

Name	<i>Gosmont</i>	Reference No	
Address	1221 Burke Road, Kew	Survey Date	6 December 2005
Building Type	Residence	Grading	A
Date	1910-11	Previous Grading	B



Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

Check that the rear half of the block has not been subdivided (permit issued but this not shown on property map).

Intactness ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

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

History

The land upon which *Gosmont* was constructed was part of Captain Edward Dumaresq's holding, purchased for £157 in late 1851.¹ Adjacent to the site of the Kew Reservoir, allotments facing Burke Road were subdivided in 1909 for a Walter G Hiscock.² Hiscock retained the allotment at the corner of Cotham Road for his own use. The generous-sized allotments faced east towards the Dandenong Ranges, providing a desirable setting for the construction of new homes.

Gosmont, a brick house of eight rooms, was designed by architect Richard Malvern Gutheridge, for Alfred Vasey, a business man and member of a locally prominent family.³ Vasey lived at *Gosmont* until the early 1930s, before it was occupied by Adrian Ball (c. 1936), Kenneth Armstrong (c. 1940) and Frederick W Haig from the mid 1940s.⁴ By the mid 1950s the property had again changed hands and new owner Mrs Mary Niall, commissioned a series of additions and alterations to the property during 1954.⁵ The exact scope of these works, which seem to have been confined to the rear of the property, are unknown.⁶ From the early 1960s the property was owned by Dr S Phillips and further alterations were undertaken in 1964.⁷ Dr Phillips owned the property until at least 1974.⁸ A proposal to demolish the building was put forward in 1998, prior to the lodgment of an application for the subdivision of the property to form two allotments in 1999.⁹

(Lovell Chen, 2005)

Description & Integrity

Gosmont, the house at 1221 Burke Road, Kew, is a substantial attic design from the middle to later period of Federation architecture. Like many neighbours in this area, it was designed to allow broad views of the eastern hills. The walls are in plain-coursed umber 'Hawthorn' brick, relieved with cream and red brick striping, and the brick is used as a pedestal for the main verandah posts, being drawn apart and perforated like a brick grille. This device was popular in the 1920s but makes its

appearance in the middle Federation period. Its street presentation is dominated by a plain slate roof with terracotta ridge capping and ball finials, in two large hips with two additional, smaller hips over the north east bay. The roof is punctuated by several chimneys, similar to those on *Carbethon* at 1223 next door (q.v., B-graded). These have open brick stacks topped by necks in textured stucco and then in turn by terracotta mouldings just below the chimney pots. The roof has bracketed eaves, the brackets springing from a deep frieze, and the verandah roof is separate from the contours of the main roofing. In general, this treatment recalls that of *Coolattie*, an earlier design of Gutheridge's, at 25 Canterbury Road, Camberwell. As at *Coolattie*, there is some elaboration of wing details, as in the east-facing window bays, which project from the main wing endings in a step and have sash windows in segmentally arched frames, forming a 2/3 division typical of the casement window bays of Norman Shaw and other leaders of the British Queen Anne tendency. These are in turn surmounted by a half-timbered frieze and roof bracketing, interspersed, on the southeast bay, by two sheets of flared shingles.

The verandah is a solid timber structure that sits almost independent of the main building, with a near flat roof broken at the centre by a gablet that marks the entry to the main door. The posts are thick turned timber, and the frieze is timber slatting supported on segmental arches. This arrangement is repeated on a doorway to the south and a three-arched loggia on the north side, the latter infilled.

The building is generally intact as viewed from the street. Approval was given for the subdivision of rear of the allotment in 1999, though an application to demolish the house failed. A proposal to demolish part of the rear of the house was submitted 2002. It is not known whether these works proceeded.¹⁰

Graeme Butler prepared a report on the building in 1998 at which time he noted that the interiors include a barrel-vaulted room, and a large proportion of original joinery and detailing.¹¹

The garden is marked by a brick-edged asphalt drive that appears to be of some age.¹²

Historical Context

Originally part of Captain Edward Dumaesq's large land holding, the west side of Burke Road between Cotham and Sackville streets, surrounding the Kew reservoir, was subdivided in 1909.¹³ The generous-sized allotments were predominantly developed during the mid-1910s with substantial villas.

Comparative Analysis

The strength of *Gosmont* is the quality of its composition and the grain of its surfacing.

Compositionally, *Gosmont* presents its unifying hipped roof simply and directly, yet the transverse hip is used to set off a series of wing, dormer and gallery 'events', thus deriving a significant measure of formal complexity. The proportions mix the vertical with the solid and horizontal in careful proportions, and the juxtaposition of projecting elements- dormer, wing, verandah hood, and corner gallery is successfully executed. It is a design that in formal terms, has considerable poise and elegance.

The architect, Richard Gutheridge, is known elsewhere in Boroondara for *Coolattie*, at 25 Canterbury Road Camberwell, of 1896 (q.v., B-graded). *Coolattie* employed the stepped wing bays Gutheridge uses here, and significantly, *Coolattie* also showed an enjoyment of materials and of the intersection of detail. This certainly comes through at *Gosmont*, with materials being addressed in the lively if fairly traditional use of brick polychrome. The brickwork is employed to maximum effect, being patterned strongly on the projecting wings rather than simply buried behind a verandah, as was frequent. The timber friezes and bay window framing, wing spandrels and verandah and balcony columns are all finely proportioned in relation to the general massing and composition, and they combine with the walls in projecting a warmth of texture and a subtlety in grain. *Gosmont* makes *Carbethon*, its neighbour at 1223, look raw and proportionally awkward by comparison.¹⁴

In other details *Gosmont* is an interesting mixture of the recent and the more traditional, combining a separate verandah and roof masses in the manner of early Federation design, and perforated brick verandah walling, a comparatively new element- appearing in conjunction with the later Federation period and the rise of the Bungalow.

Assessment Against Criteria

Amended Heritage Victoria Criteria

CRITERION D: The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as a part of a class or type of places or objects.

Gosmont is a fine and externally highly intact example of a substantial suburban attic residence from the mid to later Federation period in Australian architecture.

CRITERION E: The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

Gosmont is an elegantly composed, lively and forceful example of Federation design, drawing animation from constant modulation of compositional mass and wall surface colour, which is ably applied. The design exhibits poise and elegance in its proportioning and composition, and stands as a demonstration of the Federation style in Victoria towards the height of its powers.

Statement of Significance

Gosmont, at 1221 Burke Road, is of local historical and municipal architectural significance as a fine and externally highly intact example of a suburban residence from the mid to later Federation period in Australian architecture. *Gosmont* is an elegantly composed, lively and forceful example of Federation design, drawing animation from constant modulation of compositional mass and wall surface colour, which is ably applied. The design exhibits poise and elegance in its proportioning and composition, and stands as a demonstration of the Federation style in Victoria towards the height of its powers.

Grading Review

Upgrade to A.

Recommendations

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.

Specific:

¹ Rogers, Dorothy. *A history of Kew*, 1973, pp. 12-13.

² Graeme Butler and Associates, '*Gosmont*, the Vasey house at 1221 Burke Road, Kew', 1998, p. 5.

³ Rogers, Dorothy. *A history of Kew*, 1973, p. 57, 163.

⁴ City of Kew Rate Books, 1946-47, #5725, brick 8 rooms, nav £108.

⁵ Drawings and details sourced from the City of Kew Building Index, #154, dated 21 July 1954.

⁶ The plans could not be copied in a legible form.

⁷ Details sourced from the City of Kew Building Index, #889, dated 7 February 1964.

⁸ Pattern of occupation derived from listings in the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years between 1935 and 1974.

⁹ Details sourced from the City of Boroondara Planning File 40/409/02938 and the City of Boroondara Building File 40/408/07205.

¹⁰ Details sourced from the City of Boroondara Planning and Building Files (40/409/02938 and 40/408/07205, respectively)

¹¹ Butler also noted that the rear had a U-shaped service yard encircled by a galvanized iron verandah, later filled in with the addition of a family room and two additional rooms. G Butler, 'Report: *Gosmont*,' p. 3.

¹² G Butler, 'Report: *Gosmont*,' p. 1.

¹³ LP 5064, 1909, cited in G Butler & Associates, *Kew B-graded places study* (draft), 2001.

¹⁴ Graeme Butler has suggested this may also have been by Gutheridge but this has not been confirmed. See G Butler, 'Report: *Gosmont*,' p. 5.