
Name	House	Reference No	
Address	53 Harp Road, East Kew	Survey Date	13 December 2005
Building Type	Residence	Grading	B
Date	1928	Previous Grading	B



Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

Intactness Good Fair Poor

Heritage Status HV AHC NT Rec. BPS Heritage Overlay

History

The brick house at 53 Harp Road, East Kew, was constructed in 1928 for Evan and Gladys Thomas.¹ The Thomas' occupied the house until 1936, with an increase in the number of rooms from five to seven occurring during this period.² The house was next owned by Harold S Williams, a civil servant, who remained there until the early 1960s.³ Subsequently V G Sullivan occupied the house from the early 1960s until at least 1974.⁴ A later owner made a significant extension to the rear of the house, comprising a rumpus room and outdoor deck which replaced an earlier sun room, in 1989.⁵

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

Description & Integrity

The house at 53 Harp Road, East Kew is a single-storey interwar bungalow of brick construction on a square plan on a prominent corner siting. A low-slung hipped roof has a pyramidal structure which extends out to a bracketed strut form at the south-east corner, highlighting a semi-circular planned bay window; further west, at the centre of the principal elevation, it is supported by a pair of stone piers which define the recessed main entrance porch. The roof is finished with non-original glazed terracotta tiles and features tall plain brick chimneys and exposed rafters. The principal south and east elevations display a roughcast rendered finish on a clinker brick plinth with matching string course, whereas the other elevations have an overpainted brick finish. Fenestration is generally arranged in long bays with timber-framed casement sash box frames and leadlight glazing, which further enhances the overall horizontality of the design.

Rear alterations and additions carried out in the 1980s and 1990s are visible from the side street.⁶

The front and side fences retain sections of low stone wall and piers with non-original red brick piers and timber pickets and the original garden has been largely replanted with native vegetation.

Historical Context

Harp Road was not developed until the early decades of the twentieth century, when the desirability of living in this portion of East Kew was enhanced by the extension of the nearby High Street tram service in 1924.⁷

Comparative Analysis

53 Harp Road, Kew, compares with architect Robert Haddon's corner bay Bungalow type as published in the *Real Property Annual*, 1918, including on the cover. 53 Harp Road, Kew, has a similarly simple and dominant roof form placed above a front elevation of central door and porch and three-quarter circular corner bay, albeit the roof is pyramidal here where Haddon's featured a long straight fronted gable. A number of houses in the Camberwell-Glen Iris area in the early 1920s emulated Haddon's prototype; one example was at the corner Burke Road and Seymour Grove, another at 44 Currajong Avenue of 1919-20 (q.v., B-graded), while in Kew there is 37 Normanby Road, of 1921-2 (q.v., B-graded). Rounded corner bays, often bisected by the main wall corner, were recurrent in the Bungalow type generally. In this context, this is quite a late example, with its decorative window panes more characteristic of the later 1920s or the early 1930s. Gawler and Drummond's 96 Kilby Road, Kew, of 1924 (A-graded) uses a similar corner bay interrupted by a roof strut, with a pioneering brick veneer base⁸ that presents a similar proportion of brick to that seen at No. 53.

The simple general form of 53 Harp Road, Kew, is interesting, as the roof has been reduced to a simple pyramid with a broadened eave extension around the corner bay. This compares with other simplifying designs in the Kew, see, for example 24 Studley Avenue (B-graded), with a massive central arch as the relieving rounded component.⁹

The other signature bungalow element seen here is the pebble-clad porch columns, and this cladding survives on one of the gate pier tops as well. In this regard, the house compares with other pebble-columned bungalows in Boroondara and elsewhere, as with 16 John Street, Kew of c.1922-3 (q.v., B-graded), or the AHJ Terry house at 26 Fellows Street, Kew, 1923-4 (A-graded)¹⁰. The latter uses textured stucco walling on a clinker brick base, exposed rafters, a corner strut, rounded corner bay and fenestration details that are all very similar to those at 53 Harp Road, Kew.¹¹

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.

53 Harp Road, Kew, is a representative and externally relatively intact, albeit late, example of a corner bay type of suburban bungalow, featuring a simple and dominant roof form placed above a front elevation of central door and porch and three-quarter circular corner bay, with a pyramidal roof with corner strut.

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 a simple and restrained composition, the house has a commanding presence on this irregular corner site.

Statement of Significance

53 Harp Road, Kew, is of local historical and architectural significance as a representative and externally relatively intact, albeit late, example of a corner bay type of suburban bungalow, featuring a simple and dominant roof form placed above a front elevation of central door and porch and three-quarter circular corner bay, with a pyramidal roof with corner strut. While a simple and restrained composition, the house has a commanding presence on this irregular corner site.

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.

Specific:

¹ City of Kew Rate Books, 1928-29, #4175, nav £85.

² City of Kew Rate Books, 1935-36, #4080, nav £66; *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years.

³ City of Kew Rate Books, 1957-58, #3636, nav £172; *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years.

⁴ *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, 1974.

⁵ Drawings and details sourced from the City of Kew Building Index, #4615, dated 4 September 1989.

⁶ Drawings sourced from the City of Kew Building Index, #4615, dated 4 September 1989 and Building Permit no. 7070, dated 1 April 1996, City of Boroondara Building File 40/408/19594, Part 1.

⁷ Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, *Kew Urban Conservation Study*, 1988, vol. 2, p. 4/16.

⁸ Pru Sanderson, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, Citation 53.

⁹ Pru Sanderson, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988, vol. 2, Grade B section.

¹⁰ Pru Sanderson, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988, vol. 2, Citation 55. Peter Cuffley, *Australian Houses of the '20s and '30s*, Five Mile, Melbourne, 1989, dates it at 1923-4; Sanderson dates it at 1926.

¹¹ Illustrated by P Cuffley in *Australian Houses of the '20s and '30s*, pp. 64, 186. Address checked from *Sands and McDougall's Victorian Directory*, Melbourne 1928. Other notable examples of the pebbled-column bungalow are *The Cobbles* at Neutral Bay, NSW, see Cuffley, p. 69, and the Brent Clark house at Castlemaine, 1927, a superimposed gable type illustrated on the cover of Cuffley's book and on p. 23.