

PLACE NAME  
ADDRESS  
AREA 2

"Acton"  
41 Virginia Street  
DATE/PERSON 26.5/RP

LEVEL: B  
NEG: 5.23 & 5.24



**DATES** Construction: c1930

**USE** Present Use: House  
Original Use: House  
Alterations?: Nil

**FORM**

Detached  
Double storey  
Other

**STYLE**

English Cottage

**DESCRIPTION** (I = Intact A = Altered \* = significant)

**ROOF**

**WALLS**

I Timber  
I Brick  
I Rendered

**ROOF FORM**

I Chimneys: pots

**VERANDAH**

**FENESTRATION**

I Doors  
I Windows, flower-box

**FINISHES**

Unpainted:  
brickwork &  
render

**INTERIOR**

**GARDEN & SETTING**

\* Garden form  
I Fences & gates  
I Plants: cypress hedge  
I Features: entry pergola  
I Outbuildings: garage

**OTHER COMMENTS**

**CONDITION & INTEGRITY**

Condition:  
Integrity:

**THREATS**

## DESCRIPTION

A romantic Tyrolean interpretation of the English Cottage manner, particularly well built and intact.

There is a major jerkin-head roof facing the street and another facing the left-hand side. A recessed first-floor balcony faces the street set into the gable-end, which is unpainted render, all timbered, extending up as a balustrade to the balcony with a floral window-box. Beneath, is a recessed porch on the right-hand side and a shallow bow window on the left. There is another recessed porch at left. The first-floor jetties forward with fretwork barges, exposed rafters and pendant bosses. There is a garage similar to the house, set back. There is a matching clinker brick fence, with slots and soldier course decoration with a header cap between piers and an entry-pergola with wrought iron vehicular gates. The garden appears to be largely intact, with various clipped topiary bushes, including a side-hedge and a huge cypress.

## HISTORY

Stewart Balfour, garage proprietor, was the first owner/occupier when work commenced in 1930 on the timber and brick two storey residence at 41 Virginia Street, Newtown. In that year, the Newtown rate books record that a dwelling costing 4000 pounds was being erected on Balfour's land, 60 x 228 feet in Virginia Street. The NAV remained as it had the year before when Balfour's property was listed as vacant land (a low 35 pounds)<sup>484</sup>. The following year however, (which suggests the completion of Balfour's house), the NAV rose to a high 208 pounds<sup>485</sup>. The valuation remained at 200 pounds throughout the 1930s, when a new owner, Ella M. Balfour was recorded<sup>486</sup>. The transference of property into a wife's name was a common practice during the depression years.

A research report by Trevor Nicholls on Balfour Motors at the corner of Gheringhap and Mercer Streets, Geelong, tells how the original section of this building was constructed in 1913 for Dennys Lascelles from the designs of the architects Laird & Buchan. "With the wealth obtained from the booming wool industry", says Nicholls, "Dennys Lascelles could afford to construct a garage, not only to service their own transport, but also to offer mechanical repairs and new car sales to the public"<sup>487</sup>.

The motor garage was taken over in 1918 by Balfour Brothers, owners of a cycle business in Malop Street, who were looking for larger premises. Building and land were sold to Bertha Matilda and Ella Muir Balfour, both householders living in Newtown<sup>488</sup>. Laird and Buchan designed additions to the building for Balfour Bros., which included the installation of a car wash and facilities for tyre retreading and new car and petrol sales<sup>489</sup>. In November 1931 Balfour Motors was appointed as Geelong's representative to the RACV<sup>490</sup>, and the following year their premises were used as the Geelong headquarters of the RACV<sup>491</sup>.

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484. Newtown rate book 1929 No 121; 1930 No 121.

485. Ibid 1931 No 121.

486. Ibid 1932 No 121.

487. Trevor Nicholls, "Balfour Motors (Formerly Balfour Bros. Pty Ltd.", 1990, unpaginated.

488. Newtown rate book 1932 No 121.

489. Nicholls.

490. Geelong Advertiser, 28 November, 1931.

491. Ibid 20 April, 1932.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1930 as the private residence of Stewart Balfour, garage proprietor, "Acton" has regional historical significance for its associations with the important Geelong motor trade. Balfour Motors, which originally owned a cycle business in Malop Street, took over larger premises previously owned by Denys Lascelles, wool merchants, on the corner of Gheringhap and Mercer Streets, and provided new car and petrol sales and an early car wash and tyre retreading service. Balfour Motor premises were used during the 1930s as the Geelong headquarters of the R.A.C.V. It has regional architectural significance as a relatively rare and charming Tyrolean interpretation of the English Cottage manner. It is particularly intact and well maintained. Contextual elements such as garage, fence, gates and entry pergola, side hedge and garden, contribute to its significance.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

<b>Existing Listings</b>	NONE	
<b>Recommend'ns</b>	RNE	LPS Area 2 Place

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