. Salmon C.P.O. Clerk

MUNICIPALITY: CAMBERWELL

### REFERENCE:

B.T. Boundary Trap	R.T. Reflux Trap	E.V. Educt Vent
D.T. Disconnecter Trap	S.T. Silt Trap	I.V. Induct Vent
G.T. Gully Trap	C.I.P. Cast Iron Pipe	S.I.V.P. Soil Induct Vent Pipe
G.D.T. Gully Disconnecter Trap	G.W.I.P. Galv. Wrought Iron Pipe	S.V.P. Soil Vent Pipe
G.I.T. Grease Interceptor Trap	S.P.D. Stoneware Pipe Drain	V.P. Ventilating Pipe
G.S.T. Gully Silt Trap	I.C. Inspection Chamber	M.F. Mica Flap
S.V. Stop Valve	I.O. Inspection Opening	T.I.T. Triple Interceptor Trap

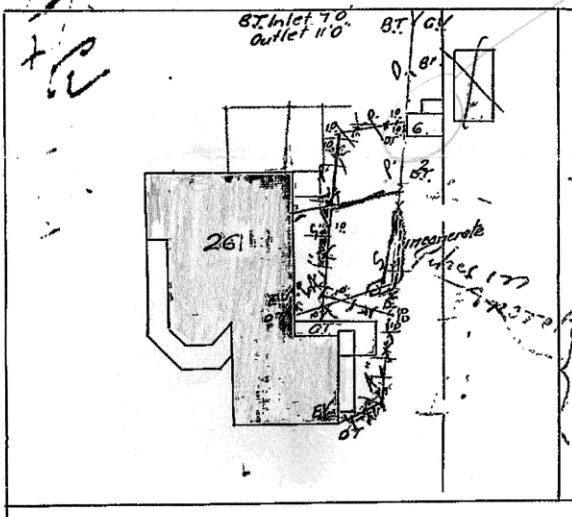
(See By-Law No.19)

This Plan is issued subject to the condition that the owner accepting all responsibility for the drains being in position indicated by green lines and to their being found in good order and condition.

SUPERVISION COPY

PROSPECT HILL R<sup>o</sup>

FERMANACH R<sup>o</sup>



Separate laundry?  
Horse?

### LIST OF FITTINGS

2. Troughs to be moved to 6.
- D.T. to be moved to new position.
- Drains close to building are to be cut & sealed at all ends & ends.
- Drains to the land should in place.
- Openings to the ground are to be surrounded with concrete.

Existing drain surrounded with concrete where less than 12\"/>

*[Signature]*

18 DEC 1929

10' 1\"/>

The 19<sup>th</sup> century mansion opposite 26 on the southern side of Prospect Hill Road, on some of Bevans' original land also, and called "Crendon", had been built for J.F Walker, I think. From early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it belonged to a Mr Hattam, a strict Methodist who owned a department store in Malvern. He had four daughters: two, and then after quite a gap, another two. The block was large: 200' by 290'. When one of the older girls married, a block was cut off along Prospect Hill Road (22) where she and her husband built a house (now the site of town houses). Similarly, when one of the younger ones married, she and her husband eventually built a yellow brick veneer on the southern-most part of the grounds, 6 Fermanagh Road. This was Mrs Thomas, widowed by the time I got to know her in the 1980s. She lived there, nurturing plants from her parents' original garden, until she died at 93 in c.2001. She was a willing source of information: for instance, she had played tennis at the Salmons' and was able to tell me that "old" Mrs Salmon had outlived her husband; and that one of the three daughters (Mary) had died early, before her mother.

One of "old" Mrs Salmons' daughters, Phyllis Arnell Rayner, and her husband moved into No. 26 presumably to look after her. Some time during that period, the two northern rooms were added and the house was divided into two flats. The MMBW Drainage Plan for 1933 (or '36) shows the two rooms and the creation of a second bathroom and a kitchen in the northern part of the house (see figure 11, p.21).

This is interesting because the earlier plan gave no indication of the rooms or their uses. So I think we can conclude that our kitchen had been that before and that the southern bathroom, with its sturdy wooden fittings was the older one. The room that became the northern kitchen had been at some stage the laundry. A cupboard in there was actually a drying cupboard. When I was having a new bath put into the room adjacent, the plumber had trouble fitting it in and showed me that the dividing wall contained special heatproof bricks. A hole in the ceiling suggested this was where the copper's flue had been. The big heavy wooden door that gave access into the back yard is almost certainly a survivor from the original house. Paved areas are shown outside the laundry and the kitchen. The new northern rooms imitated the style of the large 1920s' room beside the kitchen with its part leaded windows, wide window-sills and plaster-sheet ceilings. But they were not so sturdily built, used narrow hardwood floorboards and orange brick in the fireplace. Probably the gas heater in the 1880s' room with the verandah was put in at this time, using the same bricks under the marble mantle piece. A floorboard laid crosswise in the long passage shows where the door or wall that divided the two flats was located. This is probably when the rather narrow door was made between the front hall and the southern 1880s' room. Two electricity meters were installed but I don't know whether this was done when Mrs Salmon was alive or subsequently when one of the flats was let. A neighbour once told me that her father, when newly married, had rented one of the flats in the 1950s, but I'm not sure which one: Mrs Thomas thought it was the southern one. S&M in 1946 shows one let to W.A. Tower.

I think I am convinced about the account that I've given so far. What worries me is the difference between the rooms of the house to the east of the long passage. They all have lathe and plaster ceilings and plain single-pane windows and so does the kitchen, (come to that) more in the style of those in the 1880s' rooms. They were very plain: the picture-rails were put in by us. The upper parts of the walls were

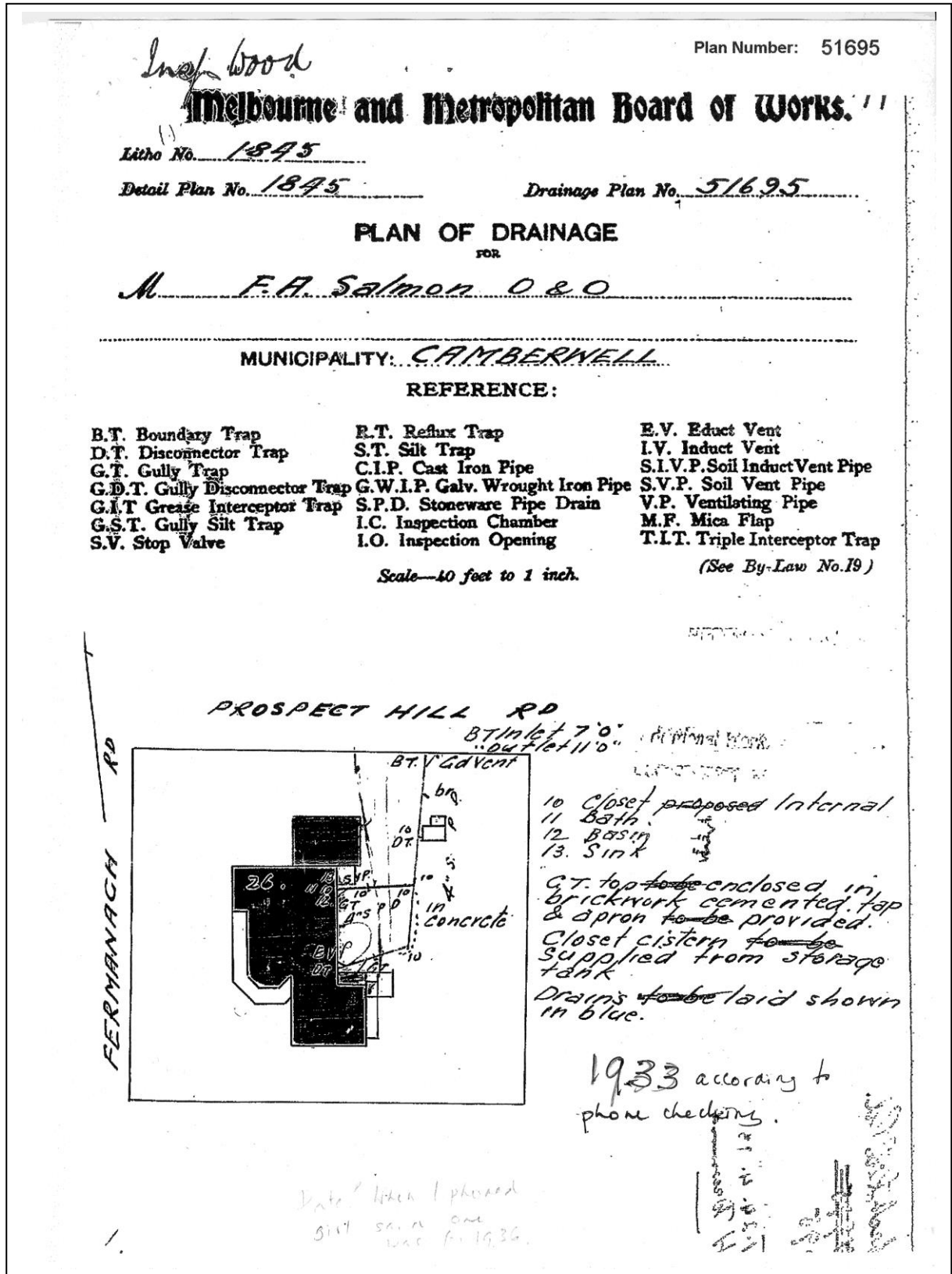


kalsomined; the lower, separated by a band, were washable gloss. I suppose what worries me is that I might be entirely wrong. Perhaps these rooms constitute part of an even older Bevans' 1870s' house such as described by Gwen McWilliam, quoted earlier. The whole section is lower and the slates used are of a size different from the 1880s' ones. But how, if that is so, to explain the nearness of the first "Chesney" to the fence? It's hard to imagine how there could have been more rooms behind them. That very flat back yard definitely has been built on. I wonder when the stucco was applied. From a photo I took of a little I could see when the down-pipe was loose, I think the 1880s' rooms may have been dark brick with some yellow ones. The 1919 additions are red brick and not on bluestone foundations so that's probably when it was done to conceal the difference.

Mrs Salmon died on 18/2/1950 leaving the house to her two daughters, Phyllis Rayner and Mrs Florence Baird of Christowell Crescent, Camberwell. The Rayners took out a mortgage on the property in February 1958, perhaps to buy out Mrs Baird as Mrs Rayner became the owner in September 1952? – the photocopy of the Record of Title is not clear at this point. S&M mentions Jack Rayner for the first time in 1953. When we moved in, a resident of 1 Fermanagh told me that he thought Mr Rayner was a geologist and that he had moved to Canberra. Certainly they were able to discharge their mortgage in December 1963, following the sale of No. 26 to Collective Investments Proprietary Limited. I say "No. 26" because the name "Chesney" had disappeared somewhere in the period before we bought it. I discovered (and re-named) it only as a result of this research. Just an aside: The *Columbia Encyclopaedia* gives a "Francis Rawdon Chesney (1789-1872) as a British soldier and explorer in Asia. He found a route suitable for the Suez Canal. He also demonstrated the navigability of the Tigris and Euphrates and advocated that as a route to India." Whether or not this is the inspiration of the name and why it interested the Pennefathers, I can't say.

The garden we inherited of silver birches and a preference for pink azaleas and camellias probably date from Mrs Salmon. The crazy-riverstone-pavement paths, and volcanic rock borders look like an update by her daughter in the 1950s. The driveway into the modest garage had had a bitumen surface, but I didn't ever see anything to suggest what earlier pathways were like. (Well, there was quite a lot of broken concrete concealed by the Virginia creeper in the back yard near the clothes-hoist that was driven by water pressure!) The wisteria, jacaranda, may trees (and pond) and cypress hedge belonged to an earlier period. The pepper tree and the Atlantic Blue cedar almost certainly go back to the nineteenth century. The great lemon-scented gum that towered over it all was the most venerable of all.

Figure 11: MMBW Plan of Drainage -1933



## VI. THE EXCLUSIVE BRETHERN (of several varieties)

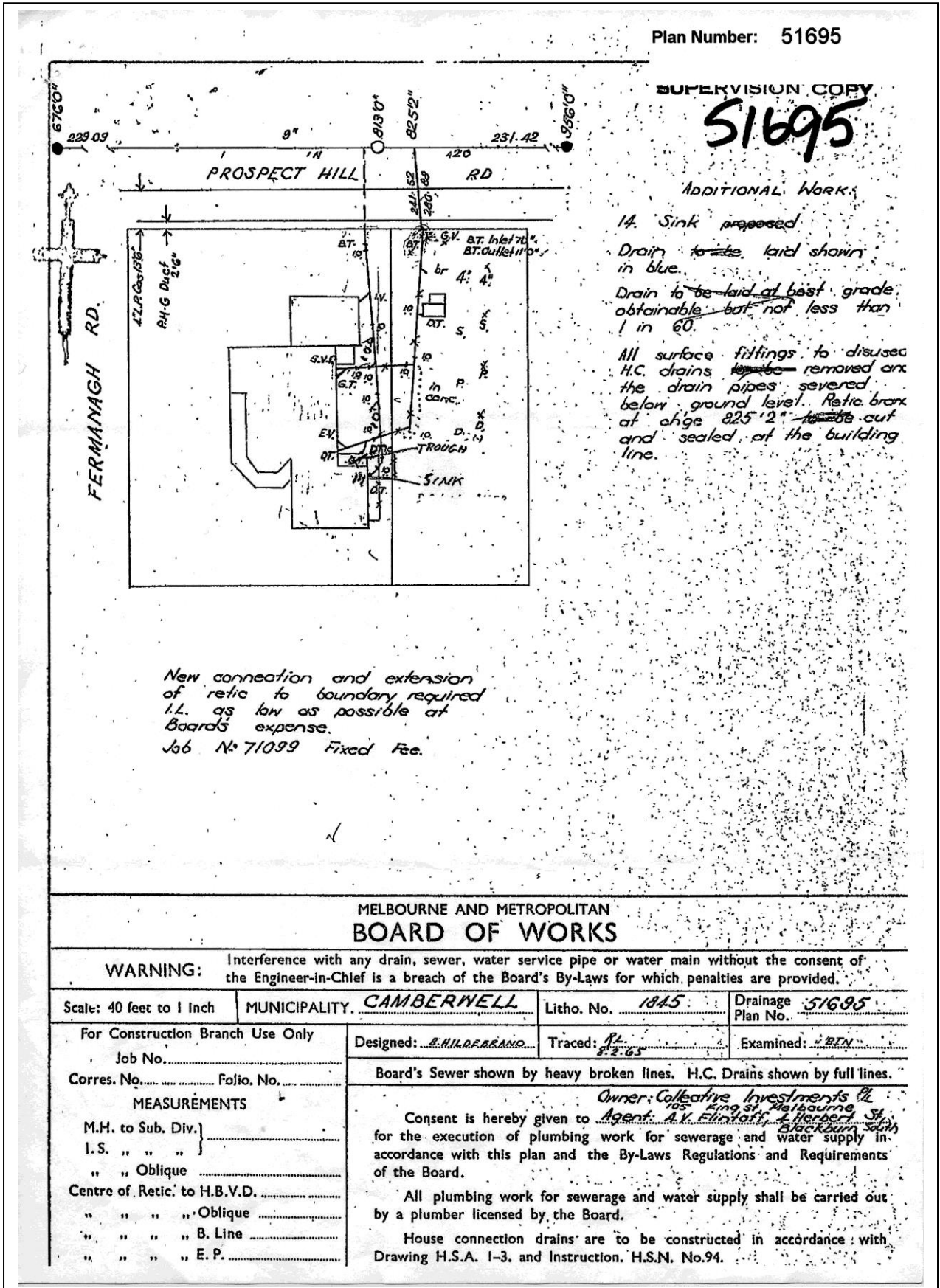
Collective Investments, in preparation for subdividing the block, cut off the water supply to the tennis court and had the drains laid closer to the house. A trough was installed in the done-in, but unlined, verandah near the southern bathroom and a sink in the kitchen. I don't know whether or not the house was occupied at this time. The Drainage Plan (SF) shows the work being done 8/2/1965. This made a 50' block which could be built on and possibly converted the house to a single residence again. The door from the front hall to the bow-windowed room may have been restored then (with '50's mouldings).

The house was bought by Stanley Vernon Chirnside, accountant, and Lucy, his wife, as joint proprietors, in September 1965. The 50' block became 26A. I don't have the documents for that title but I think it was sold at the same time to a spec builder. The Chirnsides belonged to the Exclusive Brethren who had a community in Camberwell at that time. The centre of its activities was the meeting house built on the site of the former Edwardian mansion, "Tallis", on the northern side of Prospect Hill Road between Fairholme Grove and Craig Ave/Royal Crescent. It was a large circular inward-looking structure surrounded by bitumen car park that had exits into all those streets. Many nearby houses were occupied by Brethren. For instance, "Crendon", which by the 1940s belonged to Dr. Godding, was bought by them and demolished. They built a two-storeyed red-brick house facing Prospect Hill Road and left a large block beside on the corner and that could be used for overflow parking. On the southern part, adjacent to and north of Mrs Thomas's house, the matriach of the Gadsens, also a Brethren family, built a single-storeyed, red-brick house with a block left beside it. The whole community met at least twice weekly, hence the desire to live close by. Similarly, the children attended local schools such as Camberwell High but were not permitted to eat with others and had to go home for lunch. Since then, around 1985, the community moved to Hadfield/Broadmeadows, leading to the sale of many houses and making room for the "Tallis" development on the site of their meeting house.

The Chirnsides had many children, ranging widely in age, and used the whole house as one, although the two fuse boxes and metres of the flats were retained. They used one of the 1880s' rooms as the main bedroom and had only two living areas. Radio and television were forbidden them, but they had both a piano and a harmonium. I think Mr Chirnside was ailing already when we were hoping to buy it and died a few years later. They moved not far at all, to 9 Royal Crescent which is visible from the front gate (and also has a large pepper tree!)

Samuel and Judith Goldberg, as joint proprietors, bought the house from them, 19 May 1967, when we had moved back to Melbourne. When we divorced, my mother and aunt were able to discharge the mortgage we had and ownership of the house passed to me on 28th May 1976. The children and I lived there, as Sam was happy for us to be able to do. In June 2004, as a result of selling 26 to Madeleine and Michael Johnson, I moved to 39 Brinsley Road, Camberwell. While we lived there, we did a little in the way of decoration but concentrated on maintaining the fabric of the building and its surrounds. I did cut down the great land mark lemon-scented

Figure 12: MMBW Plan of Drainage – 1965



gum in 2000 when the stress of being responsible for it became too much. I tried to foster the hedge and the Locally Significant pepper tree through the droughts. I have written in detail about this for our family elsewhere: (*26 Prospect Hill Road for the Kids.*)

The writers of *The Camberwell Conservation Study* (1991) in 'Significant Areas' state: "On January 27, 1883, M.H.Davies declared the Riversdale Estate. The estate was extended to include the western side of Fermanagh Road on December 15, 1885. Apart from Bartholomew Beckett's (pre-1884) and John Baker's residences in Fermanagh Road, the estate was undeveloped until 1888 when seven houses in Fermanagh Road and eleven in Waterloo Street were built. Eight houses in Prospect Hill Road existed at this time." No. 26 is rated D architecturally and 2 (out of 3) for streetscape in the Heritage Area and is misdated as 1890s.

The Waters' subdivision of Bevan land west of Fermanagh was the Camberwell Estate and since it wasn't marketed till 1885, it's not surprising that Fermanagh didn't have many houses till 1888. At least three schools operated in mansions in Fermanagh, the adjoining blocks serving as playgrounds, the first being Camberwell Grammar (1886). Another example is the 1906 Milverton Girls' School in "Langi". Though not built on, blocks were in use. One curious experience I've not been able to explain is that two separate women came to the house and reminisced about having gone to school there. But they may have been remembering one in a similar position nearby. In Waterloo Street the early mansions have retained their extensive garden blocks, perhaps explaining why Trafalgar was developed more quickly. (Prospect Hill Road was extended to the east in 1886, and again in 1888 to the Outer Circle Railway. The Stanhope Grove bridge did not go in till 1905: that might have made the street much busier). Though I think I've demonstrated that some of what I've quoted from the *Study* was not so, their overall picture was much as Blainey and others had painted it: an area aspiring to be a Model Suburb, a Garden Suburb, a white collar enclave where one can aspire to own one's home and find religious and education facilities nearby. Though "Chesney" itself is architecturally of no significance, I think the story of the house and its block adds something to our understanding of where we live.

## VII.THE SHORT ANSWER

1. Squatters and farmers were living and working in the country east of Burke Road before the first Crown Land sales in 1853.
2. The house, "Chesney", 26 Prospect Hill Road, is situated on part of Crown Allotment 115. The allotment was bought in 1853 by John Dane. CA 119, the next east of CA115 along the Government Road, was bought by A. Sykes.
3. Both men began selling off blocks the next year. A married couple, Samuel and Louisa Bevan, bought the block that included No.26 today and one west of, but not on the corner of, what was already known as "Bevans' Road". In April 1854, this was made a public road but was not re-named "Fermanagh" till 1871. I think this is evidence that the Bevans were farming there and that they probably lived nearby too, I suppose they may have resided in Hawthorn.
4. The Bevans continued to buy blocks in CA115 and CA119 till 1869, accumulating 30 acres and 26 perches located to the east and west of Bevans' Road.
5. Where they lived remains partly a puzzle. The 1871 Shire Map shows them opposite the Murrays' residence in Prospect Hill Road. I calculate this would be 176 yards east of Fermanagh and just on CA 119, land they did not buy till October 1866. The document (1872) leasing some of their land west of Fermanagh, for market gardening, describes it as "opposite Bevans' residence". In what was still sparsely settled country, would that house be so described? Perhaps so when we consider that "Fairholme" (right opposite "Chesney") was designated as Burke Road in the Directories in 1870. On the other hand, the block on CA 119 has some indecipherable note saying "Ag & premis...". Did they perhaps live there before the Crown Land Sales and rent the house – if that's what "premis" means – till they were able to buy it in 1866? Or does it all suggest they were building on the first block they bought, closer to Fermanagh Road during the period between 1854 while maintaining the one opposite the Murrays still in 1872?
6. The Bevans died in 1879 and 1880. The deeds show their house and land were bought by Edward Waters. By May 1882 he had subdivided the land east of Fermanagh, therein creating Waterloo and Trafalgar Streets and the bluestone service lanes. This was auctioned as the Riversdale Estate; all blocks were sold. The house that Louisa Bevan had owned and Lot 1 and Lot 2 were bought by Alexander Frazer Ross for £1,050. That house was in the same spot as today's "Chesney", No. 26. I haven't been able to establish that the Bevans lived in that house; it may have been a display house for the subdivision. But I think it more likely that the Bevans built this after they'd consolidated their holdings and to show they'd "arrived", so probably in the late 70s or even 1881.
7. The advertisements for the auction described the house as "a well appointed brick villa with every convenience" "on the Premier block in Upper Hawthorne". It was let to George Smibert, civil servant, and then to another, Favell Buxton Lincolne until 1887 when the house and its shrunken block were bought by

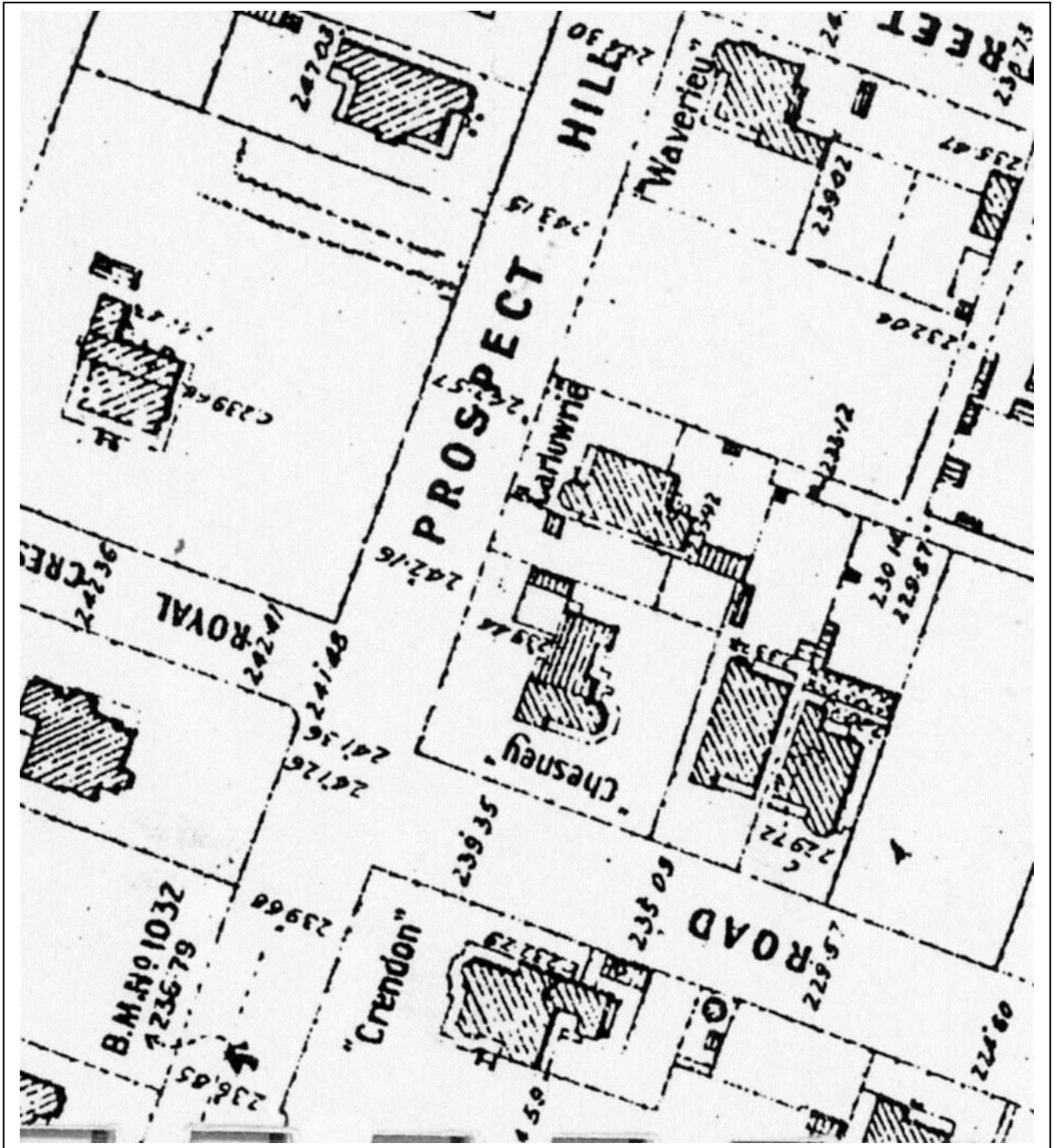
Richard Curr. During those years, Ross had sold Lot 2 which became 1 and 3 Fermanagh. He also subdivided the eastern part of Lot 1 selling a 70' block that became 28 Prospect Hill Road to H.E.Hall, and the narrow 30' strip with the stable on it behind the house to Elizabeth Sara Pennefather in 1886. Richard Curr was Mrs Pennefather's brother. She and her husband lived there and she became the owner of the house in June 1895. It was the Pennefathers who named the house "Chesney", before 1904, perhaps because streets were not numbered till 1909. Ours was at first No.28 but became 26 following a revision in 1916.

8. From 1901 it was let to Mrs F.A.Buxton until 1906 when it was empty while the bath in the house and the closet in the outhouse were connected to the new-to-Camberwell sewerage, a sink was installed and the laundry improved. It was let to F. Fosard in 1907, to R. Jarrett the next year and finally sold to Robert Purvis, described as a painter, in 1909.
9. The house was bought in October 1918 by Mrs Florence Ada Salmon. The Salmons changed the house from running east-west to north-south, using the extra space at the back for a tennis court. I think they retained only the two front rooms from the 1880s' house and during 1919 when it was vacant added 1215 square feet of brick and slate. A toilet was brought indoors but the exterior closet remained, perhaps for the tennis players?
10. At some stage, one of Mrs Salmon's daughters, husband and children came to share the house with her. Another two rooms to the north were added in the 1930s and a second kitchen and bathroom made within the existing house (1933), thus making two flats. I think the silver birches, pink camellias and azaleas, crazy pavement paths and volcanic rock borders belong to this period.
11. When Mrs Salmon died in February 1950, she left the house to her two surviving daughters. Mrs Phyllis Rayner bought her sister, Mrs Florence Baird, out of her half and continued to live there with her family till December 1963. They let one of the flats from time to time.
12. Collective Investments Propriety Limited bought the property. They moved the sewerage line closer to the house and brought the laundry inside, thus making a 50' block where the now disused tennis court stood (26A). That block was sold to a spec builder and the house to Stanley and Lucy Chirnside in September 1965. They were members of the Exclusive Brethren who had their meeting--house close by in Prospect Hill Road on the site of the old "Tallis" mansion. They had quite a few children and used the whole house as one, though the two fuse boxes and meters remained. Possibly this was when the name disappeared.
13. When Sam and I returned from Sydney in 1967 we bought the house, attracted by the private block behind the hedge, a house big enough for children and a study and a spot close to transport. The Chirnsides moved only a short distance, to Royal Crescent, perhaps down-sizing, as Mr Chirnside was already ill and died a few years later. After we divorced, the children and I were able to stay on in the house for 37 years.

14. I moved to 39 Brinsley Road, Camberwell in June 2004. No. 26 was bought by Madeleine and Michael Johnson who stayed only a year or two before moving nearby to "Ubberholme", 53 Prospect Hill Road.
15. At present, Michel Canetti, a Frenchman and commercial artist, is renovating the house and struggling with the garden through the drought and extreme weather.
16. What I haven't mentioned in all this is a photocopy of part of a MMBW Plan using the markings used on Old 160' MMBW Plans. I found it only recently (see figure 13, p.28). The railway is shown, so the houses are post 1882 but the hatching used seems to indicate that No 26 had two brick and slate rooms at the front, but a timber structure behind. How to reconcile this with the "brick villa" claims of 1882? Perhaps the Plan was not focused on the houses but, say, sewerage lines, and the Old Legend markings, no longer used, were simply reproduced and applied to a part of the house that had been updated for the Subdivision. More likely, I'm never going to know. Can I "Let it go" as the children would no doubt advise me?



Figure 13: Unexplained hatching from a MMBW detail plan



Diagonal hatching = brick      Perpendicular or sideways hatching = timber

## POST SCRIPTUM HOC ANIMAL NON TRISTE EST

I asked the current owner, Michel Canetti, to read this account of the house. I knew that he was interested and that his renovations would have uncovered new facts.

The most surprising to me resulted from his seeing the bricks under the stucco when he was removing the inefficient sun-shade over the west-facing window. It revealed dark brown and yellow bricks in quite an ornate style, examples of which can be seen nearby in 20 Waterloo Street and 22 Trafalgar Road. Had this been the case in 1967, I don't think we would have been attracted to it. Faced with the contrasting bricks in the additions, M. Canetti restored the more restrained stucco.

He has established that the well would have been just on 26A's block. He has also seen under the wallpaper in the bow-windowed room, from the brickwork and the skirting board it's clear that there was a doorway into the front hall. He thinks it was closed off to make the two flats and re-established, smaller, with '50's mouldings when it became one house again.

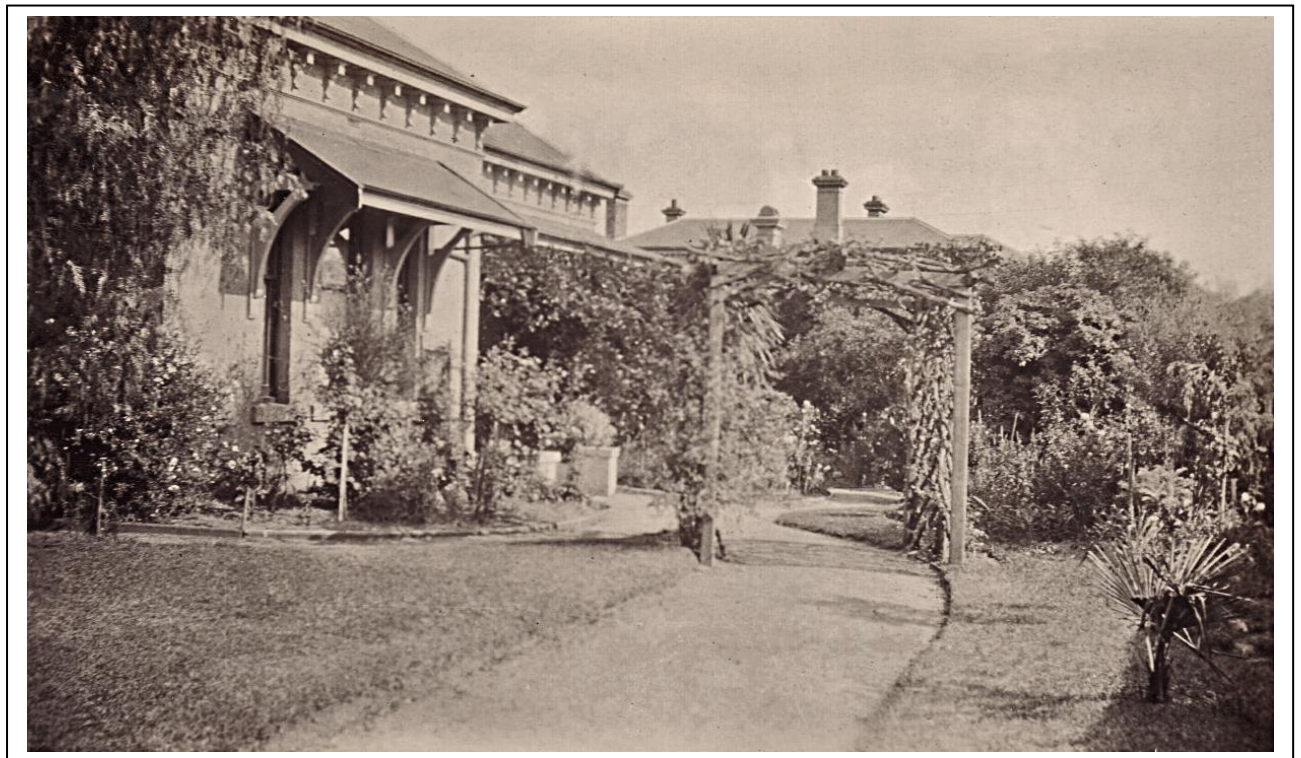
He also has photos from under the house showing that not only did the two front rooms have bluestone foundations but that there are the remains of bluestone beneath the brick footings of the southern bathroom and the adjoining (northerly) rooms. I think we agree that these are remnants of an earlier house or an earlier version of the house. Just why the long north-south passage has so many curved features in the west wall and what the layout of the previous house was continue to puzzle us both.

## POST POST SCRIPTUM: WRITING HISTORY IS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS

Thanks to meeting John Rayner, a grandson of the Salmons -- who bought "Chesney" in Oct.1918 -- I'm now able to give a more accurate account of "Tennis Anyone?" When the Rayners visited Melbourne in May 2012, Michel Canetti generously invited me too to tour the house and garden and share John's photos and explanations of their features. I think what I wrote was generally right but we now have a wealth of detail supplied by his vivid memory of growing up there as recorded in the wonderfully evocative history of his family he has written ( from which I quote below.)

Florence Ada and Phillip Walter Salmon sold their property "Daisy Hill Park" near Talbot and with their three daughters, Florence Emily, Mary and Phyllis (and perhaps a maiden aunt or two) moved to Camberwell. Florence Ada is shown as the owner on the Title. As we've seen, they retained the two front rooms but added a new kitchen, one bathroom (possibly two) and three or four other rooms opening onto a long internal passage running north south. The net effect of this was to make the house-block smaller and space for a tennis court on a 50' block. Eventually there were two garages, one facing Fermanagh and one Prospect Hill Road.

I've checked Sands and McDougall again: they didn't move in till 1920, no doubt due to the building. Perhaps there was already a considerable garden: certainly the hedge, the pepper tree and the lemon-scented gum. But as this photo shows the Salmons had, as they were used to, a beautiful garden by the mid-twenties. Florence Ada had grown up in "Risby" on Toorak Road, South Yarra, and had studied piano in London and art in Paris in the 1890s and, as remembered by John Rayner, "had a great sense of style". The garden was one of her passions all her life.



(Photo courtesy of J.R.)

S&M shows No. 26 empty in 1926. The family was doing the Grand Tour of U.K. and Europe. If they had moved partly for the sake of their daughters' education, this would have been a traditional finishing school (though more commonly for males). In 1930 Phillip died unexpectedly, and sadly -- and a reminder of those times -- Mary, who was a kindergarten teacher and engaged

to be married, died of polio in May 1931. Florence, Mary's sister, married Samuel Baird in Feb.1933 and moved to Christowell Street nearby. This must have been a very distressing time for Florence Ada, losing her husband and a daughter, and with her home emptying quickly. Paradoxically, two new rooms were added on the northern end and a second bathroom and small kitchen created, probably to allow a division into two flats. The remaining daughter, Phyllis, took on the care of her mother and they travelled together locally and overseas. But in July 1938, Phyllis also married, and her husband's work as a geophysicist took them to Broken Hill. It's not clear whether Mrs Salmon lived alone at that time or perhaps with a companion.

But in 1940 when Phyllis and her husband, Jack Rayner, moved to Sydney, Mrs Salmon, now about 70 years old and with failing health, joined them and one flat in "Chesney" was let to W.M.Tower at that time. The front and back gardens and the verandah were divided, as was the long hall; separate fuse boards were installed near the two front doors. John Rayner who supplied this information was born in 1941 while they were living in Mosman. The whole family moved to Canberra in 1942 where John's father took up the post of Chief Geophysicist in the Mineral Resources Survey and other, war-related, projects. Another child, Margaret, was born there in 1943. During this period Mrs Salmon had become even more fragile and subject to heart problems; Mrs Rayner didn't find life in Canberra, at that time "a tiny city of 12,000 ", from which her husband was often absent, and experiencing the coldest winter on record, agreeable.

So in 1946 all returned to Melbourne and to "Chesney" which was "rather run down". The house and gardens were then restored to one habitation. "Nanny" Salmon lived in the northern part of the house, her domain shielded by a curtain in the long passage. Her formal drawing room to the left as you entered the front door was yielded reluctantly to the children for a nursery-cum playroom. An earlier, timber, maid's room jutting out on the east and entered through what became our broom cupboard eventually became John's room. The garden was redesigned by Reynolds and Laversher (?). Phyllis, in the spirit of Edna Walling, devoted herself to nurturing and developing it. There was no division between 26 and what later became 26A. The asphalt tennis court took up the southern part of the block; the rest held a garage, an orchid house, a sandpit (later a wading pool), the children's gardens and a structure housing a dog, rabbits and a pigeon loft! There was a shed beside the court for the net etc. and south of the kitchen a building for Phyllis's pottery in the 30s, later Jack's workshop, not to mention fruit trees, a ruin (a summerhouse) and a water-feature in the garden.

Mrs Salmon died 18 Feb.1950, leaving her estate jointly to her two daughters. They agreed to divide it, Phyllis becoming the owner of "Chesney" (transferred Sep.1952) and Florence Baird of the holiday house "Narrung" at Point Lonsdale. The Rayners spread into the whole house. Mrs Salmon's former drawing room became the lounge, Mrs Salmon's sitting room became Mr Rayner's study, the children had their own bedrooms and the bow windowed dining/living room was the centre of a rich cultural life -- in winter by a blazing fire. When Jack Rayner was offered, in 1957, the position of Director of the Bureau of Mineral Resources, involving a move back to Canberra, "Chesney" was mortgaged to help buy the Canberra house, to which they moved -- with mixed feelings -- in Jan.1958.

Again there were two flats: the northern occupied by an architect, R.M.Ure, and his family; the other by W.H.Horn (S&M). Once the move was judged acceptable, the Rayners put No.26 on the market. It was bought by Collective Investments 11/12/1965 allowing the Rayners to discharge their mortgage. It was Collective Investments who divided the property for sale, the house being bought by S.V and L.Chirnside and the newly created 26A by Herbert Keith Turner and Richard Davis, both on 9/9/1965.

So the Salmon/Rayner family owned "Chesney" for about 43 years. They shared their good fortune through service in such organisations as the Girl Guides, even in a London soup-kitchen, in tennis parties, and even, in the twenties dances in the front room with Florence Ada at the

piano. For the first 14 years it was the family home, but the additions in the early '30s were a recognition that adaptations would be needed, as indeed they were. Being able to utilize the two flats meant they were able to cope with the necessities of Jack Rayner's career while maintaining it as a little Eden to which they could return to remake.

My final observation concerns the many uses of the front room closest to the pepper tree. At the Riversdale Estate auction in 1882 it was brand new. Forty years later it was Mrs Salmon's "beautiful" drawing room, then part of the northern flat, and became the Rayner children's nursery/ playroom. After Mrs Salmon's death it reverted to "elegant drawing room with red velvet curtains" but for the Chirnsides it was the main bedroom with a feature wall of pink and silver roses; for the Goldbergs the lounge and later lounge/dining room. Today it's the studio of M.Canettii, an artist, by occupation and in creating a new beautiful garden within the seclusion provided by the cypress hedge and the "tin fence".

My thanks to Adjunct Professor John Rayner and M. Michel Canetti for their photos and help in preparing this. Judy Goldberg 12/6/2012.

Photo provided by and of Michel's garden.



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DIAGRAMS AND MAPS USED  
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J. Goldberg Sep.2009



THE BOROONDARA  
STANDARD 11/5/1882

MORRETT STREET, LIMEWOOD ROAD, HAWTHORN.

**SATURDAY, MAY 13.**  
At Three O'clock.  
On the Ground.  
**RIVERSDALE ESTATE.**  
The Very Pick and Choicest Spot in  
UPPER HAWTHORN.  
All that Modern and Well-appointed ;  
**BRICK VILLA RESIDENCE,**  
With 130ft Frontage to Fermanagh-road,  
And  
**40 GRAND BUILDING SITES,**  
Having the Noble Frontages of 100 to 130, by  
the Great Depths of 200 to 220 ft each to  
16ft. Wide Rights-of-way  
To  
Riversdale, Prospect-hill, Fermanagh,  
Waterloo, and  
Trafalgar Roads,  
Situate Within Five Minutes' Gentle Walking  
Distance of the  
Burke-road Railway Station,  
Close to the Residences of  
Sir John O'Shanassy, George Anthoness,  
Esq., W. Murray, Esq., F. Fulton, Esq.,  
Mrs Peppin, and Others,  
Having Views of Surpassing Grandeur of  
both Land and Sea, that quite  
Baffle Description,  
Overlooking  
Hobson's Bay, the Shipping, the You Yanga,  
Steiglitz Mountains, the Dandenong  
Ranges, Malvern, Toorak, and  
Surrounding Country,  
Together with  
That Prodigious Growth, that Stupendous  
and Most Marvellous Monument of  
British Pluck, of Modern Times, ex-  
hibiting Energy, Enterprise,  
and Progress, the develop-  
ment of only some 30  
odd Years, that  
would do cre-  
dit to the  
growth  
of  
Centuries,  
that are almost  
incredible for so short  
a time,  
The City of Melbourne and Suburbs,  
with its Colossal Establish-  
ments and Buildings, with its  
Steeple, Spires, and Surrounding  
Palaces, that are Most Astounding to  
Visitors and Distinguished Tourists, without  
doubt destined to become the London  
and Paris of the Southern Hemis-  
phere, from which nothing can  
intercept the Views from this  
Grand Property, the  
Riversdale Estate  
being without  
exception  
the  
Premier  
Block now  
available of all  
that Truly Charming  
and Lovely Suburb of Upper Hawthorn.  
To Squatters, Merchants, Professional Men,  
Builders, Speculators, Warehousemen  
Investors, and those requiring large  
sized and Healthily-situated Villa Sites.

**G.** W. TAYLOR and Co., having  
been favoured with instructions, will  
positively SELL by PUBLIC AUCTION, as  
above, on Saturday, 13th May, at 3 o'clock,  
on the ground,  
All that well-appointed Brick Villa Re-  
sidence, replete with every conve-  
nience, erected on Lot 1 on the plan  
of subdivision, together with  
40 Superb Building Sites,  
being without doubt  
The Premier Block of Land in Upper Haw-  
thorn,  
subdivided with great care for drainage,  
&c., so as to meet the wants of those  
who require larger blocks than are  
usually given at subdivision sales, on  
which a gentleman may erect a mansion  
if he chooses, besides which the land  
being so  
Rich and Undulating  
in character, is eminently adapted for  
gardens, to which the healthy fruit trees,  
&c., now on the ground most abundantly  
testify, so that with very little diligence  
and application any person building  
could within a year or two fairly reckon  
upon a garden that would be simply per-  
fect, and the admiration of every person  
of taste, thus affording the fortunate  
owner of such, in addition to the splen-  
did-views obtained from the property of  
the surrounding country, &c., a con-  
stant and never-ending pleasure of a  
most interesting and edifying character.  
NOTE.—A stage is being erected on the  
land for visitors to inspect.  
The ground is pegged out, and each allot-  
ment numbered according to plans of subdivi-  
sion now ready.  
Intending Purchasers  
Are Respectfully Solicited not to Buy  
Anywhere Else  
Until they have inspected this Grand  
Property,  
And then Judge for Themselves.  
Remember—There are 31 Trains per Day  
between  
Melbourne and the Property,  
To Suit All Classes ;  
That Gas and Water are Laid On ;  
That the Property is surrounded by Man-  
sions ;  
That you will have the advantage of Rural  
and City Life Combined,  
Being within only a few minutes' ride per  
rail of Melbourne.  
Remember—The Terms are Very Easy—  
One-tenth cash deposit, balance to suit up to  
12 months, with only 6 per cent. added.  
Remember—The Title is a Crown Certifi-  
cate, for particulars of which apply to M. H.  
Davies, Esq., solicitor, 6 Collins-street west,  
Melbourne.  
Plans and further particulars from G. W.  
Taylor and Co., landed estate, general mer-  
chandise, and household furniture auction-  
eers, 20 Collins-street west, Melbourne.