



**Regent Court Flats**  
**72 McKillop Street**

**History**

Geelong Grammar School (1857-1884) was dominant in this area during both the 19th and 20th Century. Its presence began to diminish with the subdivision of its grounds as the Grammar School Reserve estate. Plans

were lodged at the Titles Office for a housing estate there as early as 1916.<sup>1</sup> This site was Lot 13 of the estate.<sup>2</sup> The Fowler brothers owned it in 1922, when their plumber, A J Wilson, proposed extensive work on the site.<sup>3</sup> In the same era the plan provided matched almost exactly another tendered in 1936 when this building was erected.<sup>4</sup> An important difference was a line bisecting the 1922 plan as a villa pair. Thomas J Fowler lived at 72 McKillop and Albert E Fowler at 74, at that time.<sup>5</sup>

1 VTO LPs 6909, 6906  
2 GWB DRP 4303  
3 GWB DRP 2338  
4 ibid.  
5 D1924

Early in 1936, Thomas Fowler applied to Geelong Council to make 'alterations' to his McKillop Street property. His builder was E E Beach and the value of the works, £3000.<sup>1</sup> It is probably that this was actually to build the Regent Court Flats, given that a timber house cost £500 to build, in the same period, as shown by two weatherboard houses Fowler commissioned in Grey Street.<sup>2</sup> By early 1936, the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust had approved the planned plumbing in a two-storey flat block.<sup>3</sup> Flats were rare in Geelong, even when this block was erected in the 1930s. When the Miller Memorial Homes were opened nearby in McKillop Street, in 1919-20, they were cited as a new step towards higher density, more affordable housing.<sup>4</sup> Regent Court was two-storey and achieved a higher density, being among the first erected in the Geelong area, at that scale. One of the few examples is the nearby C.F.A. flats which are of a similar era and of a more contemporary design (q.v.).

Symmetrically arranged, stucco-clad and two-storey, the flats are set back behind a contemporary brick fence, complete with privet hedge. The roof is hipped, with a centre bay and, either side, a skillion roof form shelters the deep balconies at the upper level. With the roof bay, these lend the effect of a protruding centre bay or portico and promote the overall classical approach to the design. Tuscan columns underscore a bracketed cemented hood to the entrance and a cement scroll provides the only other applied ornament. Tapestry brick balustrade panels supply structural decoration at both levels.

Inside, the terrazzo floors, stained and lacquered joinery, gold block lettering to doors and the pipe and steel-flat balustrading, present a faithful expression of the flat block's original state. This is also the case with the exterior, which has been well maintained.

#### External Integrity

Generally original exterior, landscape and internal communal areas. The original sand-finish render survives unpainted.

#### Streetscape

Although a distinctive building form in the streetscape, Regent Court relates, with its period detailing, to the construction period of the generally 1920s Bungalow-style houses around it, (see 70, 68 McKillop Street).

#### Significance

Regent Court flats are an unusual building type in the Geelong district, for the period, and are in near-original condition, complete with landscape setting. They represent (a belated) introduction of high density living to Geelong and evoke a stylistic approach which is also not common in the city.

1 BPA3412  
2 BPA 3535-6  
3 GWB loc.cit.  
4 G.A. 13/11/1919