


Name	House	Reference No	
Address	8 Milfay Avenue, Kew	Survey Date	16 August 2005
Building Type	Residence	Grading	C
Date	1940-41	Previous Grading	B



Extent of Overlay
Not applicable, refer Recommendations.

Intactness ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

Heritage Status ☐ HV ☐ AHC ☐ NT ☐ BPS Heritage Overlay

History

Milfay Avenue¹ was created when the *New Boulevard Estate*,² fronting Fenwick Street was created during the early 1940s. The estate was formed from the grounds of a large brick residence which had for many years been the home of Coombs family, commemorated in the name of a nearby street.³ Robert J Shaw, a builder, acquired and subsequently subdivided much of the property's grounds.⁴ Robert Shaw retained lot 11 of the subdivision for his own use and constructed the house at 8 Milfay Avenue. On completion, the house was described as an eight-roomed brick house.⁵ The Shaws resided at 8 Milfay Avenue until at least 1974.⁶

Alterations and additions, including possibly the construction of the double garage, were made to the property in 1981 by later owners Gerald and Norma Riley.⁷ An unspecified addition (works to cost \$25,000) was approved in 1997.⁸

(G Butler & Associates, Kew B-graded buildings study (draft), 2001, additional research by Lovell Chen, 2005)

Description & Integrity

8 Milfay Avenue, Kew, is a two-storey interwar house of clinker brick construction in the Old English idiom with eclectic Mediaeval overtones. The simple hipped and gabled roof is clad with glazed terracotta tile and a turret is finished with terracotta shingles and surmounted by a copper weathervane. The roofscape is penetrated by a tall brick chimney and gable ends are either half timbered or infilled with roughcast render or tapestry brickwork. The asymmetrical façade features a rendered brick turret, circular in plan, with clinker brick dressings to narrow window openings and an arch with wrought iron screen door providing access to the terrazzo-tiled entrance porch. A prominent two-storey bay also projects from the façade and joins with a flat-roofed non-original garage wing.

Fenestration throughout is irregular and windows are generally timber-framed double-hung sashes with diaper leadlight glazing and some coloured glass.

The non-original front fence comprises a low stone retaining wall.

Historical Context

Formed as part of a housing subdivision in the first years of World War II, Milfay Avenue is characterized by an eclectic array of interwar and post-war housing styles, including examples of Old English, Cape Cod or Cape Style and Moderne style dwellings.

Comparative Analysis

8 Milfay Avenue, Kew, is a substantial, but rather stiff and thin example of the Old English style. This example features a cone-topped tower near the apex of the two wings. This arrangement was of a type termed French Provincial by 1940, and was frequently linked with Old English as a stylistic variation.⁹ By comparison with better examples (see, for example, the cream and umber brick house at the southeast corner of Burke and Whitehorse Roads in Camberwell), No. 8 is rather episodic, with the tower included as a feature set out from the crucial intersection of its wings, instead of acting as the compositional fulcrum. The characteristic attention to grain and texture that marked the Old English French provincial fusion is not as evident here either.

8 Milfay Avenue, Kew, can be broadly compared with other Old English interwar houses in the study area, including 12 Tara Avenue, Kew (B-graded), 19 Howard Street, Kew (B-graded), a lively design with compressed ground floor elevations and an erupting attic level,¹⁰ and with several B and C-graded Camberwell designs, such as 125 Highfield Road, Camberwell of 1933 and 4 Marlborough Avenue, Camberwell of 1935-8 (both C-graded), 102 Mont Albert Road, Camberwell, and 660 Riversdale Road, Camberwell, and 6 Myambert Avenue Balwyn (q.v., all B-graded), all similar compositionally; and 458 Camberwell Road (q.v, B-graded). In Boroondara, the key example of the Old English idiom in these years is Marcus Barlow's c.1926 *Colinton*, (A-graded) at 92 Mont Albert Road, Kew.¹¹ All these designs are more richly textured and composed more vigorously than 8 Milfay Avenue, which is also a rather late example.

Assessment Against Criteria

Not completed, refer Recommendations.

Statement of Significance

Not completed, refer Recommendations.

Grading Review

Downgrade to C. 8 Milfay Avenue, Kew, is a late and somewhat undistinguished example of the fusion between Old English and French Provincial which was popular in the interwar period. It lacks the assurance in composition and the texture of the better examples, and its presentation has been affected by the double garage at the front of the property.

Recommendations

Not recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Boroondara Planning Scheme.

Identified By

Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988.

References

General: Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988, G Butler & Associates, Kew B-graded places study (draft), 2001.

Specific:

¹ Milfay Avenue takes its name from the first names of the two daughters –Millicent and Fay Shaw, daughters of either Archibald or Robert Shaw who subdivided the estate. Personal communication, Arthur Charlwood, 15 December 2005.

² Reference only to the streets comprising the subdivision – Fenwick Street, the Boulevard and Milfay Avenue. The subdivision plan, held by the State Library of Victoria, is not dated.

³ Pattern of occupation derived from listings in the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years between 1895 and 1940.

⁴ Personal Communication, Arthur Charlwood, 15 December 2005.

⁵ City of Kew Rate Books, 1940-1, #6765, brick, 8 rooms, nav £130.

⁶ *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, 1974.

⁷ Details sourced from the City of Kew Building Index, #9182, dated 9 June 1981. The drawings showing the scope of works were not available, but it this appears from a visual inspection to be the only significant alteration.

⁸ David Simpson architect, permit # 10/1/1997, City of Boroondara Building file 40/408/02215

⁹ Occasionally British Free Style architects such as Baillie Scott or Edwin Lutyens used the conical tower forms from Brittany houses and linked them to converging wing plans. In Philadelphia this fusion appeared in concentrated form with Edmund Gilchrist's *French Village* of c. 1915-25, and as Peter Cuffley and Conrad Hamann have noted with Tudor and Old English modes, part of French Provincial's Australian acceptance was based on its sense of up-to-date American popularity and its occasional Hollywood appearance as the housing Choice of the Stars (Peter Cuffley, *Australian houses of the '20s and '30s*, Five Mile, Melbourne, 1989, pp. 128-9. Conrad Hamann, Lectures, Monash University, 1986 onward; 'Architecture' in A Brown-May and S Swain (eds.) *The Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, Cambridge, Melbourne, 2005). French Provincial, as with Old English, also lent itself to the wing plans appearing constantly in American periodicals such as *Pencil Points*, *Brickbuilder* and *The Architectural Record*. Peter Cuffley notes that Charles Hollinshed designed fusion of these sources in *Littlecroft*, Howitt Road Caulfield, in 1929 (Peter Cuffley, *Australian houses of the '20s and '30s*, Five Mile, Melbourne, 1989, pp. 128-131) and from there on it was pursued by *Home Beautiful* and other magazines as a pleasing variant on Old English. Peter Cuffley notes that Keith Cheetham designed a similar house illustrated in *Home Beautiful* in 1929, and that the 'turreted' mode was converted to single storey versions by c. 1936 (Cuffley, *Australian houses of the '20s and '30s*, p. 131).

¹⁰ Details sourced from Pru Sanderson, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988, Grade B listings

¹¹ See Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, pp 194-5 (92 Mont Albert Road); 68-9 (458 Camberwell Road); 132-3 (125 Highfield Road); 176-7 (4 Marlborough Avenue); 194-5 (102 Mont Albert Road); 212-3 (6 Myambert Avenue); 238-9 (660 Riversdale Road).