

Name	House	Reference No	
Address	161 Cotham Road, Kew	Survey Date	13 December 2005
Building Type	Residence	Grading	B
Date	1891-2	Previous Grading	B



Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

Intactness ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

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

History

161 Cotham Road, formerly 159 Cotham Road, was Lot 4 of a subdivision of Crown Portion 85 in 1891.¹ The residence is situated at the north-east corner of Cotham Road and Belmont Avenue, one of three houses all constructed during 1891-2. Belmont Avenue followed the alignment of the driveway of *Mount Belmont*, a large brick residence, still extant,² which was the home of George W Lilley at the time of construction of the subject property.³

161 Cotham Road and its two neighbouring houses are first listed in the 1892 edition of the *Sands & McDougall Melbourne Directory* where they are all described as vacant.⁴ The following year's Directory listed the house as occupied by Allan Mansfield.⁵ Municipal rate records for the 1892-93 rate cycle recorded Allan and Elizabeth Mansfield as both owner and occupiers of a brick house of seven rooms, with a net annual value (nav) of £90.⁶ In 1921 the property was acquired by John Henry Webster,⁷ whose family owned and occupied the house until the early 1960s,⁸ in later years being owned by solicitor John Hedley Webster.⁹

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

Description & Integrity

The house at 161 Cotham Road, Kew, is a substantial single-storey double-fronted Italianate villa of brick construction on an asymmetrical plan. The decorative slate-clad hipped roof features bracketed eaves and bichrome brick chimneys with moulded caps, while the service wings have corrugated galvanised steel roofs. The façade displays tuckpointed bichrome brickwork with red face brick elsewhere. It is screened by a cast iron return verandah with bullnosed corrugated galvanised steel roof supported by Corinthian columns with frieze and brackets which is flanked at each end by a projecting bay; the verandah floor retains a bluestone edge and steps, however the original tiles have

been replaced with concrete. The main entrance contains a 6-panel timber door with etched glass surround and consoled transom. Each projecting bay contains a canted bay window with timber-framed double-hung sashes with single and paired fenestration elsewhere.

Extensive rear wings are constructed along the eastern and northern property boundaries, and these appear to incorporate substantial early fabric associated with the former kitchen wing and stable shown on MMBW plans of the area dated c.1904.¹⁰ The rear wings are partly visible from the side street, however closer inspection is required to clarify this.

Amongst other more minor changes, internal alterations and rear additions were carried out in 1960, 1970, 1972 and 1994,¹¹ none of which are visible from Cotham Road and, as such, the frontage remains externally intact.

The front and side fences are non-original timber paling fences which flank a corner entrance containing an early, if not original cast iron gate with trellis work posts.

Historical Context

Both sides of Cotham Road, in the area close to Belmont Avenue, were substantially developed by 1904 with predominantly brick residences on generously sized allotments, prompted by the proximity to tram services. Subsequent infill development occurred during the early years of the twentieth century, increasing the density of development along Cotham Road.¹²

Comparative Analysis

While the house dates from the transitional era between the Victorian and Federation periods, stylistically it is representative of the Victorian Italianate style. In this regard, it is similar to numerous other examples in Kew such as 33 Wills Street (B), and 23 and 25 Wellington Street (B), all of which are similarly scaled and styled bichrome brick villas of comparable integrity, and possibly the neighbouring 163 and 165 Cotham Road, albeit the latter are both C graded, slightly smaller scale and obscured examples.

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.

161 Cotham Road, Kew, is a representative and externally relatively intact example of a substantial single-storey Victorian Italianate brick villa, prominently sited on a corner block. The house appears to retain substantial early fabric associated with a rear service wing and stable (albeit partly altered and/or overbuilt) together with original or early gateposts and gate.

Statement of Significance

161 Cotham Street, Kew is of local historical and architectural significance as a representative and externally relatively intact example of a substantial single-storey Victorian Italianate brick villa, prominently sited on a corner block. The house retains some early fabric associated with a rear service wing and stable (albeit partly altered and/or overbuilt) together with original or early gateposts and gate.

Grading Review

Unchanged.

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, G Butler & Associates, Kew B-graded places study (draft), 2001.

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- ¹ LP 905 Lot 4, Cited in G Butler & Associates, *Kew B-graded places study* (draft), 2001.
- ² Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, *Kew Urban Conservation Study*, 1988, vol. 2, citation no, 17.
- ³ 'Mount Belmont', *Melbourne Mansions* database.
- ⁴ *Sands & McDougall Melbourne Directory*, 1892.
- ⁵ *Sands & McDougall Melbourne Directory*, 1893.
- ⁶ Borough of Kew Rate Books, 1892-93, #605, nav £90.
- ⁷ City of Kew Rate Books, 1921-22, #1586, nav £90.
- ⁸ Pattern of occupation derived from listings in the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years between 1921 and 1965.
- ⁹ City of Kew Rate Books, 1945-55, #3064, nav £153.
- ¹⁰ MMBW Plan No.65, Kew, scale 160':1", dated c. 1904.
- ¹¹ Details sourced from the City of Kew Building Index, #711, dated 7 June 1960; #1967, dated 29 June 1970; #3345, dated 28 June 1972; and #1078, dated 21 July, 1994.
- ¹² MMBW Plan no. 65, Municipality of Kew, scale 160':1", dated c.1904 with 1933 overlay.