BERKELEY HALL

Berkeley Hall_St Kilda_KJ_Dec 09

Berkeley Hall_St Kilda_KJ_Dec 09

Berkeley Hall_St Kilda_upper colonnade_KJ_Dec 09

Berkeley Hall_St Kilda_ground floor colonnade_KJ_Dec 09

Berkeley Hall_St Kilda_KJ_Dec 09

Berkeley Hall_St Kilda_rear servants' quarters_KJ_Dec 09

Berkeley Hall_St Kilda_stable_KJ_Dec 09

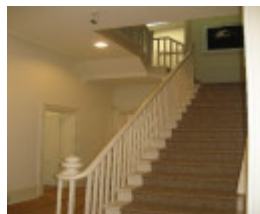Berkeley Hall_St Kilda_ground floor shutters_KJ_Dec 09

Berkeley Hall_St Kilda_Morwood & Rogers tiles on stable roof_KJ_Dec 09

Berkeley Hall_St Kilda_cellar with wine bins_KJ_Dec 09

Berkeley Hall_St Kilda_drawing room_KJ_Dec 09

Berkeley Hall_staircase_KJ_Dec 09.jpg

BERKELEY HALL SOHE
2008

1 berkeley hall princess street
st kilda front view

Location

11 PRINCES STREET ST KILDA, PORT PHILLIP CITY

Municipality

PORT PHILLIP CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0491

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO229

VHR Registration

March 4, 1981

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 17, 1999

What is significant?

The residence also known as Berkeley Hallwas designed by the architect Albert Purchas and built in stages from 1854 for the prominent solicitor Henry Field Gurner. Gurner (1819-83) was born in Sydney, in 1841 was the first attorney admitted to the bar in the Port Phillip District, was Melbourne's first Town Clerk and was Crown Solicitor of Victoria from 1851 until his retirement in 1880. Gurner purchased land on Grey Street in the second sale of Crown Land in St Kilda, and in 1850 bought the land to the east on Princes Street, where he built what was originally a Georgian style house, facing across Dalgety Street towards Hobson's Bay. Albert Purchas (1825-99)

arrived from England in 1852 and became one of Victoria's most important architects; this was one of his first commissions. The front rooms and an earlier two-storey verandah are said to have been added after 1873. The 1897 MMBW plan shows it as the only house between Dalgety and Burnett Streets, with two wings with a courtyard between at the rear, and large gardens facing Princes Street and Dalgety Street, with steps leading from there to the front entrance. Gurner died at the Melbourne Club and is buried at St Kilda Cemetery. His wife Augusta continued to live at the house until her death in 1917, when the property, now much reduced in size, was sold. The colonnaded verandah was probably built after this. In 1945 changes were made to the house for conversion to reception rooms, known as Berkley Hall, and further changes have now been made for conversion to offices. The former rear courtyard (with an underground brick lined water tank) has been enclosed, new openings made between rooms, floorboards replaced and most of the interior decorative details removed.

The residence at 11 Princes Street is a two storey rendered brick Classical style house. Around three sides of the house is the prominent two-storey Doric and Ionic colonnade which has small curved balconettes near the corners of the upper level. The long double-hung sash windows on the ground floor have timber shutters. The house retains its original entrance hall, the main staircase with a fine timber balustrade, the drawing room with a canted bay window and a cellar with brick and slate wine bins. Behind the house are the former four room servants' quarters and a brick stable with a loft and roofed with Morewood & Rogers tiles.

How is it significant?

The residence at 11 Princes Street is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The residence at 11 Princes Street is of historical significance as the home from 1854 until his death in 1883 of Henry Gurner, one of Victoria's most prominent early residents. He was the first attorney admitted to the bar in the Port Phillip District, Melbourne's first Town Clerk and Crown Solicitor of Victoria from Separation in 1851 until 1880. Berkeley Hall is one of the oldest surviving houses in St Kilda, and reflects the popularity of the seaside suburb for gentlemen's residences in the early days of the colony. It is historically significant as a demonstration of the way of life of the wealthier residents of Victoria during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The residence at 11 Princes Street is of architectural significance as an impressive example of a grand Classical style house, first built in 1854 and extended during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The early twentieth century Classical colonnade is an impressive and unusual example of its kind. The house is significant for its association with Albert Purchas, one of Victoria's most important architects of the second half of the nineteenth century.

[This statement of significance was updated as part of the Data Upgrade Project 2010]

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.

Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: A Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Painting of previously painted surfaces provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of any original paint or other decorative scheme.

Demolition or removal of non-original stud/partition walls, suspended ceilings or non-original wall linings, bathroom partitions and tiling, sanitary fixtures and fittings, kitchen wall tiling and equipment, lights, built-in cupboards, cubicle partitions and the like.

Removal or replacement of non-original door and window furniture including, hinges, locks, knobsets and sash lifts.

Removal of non-original tiling or concrete slabs in wet areas provided there is no damage to or alteration of original structure or fabric.

Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves, obscure architectural features and that the central plant is concealed.

Sensitive installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring.

Removal or replacement of electric clocks, public address systems, detectors, alarms, emergency lights, exit signs, luminaires and the like on plaster surfaces.

Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.

Installation of plant within the roof space.

Sensitive installation of new fire hydrant services including sprinklers, fire doors and elements affixed to plaster surfaces.

Construction dates	1854, 1917,
Architect/Designer	Purchas, Albert,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	1118
Property Number	

History

Berkeley Hall was built in 1854 for H.F. Gurner, a prominent member of the local community. It was designed by Albert Purchas, an early Melbourne architect, in the classical revival style. The owner of Berkeley Hall, Henry Field Gurner, was Melbourne's first Town Clerk and, after separation, the first Crown Solicitor of Victoria. After Gurner's death in 1883, Berkeley Hall passed out of private hands, eventually becoming reception rooms in the early twentieth century. The hall has been significantly altered since its construction, with very little of the original Georgian qualities remaining.

Source: Historic Buildings Preservation Coucil Act 1974.

Richard Peterson: "A Place of Sensuous Resort: Buildings of St Kilda and Their People", © 2005, St Kilda Historical Society Inc.:

Berkley Hall

11 Princes Street, St Kilda

Henry Field Gurner (1819-83) was an Australian, born in Sydney. On leaving school in 1834 he became a clerk to his father, a judge of the Supreme Court, worked for the Crown Solicitor and in 1841, was admitted as an attorney, solicitor and proctor in the Colony of New South Wales. His first position was Deputy-Registrar and Clerk of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, for the Port Philip District and so in May 1841, Gurner was the first attorney, solicitor and proctor admitted to the Bar in the six year old town of Melbourne. By January 1842, he became Clerk of the Peace and Crown Solicitor for the Colony of Port Phillip. He briefly acted as the first Town Clerk (chief executive officer) of the newly incorporated Town of Melbourne, in 1842. He remained Crown Solicitor of Victoria from its separation in 1851 until he retired in 1880.

Gurner was a great Australian patriot and developed a valuable collection of Australiana. As well as two legal textbooks, in 1876, he also wrote a *Chronicle of Port Philip now the Colony of Victoria from 1770 to 1840*. He was a member of the Melbourne Club from 1844 and its president in 1870. He married Augusta Mary Curr (1829-1917), a gentlewoman, the second daughter of Edward Curr, landowner, squatter, politician and 'controversialist'. Curr was one of very few Catholic gentlemen in the District of Port Philip, although both his daughters married Protestants.

Curr was one of the nominated six members of the first Legislative Council of Van Diemens Land in 1825, on its separation from New South Wales. As his family grew (nine sons and six daughters) he settled in Victoria in 1841, where he built the house St Helliers on the Yarra at Abbotsford, the next year. Georgina McCrae describes the Currs as her neighbours in February 1842.

Augusta Gurner was a fine horsewoman, known famously as the 'Lady in Grey'; a skilled huntress who cleared three and four-railed fences on her horse 'Major' in the tradition of Diana, the ancient wood-goddess. In Melbourne she was the only woman to ride the hunt with the Melbourne Hounds. Of their eight surviving children, Henry Edward and John Augustus were barristers, and the latter became Crown Prosecutor in Victoria.

The Gurners first lived in a two-storied house and a villa with a garden on the corner of William and Little Collins Street, today bounded at the rear by Gurners Lane. Ironically, in relation to Gurner's Melbourne Club connection, these houses were demolished to build the Australian Club on the site in 1879. A syndicate of Australian Club members was formed and their horse 'Gurners Lane' won both the Melbourne and Caulfield Cups in 1982. The

name continues to be used by interests associated with The Australian Club.

Gurner bought land at the second sale of Crown Land at St Kilda. This was sections 27 and 28, giving him an 183 metre frontage to Grey Street. (F.G. Dalgety bought the adjacent similar blocks). In 1850, Gurner bought the adjacent block to the east, obtaining a similar frontage to Princes Street. (So did Dalgety, who also acquired a frontage to Barkly Street, later the site of Oberwyl). Gurner named the street put through his land Dalgety Street, and Dalgety named Gurner Street, penetrating his property. The land had been previously settled. The Black Plan of 1854 shows existing buildings on the site which were demolished to build Berkley Hall.

In 1854, the year of the Eureka Stockade, Gurner built his house on top of the hill, facing Princes Street. It had a view over Hobson's Bay. The architect was Albert Purchas. Later Purchas designed St George's Presbyterian Church, in Chapel Street, St Kilda (1877-80), his firm, Purchas and Teague, designed the Wool Exchange, 120 - 138 King Street, in 1913-14, and over 140 houses, offices, churches and cemetery buildings in Victoria between 1852 and 1909.

11 Princes Street is one of Purchas's first buildings. It was built in a sequence of stages. It was a large four-square Classical house, with a verandah on three sides, but quite close to Princes Street. It had four reception rooms, four bedrooms, store, pantries, larders, strongroom, brick stables, two coach houses and harness room, by 1917. It is known to have had difficulty in persuading the Yan Yean water supply to climb the hill, excepting only 'a trickle between one and five am'.

James Sinclair in *Beauties of Victoria*, an 1856 tourist booklet, evokes the scene: 'Nearly on the highest part of the hill of St Kilda, stands this gentlemen's spacious suburban residence, ... From the lofty verandah a fine view of the adjoining park of St Kilda, with the blue hills in the distance over-topping many a beautiful residence is obtained.' Frederick Revans Chapman, who lived in St Kilda from 1855 - 64, wrote in a letter: '... on the west side (of Princes Street) was Mr Gunner with a high fence to protect his front garden'.

After Gurner's death, Mrs H. F. Gurner was given as occupant of Berkeley Hall. It is

unclear to whom this refers. Not Augusta, she was off abroad. By 1892, 'John A. Gurner' is given as occupant, that is, Gurner's barrister son, John Augustus. By 1900, Augusta was ensconced back in residence, after her extended travels abroad. There was still no house built between Burnett Street and Dalgety Street. The redoubtable Augusta died in 1917.

The front rooms, and double-storied verandah were built after 1873, (they are not shown on the Vardy Plan of that year), but before the additions of 1897. By 1897, the MMBW plan shows Berkley Hall bounded by Dalgety Lane, with a large garden facing Dalgety Street, from which steps approach the side verandah. There is also a

garden on the south side, facing Princes Street. At the rear of the house are two large wings with a courtyard between.

The colonnaded verandah with Doric and Ionic column-pairs, with balconettes between at first floor level, is rather coarsely detailed and obscures the facades.

Technically interesting are the rare Morewood and Rogers galvanised iron roof tiles surviving on the stables. Wattle House also has them and they were only recently removed from Fenagh Cottage stables.

During a brief recall as Crown Solicitor, Gurner died, at the Melbourne Club. He left an estate £61,000. Augusta lived on for another 34 years, filling her widowhood with extensive travel. When she died in 1917, the house was auctioned. By then the property had reduced to 65.5 x 56.4 metres. It was bought by Mr and Mrs Balwin and when he died, Mr Gosling sold it to Mrs D.L. Speed in 1945, who named it Berkley Hall. It was converted to reception rooms, leaving only the drawing room relatively as the Gurners would have remembered it. In November 1999 it was auctioned for over $1.5million.

After the Wattle House and Eildon (as Barham House), Berkley Hall is the third oldest surviving substantial house in St Kilda. Berkley Hall is now offices for Abercrombie and Kent (Australia) Pty. Ltd.), 'Simply the best way to travel'.

Note: A proctor is a person managing cases in a civil court.

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Plaque Citation

This is one of St Kilda's oldest houses, designed by the architect Albert Purchas and built in stages from 1854 for Henry Field Gurner, Victoria's first Crown Solicitor. The colonnaded verandah was added after 1917.

Extent of Registration

Historic Building No. 491 Berkeley Hall, 11 Princess Street, St. Kilda.
[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. 22 4 March 1981 p.766]

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/