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<b>Name</b>	<i>Darley</i>	<b>Reference No</b>	
<b>Address</b>	2 Merrion Grove, Kew	<b>Survey Date</b>	23 August 2005
<b>Building Type</b>	Residence	<b>Grading</b>	B
<b>Date</b>	1869	<b>Previous Grading</b>	B



#### Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

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**Intactness**    ☒ Good    ☐ Fair    ☐ Poor

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

#### History

*Darley* was built upon a large land holding originally bordering Studley Park Road, in c.1869. It was built for John Alsop, a Trustee of the State Savings Bank of Victoria.<sup>1</sup> Alsop's sister Charlotte Anderson, apparently on the urging of her brother, founded the Ruyton Girls School and in 1881 moved it to a nearby property, known as *Mount Edgecombe*, which also then had a Studley Park Road address. John Alsop was also the father of prominent architect Rodney Alsop (1881-1932), who, born in Kew, would have spent his childhood at *Darley*. The architect of *Darley* is not known. In 1876, John Alsop commissioned noted artist William Tibbits (1837-1906) to prepare a watercolour painting of the property. The work was included in an exhibition of Tibbits' work in c.1984 and while not illustrated, a description was included in the catalogue:

Built in 1869, the residence of John Alsop, is a comfortable middle class suburban residence constructed of brick, with a concave verandah roof striped to resemble an awning in the manner of the day, and a slate roof.<sup>2</sup>

Alsop and his family occupied the house until c.1904.<sup>3</sup> An MMBW survey plan shows the house with a driveway to Studley Park Road at its western side, running parallel to that of the Henty family's *Field Place* next door.<sup>4</sup> Though accessed from Studley Park Road, the house looked away from this street frontage to the south, east and west. The plan also illustrates a substantial ballroom flanked by a large lattice fernery and workshop located within the garden area to the east of the house and extensive outbuildings and yards between the house and Studley Park Road.<sup>5</sup>

Subsequent occupants of *Darley* included William Barrett (c.1905), Elias Diamant (c.1907), Elwood Mead (c.1912), Walter J Moore (c.1916-1920), John Lehane, (1922-1926) and Samuel Peacock (c.1928-1933).<sup>6</sup> Then known as 23 Studley Park Road, *Darley* was listed as flats during 1935.<sup>7</sup> At this time the property's owner John Lehane was in the process of completing its subdivision,<sup>8</sup> and

Merrion Place, cut through to provide access to the new allotments was first listed in the 1937 edition of the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria* between 13 and 15 Studley Park Road. The subject property's frontage is thought to have been subdivided in c.1939-40, based on information derived from the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria* listings for those years. Norman D Watt, initially John Lehane's tenant,<sup>9</sup> was listed at 23 Studley Park Road in 1939 and in 1940 was the sole resident living in the newly-listed Merrion Grove. Watt resided at *Darley* for nearly twenty years, acquiring the property at a date not known.<sup>10</sup> Subsequently the house was occupied by J G Smith, (c.1960); P A Cudmore (c.1965) and by S W Poon, from c.1970 until at least 1974.<sup>11</sup>

A brief outline history and description of the property – an eleven roomed brick house with pool, tennis courts, double garage on land of approximately 3000 sq metres - was published in an article accompanying its listing for sale by auction in 1984.<sup>12</sup> In 2000 a portion of the property's grounds were subdivided to the east and a new residence has since been constructed on the allotment.<sup>13</sup>

(G Butler & Associates, Kew B-graded buildings study (draft), 2001, additional research by Lovell Chen, 2006)

### Description & Integrity

*Darley*, 2 Merrion Grove, Kew, is a single-storey Victorian villa of rendered brick construction. Now on a dramatically truncated site when compared with the original, the house was always oriented away from Studley Park Road. The original entry to the house was via a drive from Studley Park Road to the north leading to the main entry on the western elevation of the house. The present-day Merrion Grove elevation was originally a side elevation.

The hipped roof is clad with slate and is penetrated by rendered chimneys with moulded caps and the Edwardian return verandah has a bullnose profile clad with corrugated galvanised steel supported by turned timber posts with timber balustrade and frieze; non-original timber lattice infills the sub-floor space beneath the timber floor. The asymmetrical south elevation contains a faceted bay with half-glazed panelled timber door with fanlight and elsewhere there are timber-framed French doors and timber-framed double-hung and fixed sashes. The original façade, or west elevation, contains the original entrance which is between a pair of projecting faceted bays, and has an elaborate timber door with Art Nouveau styling, possibly contemporary with the verandah.

A later garage is located at the northern end of the side driveway and the frontage is defined by a non-original stone retaining wall. The front garden contains a mature oak species and Peppercorn (*schinus molle*). In the 1988 Urban Conservation Study the house was listed as 4 Merrion Grove<sup>14</sup>, but the present No. 4, looking like a quite recent subdivision, is now a narrow but separate property with a free standing house of recent French Provincial design.

### Historical Context

As originally constructed, *Darley* was accessed from Studley Park Road, a prominent 'entrance' road to Kew, which was a favoured setting for gracious homes on large land holdings. *Darley* is now surrounded by later residential development, the majority from the late 1950s or early 1960s.

### Comparative Analysis

*Darley*, at 2 Merrion Grove, is a single-storied Italianate villa which is a relatively early survivor amongst Kew houses. In this regard, it invites comparison with the A-graded *Wimba* at 235 Cotham Road, Kew, of 1862-70.<sup>15</sup> *Wimba* has a balustraded parapet and an earlier, straight-sloping verandah roof with cast iron columns and frieze. *Darley's* verandah appears to have been replaced in the c.1900s with a timber-framed verandah in flattened, vaguely Tudor arches (an unusual device for the period) and a convex galvanised iron roof.<sup>16</sup>

### 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.*

2 Merrion Grove Kew is good example of a single-storey Italianate villa of the late 1860s, broadly intact to its original form, albeit modified in the Edwardian period. Though now on a much reduced

allotment, the house is one of a relatively limited number of residences surviving in the Kew area from the period pre-1870.

### Statement of Significance

*Darley*, at 2 Merrion Grove, Kew is of local historical and architectural significance. The house is good example of a single-storey Italianate villa of the late 1860s, broadly intact to its original form, albeit modified in the Edwardian period. Though now on a much reduced allotment, the house is one of a relatively limited number of residences surviving in the Kew area from the period pre-1870.

### 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:*

<sup>1</sup> *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1979, vol. 7, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Portraits in the landscape: the house paintings of William Tibbits, 1870-1906*, c.1984, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years between 1880-1905.

<sup>4</sup> MMBW Plan No. 40, Collingwood & Kew, scale 160':1", dated c. 1904.

<sup>5</sup> MMBW Detail Plan No. 1294 & 1295, dated c.1904.

<sup>6</sup> Pattern of occupation derived from listings in the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, between 1905 and 1925.

<sup>7</sup> *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, 1935.

<sup>8</sup> LP15032 (Central Plans), Cited in G Butler & Associates, *Kew B-graded places study* (draft), 2001.

<sup>9</sup> City of Kew Rate Books, 1937-8, #6768, brick, 11 rooms, nav £100.

<sup>10</sup> City of Kew Rate Books, 1954-5, #8017, nav £270.

<sup>11</sup> Pattern of occupation derived from listings in the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years between 1960 and 1974.

<sup>12</sup> *Age*, 31 October 1984, pg. 40., Cited in G Butler & Associates, *Kew B-graded places study* (draft), 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Drawings and details sourced from the City of Boroondara Building File 40/408/19407 and Planning File 40/409/03335, parts 1 & 2.

<sup>14</sup> Pru Sanderson, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988, B listings.

<sup>15</sup> Pru Sanderson, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988, Designation A, Citation 6.

<sup>16</sup> They have been intended to endow *Darley* with greater antiquity, as in *Invergowrie* or its gatehouse at Coppins Grove and Palmer Place Hawthorn, of 1846-55, or *The Hawthorns* in Creswick Street Hawthorn, , of 1846-7. Dating sourced from Philip Goad et al., *Melbourne Architecture: a Guide*, Watermark, Sydney, 1999, pp. 19, 20. Such 'archaeologizing' was coming into favour in the later 1900s and early teens, as in James Barr and Leslie Wilkinson's completion of the University of Sydney quadrangle and library in a consciously stiff and 'early' collegiate Gothic, in 1914, or the Colonial Revival and evocations of 'pioneering' form around the same period. Barr's work at the University of Sydney was covered in *The Salon* in 1914. Hardy Wilson's Colonial Revivalism was gaining momentum at the same time, as Wilson retraced the revivalism of James Barnet and Charles Slatyer from twenty years earlier, presenting it as his personal rediscovery. See Caroline Simpson et al., *Hardy Wilson: a Twentieth-Century Colonial*, National Trust of New South Wales, Sydney, 1981. In Adelaide Walter Bagot was also consciously recreating an 1850s and 1860s 'awkward' picturesque form, in the late teens and early 1920s.