

## GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

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**Site Name:** Residence

**Project File No:** 0910

**Address:** 46 Eastern Beach Geelong 3220

**Approx. Date:** 1909, 1947

**Integrity:** Moderate

**Significance Level:** C (Local)

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**Photograph No:** 06.24

**Survey Date:** March 2002

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### History

The residence at 46 Eastern Beach Road (formerly 30 Victoria Parade) was built for the Geelong timber merchant, Thomas Higgans, in 1909. The eminent Geelong architectural firm of Laird and Buchan designed the two storey house which consisted of 10 rooms, bathroom, pantry, wash house and stables. At a cost of approximately £1,000, it was constructed of galvanised corrugated iron gabled roofs, weatherboard walls, attic dormers and single tower and brick basement walls. Timber verandahs and balconies; fine pine shingles to portions of the gables, tower and underside of the balcony; and a tower flagpole and other decorative woodwork further characterised the exterior of the house. Internally, the staircase was constructed of blackwood. The contractor for the work was Armour Brothers, the plumbing, plastering, painting and asphalting being undertaken by Richard Robinson, James Palmer, Mc Rorie Brothers and Conway and Evans respectively.

In 1918 Thomas Higgans sold the house to James B. Stephens, formerly of Newlyn. His ownership of the property was short-lived, because by September 1922 the house was purchased by Ella Solomon, wife of Julius Solomon, Managing Director of the well-known and established Geelong Department store, Solomon's Pty. Ltd. It seems the home was named Lorisville after their child, Loris.

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The Rate Books suggest that Loris Solomon was bequeathed the property in 1946 and appears to have engaged Jockey Jones to undertake considerable modifications one year later. The bird-wired roughcast cement rendered finish applied over the original weatherboard exterior was Jones's specialty, having undertaken this type of work on a number of homes in Geelong. The additional squat square tower on the north-west corner of the house; alterations to the verandah (provision of segmentally-arched and cement-rendered loggia) and balcony (addition of bellcast panelling, walls and glazing) and alterations to the roof of the original tower appear to have been the major changes undertaken by Jones.

In 1962, Lorisville was sold to H.V. Fowler and then to John Combe in 1964, before being purchased by Claude Emmerson in 1970.

### Description

The house at 46 Eastern Beach, Geelong, is set on a large allotment with a substantial front setback. The garden consists of several mature shrubs and flowers, with some lawned areas. The front is bound by an elaborate rendered brick fence with incised panels and capped piers, and is approximately 1200 mm high. There is also a steel gate. The house also has panoramic views to Corio Bay.

The two storey, cement rendered weatherboard, eclectic Federation and postwar Freestyle bungalow consists of an Arts and Crafts-like picturesque arrangement of roof forms (clad in overpainted corrugated galvanised iron) and protruding spatial forms. The house is balanced by the main central gable that links the rear gabled wings. The significant protrusions include the prominent rendered polygonal tower and the squat square tower which is angled approximately 45 degrees to the extended balconied section of the house. Elements of Laird and Buchan's original design can be partially discerned in the main central gable and attic dormers, timber detailing of the side balconies, timber framed windows, lofty chimney stacks and lower section of the polygonal corner tower. These features were typical elements of the architects' work for the period and they also have an affinity with some of the contemporary designs by Melbourne architect Robert Haddon who worked in association with Laird and Buchan on some Geelong designs. Also of particular interest are the subtle Art Deco lines and moulds applied to the verandah loggia, north-west tower, parapet of the polygonal tower and bellcast balcony panelling. These Art Deco details are especially rare for Geelong houses and contribute to the uniqueness of the design. Furthermore, the segmentally-arched entrance loggia below the bellcast-like panelling, together with the ornamental cement-rendered fence, contribute to the distinctive and varied architectural display.

### Statement of Cultural Significance

The house at 46 Eastern Beach, Geelong, has significance as an unusual and reasonably intact example of a postwar Freestyle Bungalow style, with an Arts and Crafts-like picturesque arrangement of roof forms. It was originally built in 1909 (with major alterations in 1947) for Geelong timber merchant, Thomas Higgans, and was later owned by Ella Solomon, wife of Julius Solomon, Managing Director of the well-known and established Geelong Department store, Solomon's Pty. Ltd., from the 1920s.

The house at 46 Eastern Beach is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level. Although the house has experienced some alterations, it still demonstrates original and unusual design qualities of an eclectic Federation and postwar Freestyle Bungalow style. These qualities include the Arts and Crafts-like picturesque arrangement of roof forms (clad in overpainted corrugated galvanised iron) and protruding spatial forms. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the prominent rendered polygonal tower and the squat square

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tower which is angled approximately 45o to the extended balconied section of the house, rendered weatherboard wall construction, main central gable and attic dormers, timberdetailing of the side balconies, lofty chimney stacks and lower section of the polygonal corner tower, subtle Art Deco lines and moulds applied to the verandah loggia, north-west tower, parapet of the polygonal tower and bellcast balcony panelling, segmentally-arched entrance loggia below the bellcast-like panelling and the timber framed windows. The decorative rendered fence and mature shrubbery, together with uninterrupted views to Corio Bay, contribute to the significance of the place.

The house at 46 Eastern Beach is historically significant at a LOCAL level. It is associated with residential developments in Geelong in the Federation (c.1895-1915) and postwar (post 1945) periods. In particular, this house has associations with Thomas Higgans, original owner and Geelong timber merchant from 1909, having had the house designed by the prolific Geelong architects, Laird and Buchan. The house also has associations with a the prominent Solomon family from 19, as it was purchased as the family home by Ella Solomon, wife of Julius Solomon, Managing Director of the well-known and established Geelong Department store, Solomon's Pty. Ltd. The Solomon family had long associations with the property (which they named Lorisville, presumably after their daughter, Loris), owning the property until 1962.

Overall, the house at 46 Eastern Beach is of LOCAL significance.

### References

Sands and McDougall Street Directory, 1912-1962, 1961-70.  
Geelong Town Council Rate Books, Bellarine Ward, 1910-1953, Geelong Historical Records Centre.  
Certificate of Title, 18 June 1922, 8 September 1922, Titles Office, Melbourne.  
Laird and Buchan, Specifications: Residence at Eastern Beach for Thomas Higgans, file H.563, Geelong Historical Records Centre.  
Laird and Buchan Account Book 1908-1909, Geelong Historical Records Centre.  
*Geelong Advertiser*, 10 July 1933.  
C. Demllo, 'Digressions', in the *Investigator*, vol.25, 1990, pp.171-172.