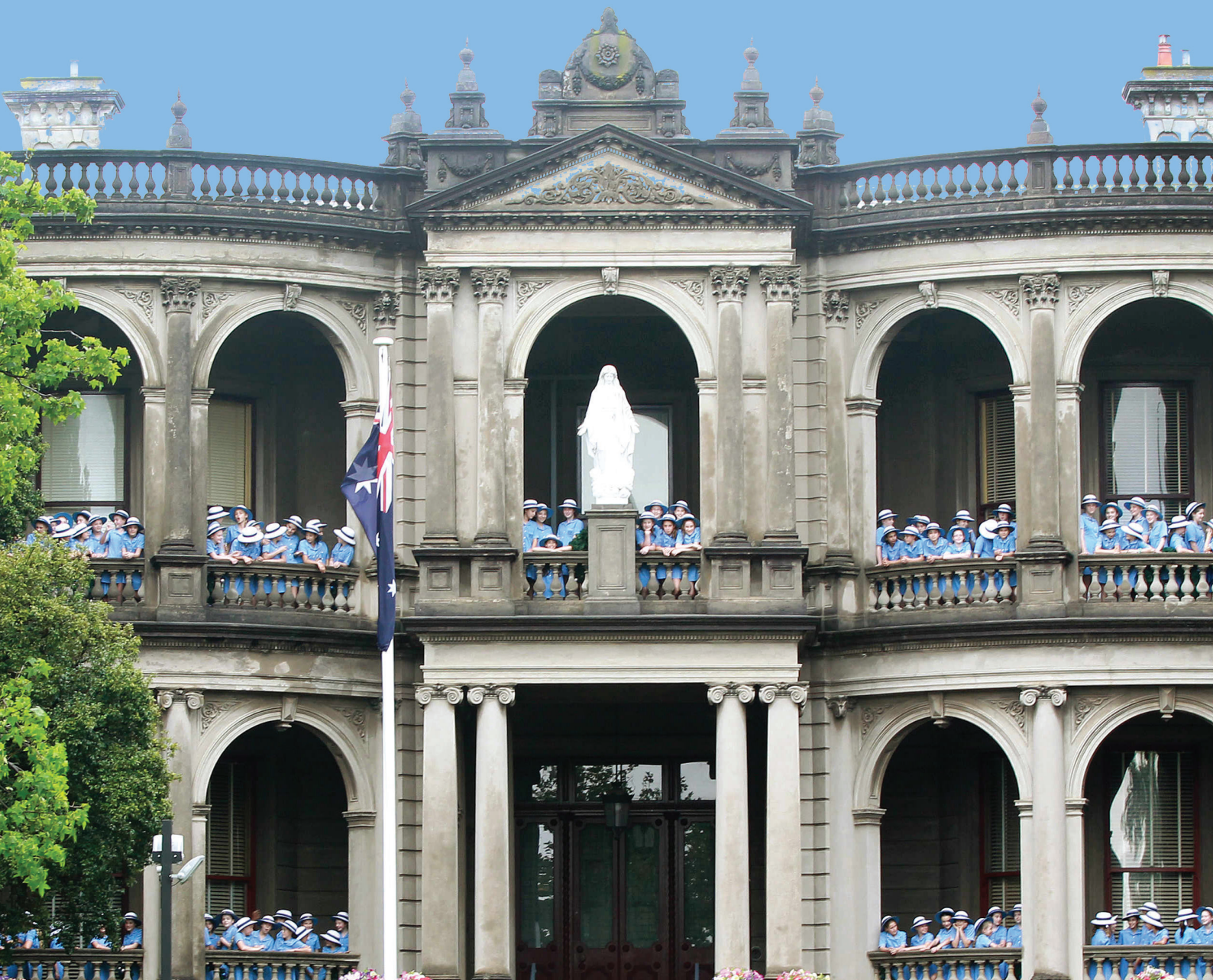


# MANDEVILLE HALL INFORMATION



**LORETO**  
Mandeville Hall Toorak

AN INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC SCHOOL FOR GIRLS ELC TO VCE



**Heritage Victoria describes *Mandeville Hall* as “one of the most lavishly decorated of Melbourne's nineteenth century mansions.”**

*Mandeville Hall* is of:

- **architectural significance** as one of the best examples of the fine town houses built in fashionable Toorak during the late 1870s and early 1880s for Victoria's wealthy pastoralists, business and professional men and their families;
- **historical significance** as a manifestation of the wealth of the affluent and socially prominent Clarke family;
- **aesthetic significance** for its interiors, which provide a remarkable record of 19<sup>th</sup> century interior decoration tastes and skills;
- **historical significance** because it illustrates how changing social and economic conditions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century made the maintenance of such large estates virtually impossible for individual families.

In January 1867, Alfred Watson, of the softgoods trading firm, William Watson & Sons, Flinders Lane, Melbourne, purchased 13 acres of land on the north east corner of Orrong & Malvern Rds, for £933. Watson had a 16-roomed house, *St George's*, probably designed by architect Joseph Reed, erected on a terrace above a formal garden. Reed also designed the Collins St Independent Church (now St Michael's) and *Rippon Lea*, Elsternwick. En route to England, Watson died. Edward Gilbert Watson's son and another executor of Alfred's will, Frederick Johnson who was married to Emily (nee Morton), sister of Alfred's wife, Marianne Jemima (nee Morton) had conveyed the land to Joseph Clarke by early 1877.



*St George's* c.1877

In 1878, journalist, James Edward Nield, otherwise known as the theatre critic Christopher Sly, visited *Mandeville Hall* in preparation for writing his article entitled, 'A Habitable House' for the *Australasian*. In this article he referred to the property as *Athelstane*. This is the only reference to *Mandeville Hall* under this name. Athelstan was a king of Wessex and Mercia who extended his realm to control most of England between 895 and 939 AD

In 1877 Clarke commissioned architect Charles Webb to enlarge *Athelstane*. Webb also designed the Melbourne Town Hall, Royal Arcade and Emerald Hill (South Melbourne) Town Hall. The London firm of Gillow & Co. designed and furnished the interiors. *Mandeville Hall* is described as 'the first and most important expression of the Aesthetic

*Movement in Australia*'. Its front rooms are described as '*the most intact and significant example in Australia of an interior influenced by the contemporary Aesthetic movement*'.

Joseph Clarke, his wife Caroline and sons William and Lewis lived in the house, which was renamed *Mandeville Hall* after *Norton Mandeville* near Gretna, Tasmania which had been purchased by Clarke in 1846. The name Mandeville is the name of the village from which the original owners of Norton Mandeville emigrated.

The death of Joseph Clarke in 1895 placed the Colonial Bank of Australasia in a very difficult position. Neither Sir William Clarke nor Mrs Caroline Clarke desired to keep *Mandeville Hall* although Mrs Clarke had claimed the light fittings in the Drawing Room as hers and had wanted to remove them in 1895 after the death of her husband. The Bank purchased the three gasoliers at the auction in November 1895. Nonetheless, Mrs Clarke did remove nine gasoliers, presumably the wall sconces, in July 1896 but soon returned them. However, most of them have since gone missing.

As the Bank effectively owned the property, it tried to sell as mortgagor. In April 1895, *Mandeville Hall* was up for sale with the price fixed at £25,000 for the mansion and £3,000 for the paddock at the rear. On 6 October 1896 the mortgage over *Mandeville Hall* to the Bank was registered.

By 1903 Mrs Isabel Ross Soden was leasing *Mandeville Hall* and stayed until 1908. Mrs Soden's occupation together with her four handsome sons was a glamorous time, entertaining in a lavish style. In March 1908 she made her gardens available for a performance of Shakespeare's 'As You Like It' as a charity fund-raising afternoon for the Queen Victoria Hospital.

Before Mrs Soden took occupation of the property, she made an extensive world tour with her sons and their tutor. The diary of one of the sons describes his mother's shopping forays in Japan and China where she purchased the Japanese screen and dinner gong, which appear in *The Punch* photographs of 1905. The diary is still held by the Soden family together with other furniture and furnishings, which may have been at *Mandeville Hall*.

*Mandeville Hall* became a boarding house during the ownership of the Tremearnes. Dr and Mrs Tremearne occupied a section of the house while Mrs Tremearne's sister, Ella Rowe Martyn, ran an exclusive guesthouse in the remainder of the house. With Dr Tremearne's death in 1912, the building gained official status as a boarding house.

Ella Rowe Martyn, known as 'Marty' to a great number of guests, managed the guest house personally and slept in a little chalet (or sleep-out) off the main driveway and near the gully at the side of the front lawn. Another eight or so chalets were located near Clendon Rd for the staff. Two peacocks strutted around the lawn, maintaining the air of picturesque privilege. The boarders were often wealthy, Englishmen who visited Australia for regular stays of a month or more and had heard of *Mandeville Hall* boarding house by word of mouth before coming out.

From 1915 at least two smaller houses were on the *Mandeville Hall* land, one of which was owned by G D Delprat, of Broken Hill Proprietary (BHP), and the other by Alfred Brash, of Brashes, the musical equipment suppliers. Sir Douglas Mawson married Delprat's daughter, Francisca Adriana (nee Paquita), in 1914 and he and his wife stayed at *Mandeville Hall*. General John Stanley, upon his return from the Great War, also had a brief stay at either *Mandeville Hall* or at one of these smaller houses.

The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM), more commonly known as the Loreto Sisters, acquired *Mandeville Hall* in 1924. At first the Sisters slept in the stables, used the Oak Parlour as a chapel with the room beside it as a sacristy, the Drawing Room as a reception room, several bedrooms upstairs as dormitories and the rest of the house for community purposes and classrooms. The chalets were used as music rooms.

Archbishop Dr Daniel Mannix laid the foundation stone of the new Chapel of Christ The King on 25 September 1927. The first Mass was celebrated in May 1928 and the chapel was formally opened in October of that year.

### **Gardens & Stables**

The grounds comprised a terraced sunken garden, formal lawns, gravel carriage drives, substantial stables, a lodge at Orrong Rd, several hothouses, a vine house, a large trellised fernery, aviaries and a pond and fountain, all of which have disappeared. The Victorian style stables, outhouses (laundry) and some garden features survive. Subdivision of the surrounding land over time has reduced the extent of the grounds and a number of school buildings are crowded into the remaining garden area. It has been assumed that the garden and associated outbuildings were arranged by Edward La Trobe Bateman who worked with Joseph Reed at *Rippon Lea*. The rambling, romantic style is typical of Bateman's work.

Overlooking the broad loggia are the remnants of the Clark gardens that were designed by Taylor & Sangster. Along the northern side of the gardens were canals formed for boating, which were later filled in to become 'the gully' and now only a few trees remain. A sunken garden was also established near the Conservatory. On the south side of *Mandeville Hall*, a small lake was established, but due to a tragedy, it was reclaimed.

### **Façade**

The Italianate style façade features two segmental bays, symmetrical entrance, two-story loggia comprising Ionic and Corinthian colonnades with intermediate arches and a central projecting pedimented portico which completely obscures the earlier Georgian style house *St George's*.

### **Interior**

Clarke commissioned the London firm Gillow & Company (established in 1782 and better known as a firm of furniture makers) to design and furnish the interior of his newly extended house. By the third quarter of the eighteenth century the Gillows were among the leading English cabinet makers with a branch in London and a large export business to the West Indies. Lancaster was the base for the firm's work and it is likely that much of the material exported to *Mandeville Hall* was fabricated there. A team of Gillow's workmen were brought out from England to complete the commission under the supervision of a Mr East, the overall co-ordinator of the interior scheme. While Gillow & Co. made the furniture, they purchased other elements such as the painted friezes, the Drawing Room silk and the various wallpapers, from other firms such as Warner & Sons and Jeffrey & Co..

### **Entrance Hall**

The entrance hall features a marble tiled floor (with brass studs for fixing carpet) and gilded coffered ceiling. The olive green walls are stencilled with a pattern of chestnut leaves in a darker green. The frieze, signed by T.W. Hay, is painted in oils on canvas/paper. The south wall features The Hunt in classical mythology, with figures of Diana, Endymion, Iphigenia, Alpheus and others. The north wall features allegorical

figures – Peace, War, Navigation, Science and more. The dado designed by Bruce James Talbert and manufactured by Jeffrey & Co., features embossed wallpaper, an imitation of leather, with a design of cherubs and grapevines in ruby and gold.

The two large columns (originally part of the *St George's* porch) featured deep reds, greens, blues and a generous application of gold. The two doors leading off the Entrance Hall are panelled in wallpaper with a leaf pattern. Over each door is the Latin word 'Salve', meaning 'Greetings'. The front door has frosted and stained glass and coloured panels, featuring two graceful ladies, Flora, the goddess of flowers, and Pomona, the goddess of fruits.

### **Stair Hall**

The large frieze over the entrance to *St George's* bears the inscription 'Salve - East, West Hame's Best'. On either side are scenes entitled 'Welcome Ye Coming Friend' and 'God Speed Ye Parting Guest'. The scene over the entrance door to the servery was relocated to a room at the rear of the house. The restored dado is the same embossed paper as the Hall. On the wall side of the staircase is a knotted spun brass handrail and behind it, on the wall, is a band of crimson Utrecht velvet. The gilded cast iron balustrade also bears a handrail, which is covered in fringed crimson Utrecht velvet. The frieze on the walls of the staircase is a stencilled pattern of stylised flowers.

The large stained glass window features four roundels, each representing one of the four seasons in the English Countryside. A medallion at the top gives the date of erection, 1878, while a lower medallion is inscribed with Clarke's initials "JC". The artist and craftsmen responsible for this window may have been either Ferguson & Ure or Smryk & Rogers.

The stained glass under the stairs shows various Australian birds and is an early example of this motif. The glass was moved from the two external windows and the doors were relocated from an entrance leading to the northern verandah of *St George's* or from the original conservatory. The embossed wallpaper on the eastern wall under the staircase remains unpainted, whilst the wallpaper of different design on the western wall retains its imitation of leather.

### **Indian Room**

Formerly the library, this room was the dining room in *St George's* before Clarke transformed it into a unique and exotic smoking room. The dado was painted in a rose-colored design with a green and yellow border, and an overlying floral border imitating silk, draped curtains. The frieze features greens and blues, palms, foliage and Moorish arches. The bay window opens onto a terrace, which was once covered by a small verandah.

### **Breakfast Room**

The wallpaper in the breakfast room featured flowers, small leaves and a sort of paisley, which interlock to form a strong diaper effect.

### **Oak Parlour (Dining Room)**

The frieze, painted in oil on canvas, predominantly blues and greens, features The Hunt. These medieval scenes are divided by arches and may be viewed separately, or as a continuous narrative. The frieze is signed 'C. Pitts Prahran 1878'. The walls are covered with machine-made, embossed design wallpaper in several shades of green with abstract foliage and cartouches. It is unusual because of its narrow width and the fact that the overall pattern requires two widths for a full repeat.

Around the room, above the dado, are carved oak panels, depicting different English flora, with almost no repetition. Surmounting the fireplace is a tall over-mantel in which there is a panel carved with 'C' for Clarke and '1878', being the year the room was completed. The ceiling is covered with textured papers in pastel shades with floral and geometric patterns. Utrecht velvet is used in the rear panel of the pediments above the doors. One wall sconce mount, in the south-east corner, survives. The original curtain rods feature spun brass ends and supported a silk curtain, with dados and friezes of Utrecht velvet.

### **Servery**

The room once featured a very large built-in buffet unit where food was prepared prior to it being served in the adjacent Dining Room. A trap door from the room leads down the steep staircase to the cellar below.

### **Drawing (Reception) Room & Conservatory**

The use of silk wall hangings appears to be unique in Australia, although it was not unusual in luxurious interiors in England of this period. The stretched silk damask covering the upper wall was originally an olive green with a pattern of darker green leaves and blue flowers. The damask was designed by Bruce James Talbert and woven by Thomas Grainger of Warner and Sons, England, in 1878. The overall colour now is a gentle gold, the flowers are barely different in hue from the background and the leaves are not different at all. The elaborate ceiling is in gold and turquoise. The original curtain rods feature spun brass ends. Acid etched glass doors, again featuring Flora and Pomona, lead to the Conservatory, which also features acid etched glass windows.

The colour of the dado, in deep rose silken plush Utrecht velvet, survives near the servant bells on either side of the chimney breast. The silk frieze, produced by Jeffrey & Co. of embroidery and velvet has a pattern of ripe pomegranates bursting their skins. The mantelpiece is of satinwood, as was all the original furniture in this room. Only one original item of furniture remains, that being the small card table, given to the school by Mr Brock in memory of a past pupil stamped with the manufacturer's name and unique number. The design of the three floral painted panels of the covered hood featuring birds and butterflies is also seen in the panel of the pediment over the door initialled '18 J.M. 78', thought to be Scottish artist and decorator John Mather who arrived in Melbourne in 1878.

Mather was a skilful and prolific etcher but was best known as a landscape oil and watercolour painter. He first worked as a house decorator before painting the inside of the dome of the (Royal) Exhibition Building in 1880 and was a founding member of the Victorian Artists Society and president on a number of occasions.

### **Bathroom**

Hand painted tiles featuring mermaids, fish and swans rise to above normal dado height. Above the dado is a stylised floral pattern similar in style to that found in the Entrance Hall and a representation of pillars, as if these support the roof. Between the pillars are sky, flowers and birds. The ceiling, which features the Adamesque quadrant decoration typical of the adjacent dressing and bedrooms, has a central skylight, which is of opaque glass with an etched geometric design in the centre. Some of the cast iron rosettes, part of the wall sconces survive. The bath was hewn out of a solid piece of marble.

### **Bedrooms & Dressing Rooms**

Large panels bordered by timber and gesso beading, are a feature of these rooms. The panels were originally wallpapered, thus explaining the function of the beading. The wallpaper in the southern bedroom consisted of a small, tight floral design and may have been one of Bruce James Talbert's designs. A large fragment of wallpaper was recently

discovered under the floor and is bright blue and gold. Small sections of this wallpaper survive behind the servants bell. Some of the cornices are intact and appear to retain original colours of pale blue, dark pink and gold. The ceilings also feature stylised classical motifs in the Adam fashion. Some doors retain their original painted panels in gold, outlined with blue on stone and some door pediments feature central medallions. The overmantel in the small bedroom is purely decorative and is not functional.

### **Servants Wing**

The kitchen and scullery were located on the ground floor and the servant's bedrooms on the first floor. One of the cast iron rosettes, part of the wall sconces survive. The first floor features its original colour scheme and a number of staircases lead to the basement.

### ***Mandeville Hall* Basement**

It is unknown what the front rooms in the basement were used for, but they were not occupied. The walls are constructed of roughcast bluestone as evident in the front rooms under the Oak Parlour and Reception Room. The floors of the rooms are lined with large slabs of bluestone which is still evident in the cellar, a room yet to be refurbished. The entrance to the basement was via a very steep staircase (since reconstructed) under the main *Mandeville Hall* staircase. The rendered, brick vaulted ceiling supports the marble floor in the entrance hall and stair hall. The cellar features bluestone walls and floors, what appears to be upright slate dividing walls, a very steep staircase and trap door leading into the scullery on the first floor.

### ***St George's* Basement**

It is unknown what the rooms in the basement were used for, but we can safely assume that they were occupied due to the presence of a number of fireplaces in some rooms and windows at the rear, fronting what was the laundry service yard and servants wing. All walls are cement rendered, but only the external walls are ashlar ruled. The floors of the rooms were lined with bricks some of which is still evident in the rooms that are yet to be refurbished. The entrance to the basement was via a very steep staircase under the main *St George's* staircase.

### **The Chapel of Christ the King**

The foundation stone of the chapel was laid in 1927. It was built onto the southern elevation of *Mandeville Hall*, causing the Loggia and steps to be removed. The architect may have been Robert Harper & Son, or perhaps Augustus Andrew Fritsch, who designed St Joseph's Church, Malvern; Brigidine Convent - Kildara College Chapel, Malvern; Our Lady of Mt Carmel Church, Middle Park and St Columba's Church, Elwood.



The Chapel of Christ the King c.1927

The organ, classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), is a smaller version of the pipe organ in the Melbourne Town Hall. The stained glass windows with their traditional blues and reds were commissioned by the Loreto Sisters, and made in Birmingham. The windows in the sanctuary represent The Annunciation and The Coronation of Mary. Although the reredos and cupola were removed from the marble altar in the 1980s, it still features a panel of The Last Supper. In the 1973, the pews and stations of the cross were removed and the parquet floor was covered with carpet.

Prepared by Steve Stefanopoulos, Heritage Collection & Records Manager with resources from the Loreto Mandeville Hall Heritage Collection & the Mandeville Hall Conservation Analysis by Timothy Hubbard Pty. Ltd. July 1990.

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# LORETO

Mandeville Hall Toorak

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