

Name	House	Reference No	
Address	8 Denmark Street, Kew	Survey Date	23 August 2005
Building Type	Residence	Grading	B
Date	1912-3	Previous Grading	B



Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

Intactness ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

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

History

The red-brick residence at 8 Denmark Street was designed by architect Christopher Cowper, and constructed for Mr Alfred E Johns in 1912-3.¹ The house originally had ten rooms², and was occupied by Johns until 1921.

Alfred Johns was the son of Peter Johns, the founder of Johns' Hydraulic and General Engineering Co in 1856, which later became Johns and Waygood, after the company's acquisition of the Waygood Lift Company in 1893.³ Alfred Johns began his career as a cricketer and captain of the Melbourne University cricket team, whilst studying to become a lawyer.⁴ Alfred toured England with the Ninth Australian Eleven cricket team in 1899, and was publicly known as a 'dashing playboy'.⁵ On his father's death in 1899, Alfred Johns became managing director of Johns and Waygood, and between 1913 and 1934 he was the company's chairman of directors.⁶

In 1921, Henry Gower a draper, and Avery Gower purchased the property, and lived there until the early 1950s.⁷ In 1952, Stephenson Percy Naunton, a guest house proprietor purchased the property, and by 1957 the house was described as having 12 rooms.⁸ From the mid-1960s, the house was converted to apartments, under the ownership of Mrs N Munquam, and referred to as the *Denmark House Apartments* into the 1970s.⁹

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

Description & Integrity

8 Denmark Street, Kew, is an attic storey, double-fronted Federation villa. The broad hipped and gabled roof is clad with terracotta tiles and is penetrated by tall rendered chimneys with brick banding which terminate in flat caps with terracotta pots. Centrally located, a large dormer window has a

hipped roof and bays of timber-framed casement sashes above weatherboard cladding. The half-timbered flying gable ends are supported on timber brackets and elsewhere the rafters are exposed. Tuckpointed red face brick walls are augmented by a bluestone plinth and roughcast rendered frieze. The principal façade contains a central recessed porch supported by rendered pilasters which bear on a bluestone plinth with bluestone steps; it contains a broad Romanesque arch within which is a timber door surrounded by extensive leadlight glazing. This detail is echoed in the main entrance which is located in the southern elevation. The front porch is flanked by a pair of projecting bays, each containing broad bow windows with timber-framed casement sash windows and highlights containing leadlight glazing.

Alterations appear to be confined largely to the rear of the house and are indicated by a small gable projecting above the ridge line. The possibility that the attic storey may have been an addition was raised in a report prepared by Bryce Raworth in 2003,¹⁰ however, the findings of this report were inconclusive in relation to this issue, and there is no reference in Council files to such an addition.

The property is screened by a recent steel fence which replaces an earlier, non-original brick fence.

Historical Context

The eastern side of Denmark Street, which originally backed onto the railway line, was previously owned by Xavier College, who subdivided and sold the land during the first decade of the twentieth century.¹¹ The vacant land was developed in subsequent years and is characterised by large detached and semi-detached brick villas, sited on generous allotments with uniform setbacks.

Comparative Analysis

Comparisons previously have been drawn between 8 Denmark Street, Kew, and other Christopher Cowper designs. Two comparable Cowper-designed properties, 14 Studley Avenue, Kew, and 17 Selbourne Road, Kew, are located in the study area; both are graded A and are more distinguished examples when compared with the subject building.¹² No. 17 Selbourne Road is closer of the two in type to the subject building, featuring a centrally placed dormer balcony and two projecting wings on its ground floor. By comparison, however, 8 Denmark Street lacks the richness in details and the individuality of the Selbourne Road house. 14 Studley Avenue is a single-storey house with a hipped, 'homestead' roof, a corner tower and projecting shingled gable, more like Cowper's design at the Riversdale and Fordholm Road corner, Hawthorn, of c. 1907, and using classical verandah columns.

Other broadly comparable Kew buildings (all B-graded) include 11 Barrington Avenue, which is similar in detailing to 17 Selbourne Road, 1221 Burke Road, which is earlier; 1223 Burke Road, from around the same time, 171 and 193 Cotham Road, albeit with a prominent tower at the roof apex; the radially-planned 2 Denmark Street; 20 Howard Street, with a corner tower and arched entry, 24 Miller Grove, 1 Nolan Avenue, 83 Pakington Street (in timber), 15 Uvadale Grove, with a dramatic arched entry, 6 Walmer Street, and 52 Walpole Street, the last a simplified Federation design that was moving toward the later Bungalow form.¹³

Assessment Against Criteria

Amended Heritage Victoria Criteria

CRITERION A: *The historical importance, association with or relationship to Boroondara's history of the place or object.*

The historical association of this house with Alfred Johns, Chairman (1913-1934) of the engineering firm of Johns & Waygood and a former member of the Australian cricket team is of interest, but is not considered to elevate the significance of this house.

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.*

8 Denmark Street is a broadly externally intact and representative example of a Federation attic storey house, having two projecting wings and an entry under the verandah roof pitch with the dormer immediately above.

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.*

While the association of this house with its designer, the well-known and prolific residential architect, Christopher Cowper is of interest, this is not considered to be an outstanding example of Cowper's work, which is well-represented elsewhere in the City of Boroondara.

Statement of Significance

8 Denmark Street, Kew, is of local historical and architectural significance as a representative and broadly externally intact example of a Federation attic storey house. The house makes a strong contribution to the intact and impressive group of Federation houses at the lower end of Denmark Street. Though not an outstanding example of his work, the association of the house with the architect, Christopher Cowper, is of interest.

Grading Review

Unchanged.

Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Boroondara Planning Scheme.

Note that Council has previously considered the application of a Heritage Overlay to this site (2003) and has commissioned two reports on the significance of the house. The report by Graeme Butler ('Heritage Report Kew B-graded Places: selected site, Johns house, 2003) assessed the house as significant to the City of Boroondara, while a second report by Bryce Raworth ('8 Denmark Street, Kew: Review of significance) concluded that there was 'only a modest argument for local significance in the context of the heritage overlay' (refer p. 8).

In addition, it is recommended that Council undertake a detailed review of the housing stock in the broader area including both sides of Denmark Street between Barkers Road and High Street, Foley Street and the section of Barkers Road bounded by High Street and Power Street, and the northern side of Barkers Road between High Street and Denmark Street. Depending on the outcome of this review, consideration should be given to identifying a Heritage Overlay precinct. While only 5 houses were graded B in the 1988 Kew Conservation Study (1, 2 and 8 Denmark Street, 48 Foley Street and 83-85 Barkers Road), the broader area contains three B-graded institutional/retail properties and substantial numbers of C-graded houses from the Victorian and Federation periods, many of which appear to be broadly intact and were graded C in the 1988 Study.

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 Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, 8 Denmark Street, Kew, Review of Significance, July 2003, p. 3.

² Borough of Kew Rate Books, 1912-13, #2125.

³ Graeme Butler and Associates, Heritage Report Kew B-graded Places: selected site, March 2003, p. 2.

⁴ Graeme Butler and Associates, Heritage Report Kew B-graded Places: selected site, March 2003, p. 2-3.

⁵ G Blainey, 'Peter Johns' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 4; 'Town and Country Journal', 8 February 1899, p. 29.

⁶ Graeme Butler and Associates, Heritage Report Kew B-graded Places: selected site, March 2003, p. 3.

⁷ Sands and McDougall Directory of Victoria, various dates 1920-1950.

⁸ Sands and McDougall Directory of Victoria, 1952; City of Kew Rate Books, 1957-8, #5629.

⁹ Sands and McDougall Directory of Victoria,

¹⁰ Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, 8 Denmark Street, Kew, Review of Significance, July 2003, p. 3.

¹¹ Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988, p. 4/9.

¹² Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, 8 Denmark Street, Kew, Review of Significance, July 2003, pp. 6-7.

¹³ Details sourced from Pru Sanderson, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988, Grade B listings.