

Name	<i>Birralie</i>	Reference No	
Address	52 Walpole Street, Kew	Survey Date	20 September 2005
Building Type	Residence	Grading	B
Date	1907-08	Previous Grading	B



Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

Intactness ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

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

History

Birralie, 52 Walpole Street, Kew, an 11 roomed brick residence,¹ was built in 1907 for leather manufacturer, Frank Vial. Vial occupied the house until 1921.² The house reputedly changed hands twice before a John Hackett became the owner.³ John Hackett, a tanner occupied the house until 1944-5.⁴ The subsequent owner of the property, Herbert Purton, subdivided a portion of the allotment to the east to form a new house block facing Malmsbury Street, in 1946.⁵ By 1948 a new house was under construction, today 14 Malmsbury Street.⁶ In 1952 the house was acquired by Francis J Byrne, who lived there until at least 1974.⁷

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

Description & Integrity

Birralie at 52 Walpole Street, Kew, is an attic-storey Edwardian villa of red face brick in a transitional mode between the Federation and later attic-bungalow styles. The expansive hipped roof is clad with Marseilles-pattern terracotta tile and features exposed rafters, gabled and hipped attic dormers and tall red face brick chimneys with roughcast rendered caps and terracotta pots; the gable ends are shingle-clad with louvered vents. The roof extends in a bellcast form to encompass a deep return verandah at the south-west corner supported by turned timber posts, which are clad to dwarf wall height by shingled weatherboards. The asymmetrical composition addresses its corner siting however the principal façade is to the west with a secondary elevation to the north. The main elevations display tuckpointed red face brick with a rendered dado moulding and roughcast rendered frieze. Located centrally in the west elevation is the main entrance which comprises a half-glazed panelled timber door with matching fan and sidelights and wrought iron screen door. The fenestration is irregular but generally comprises bays of timber-framed casement sashes with leadlight highlights with canted bays in the north and west elevation which have bracketed canopies. Alterations appear generally to have been confined to the rear, interior and attic spaces of the house and include a detached garage.⁸ The verandah flooring has also been replaced.

The timber picket fence and gate is non-original, replacing an earlier non-original brick fence and the landscape contains some mature plantings such as a large *Liquidambar* among more contemporary planting.⁹

Historical Context

Walpole Street is one of the principal streets of Kew's first land subdivision. Nicholas Fenwick, Commissioner of Crown Lands, purchased Allotment 87 in October 1851, and promptly employed surveyor and architect George Wharton to survey and subdivide his land into half acre allotments. Bounded by High, Princess, Eglinton and Derby Streets, Wharton laid out an alternating pattern of wide and narrow streets, which were named after English statesmen.¹⁰ Walpole Street was named for British Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole, (1676-1745). Walpole Street is one of Kew's most desirable addresses and is characterised by substantial Victorian brick villas on large allotments, with some later residential construction occurring in the early years of the twentieth century.

Comparative Analysis

Amongst others, *Birralie* at 52 Walpole Street, Kew, can be loosely compared with its close neighbours, *Nambour*, at 10 Malmsbury Street (C-graded), a similarly scaled and detailed transitional Edwardian house, albeit a more straightforward composition; and 51 Walpole Street (B-graded), a more prominent and eclectic example diagonally opposite. The projecting rafters of the subject property are early by Melbourne bungalow standards and, like 22 Albion Road, Surrey Hills, *Birralie*'s general simplification of Federation style is relatively early in the development both of the bungalow and gabled attic house styles of the early twentieth century. Compositionally the house is poised between Federation villa of the 1900s (often called Queen Anne) and the Gabled Attic-Bungalow modes of the later teens and 1920s. Examples in Kew of this general tendency toward simplification include Inskip and Kemp's 5 Adeney Avenue of 1914 (graded A) and 9 Edward Street (formerly A, but regraded to C in this review);¹¹ Other Boroondara examples of transitional Federation bungalows can be found in Camberwell, as at 22 and 24 Albion Street, Surrey Hills (C and B graded respectively), or 22 Balwyn Road Canterbury, unlisted but cited as a prime example of the simplified *Federation Bungalow* by Irving et al.¹² Kew counterparts graded B in Kew's 1988 study¹³ 15 Uvadale Grove, with a single-bay central dormer and striking central arch; 24 Stanley Avenue, a powerful pyramidal-roofed design with small central dormer and brick-lined central arch; 34 Stevenson Street, 1910-11 (q.v.), a similarly transitional design with simplified roof in two overlapping gables and a colonnaded corner tower; 101 Princess Street, also marked by emphatic gabling and a similarly weighty detail; 35 High Street (2 Miller Grove) of 1914 (q.v.) by Arthur Purnell, simplified in its roof form and at similar dimensions, though more complex in outline; Alsop and Klingender's 2 Young Street, a simplified Federation design around a cranked, open plan; 33 Willsmere Road, 1923, a late example in its half-timbering and the boldness of its gables; 31 Barrington Avenue, showing the transition of this mode into the Bungalow form; and 7 Bowen Street, 1917 (q.v.), a single storey design with the roof reduced to a single pyramid and one hipped flanking wing. *Birralie* is closer to Federation houses at their high tide than these designs, retaining the Federation style's hipped roofing, terracotta ridge-capping and casement sashes with highlights. Notwithstanding this, *Birralie* is of interest for its relatively early date. In addition *Birralie* is ably composed in the newly simplifying Federation Bungalow mode, with its roof and bay treatment marked by a newly planar emphasis in its roof and bay detailing and a lively, satisfying proportional relationship between its roof and integral verandah, and its bargeboard, projecting rafter and verandah post treatments.

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.*

Birralie, the house at 52 Walpole Street Kew, is a fine and relatively externally intact example of a Federation attic storey house of the early twentieth century which suggests a shift from formally complex Federation architecture toward a simplified bungalow form.

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.*

52 Walpole Street, Kew, is an ably composed design in the simplified Federation Bungalow mode, marked by a new planar emphasis in its roof and bay detailing and a lively, satisfying proportional relationship between its roof and integral verandah, and its bargeboard, projecting rafter and verandah post treatments.

Statement of Significance

Birralie, at 52 Walpole Street, Kew, is of local historical and architectural significance as a fine and relatively externally intact example of a Federation attic storey house of the early twentieth century, which suggests a shift from formally complex Federation architecture toward a simplified bungalow form. It is an ably composed design in this simplified Federation Bungalow mode, marked by a new planar emphasis in its roof and bay detailing and a lively, satisfying proportional relationship between its roof and integral verandah, and its bargeboard, projecting rafter and verandah post treatments.

Grading Review

Unchanged.

Recommendations

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

Should the site be included in a HO precinct as part of a future Amendment process, the site-specific Heritage Overlay could be removed from 52 Walpole Street (Panel for Amendment C64).

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 Borough of Kew Rate Books, 1907-8, #2911, nav £90.

² Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria, 1921.

³ City of Kew Rate Books, 1925-6, #6616, nav £175.

⁴ Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria; City of Kew Rate books, 1944-5, #8026, nav £146.

⁵ LP 17093, (Central Plans), cited in G Butler & Associates, *Kew B-graded places study* (draft), 2001.

⁶ Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria, 1946-1950.

⁷ Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria, various years to 1974.

⁸ Details sourced from the City of Kew Building Index, #1167, dated 19 March 1967; #9386, dated 21 September 1981; #4578, dated 11 August 1989; and #5701, dated 28 August 1991.

⁹ Building Permit no. BR197/52509, dated 16 June 1997, City of Boroondara Building File 40/408/02453. Other details sourced from the City of Kew Building Index, #728, dated 18 December, 1957; #1228, dated 24 August 1984; and #2349, dated 11 June 1986.

¹⁰ Rogers, Dorothy. *A history of Kew*, 1973, pp. 14-15; Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, *Kew Urban Conservation Study*, 1988, vol. 2, p. 4/3.

¹¹ Pru Sanderson, *City of Kew Urban Conservation Study*, 1988, Designation A, citations 48, 50.

¹² *Identifying Australian Architecture*, pp. 144-7. The most direct counterpart cited by Apperley et al, apart from 22 Balwyn Road, is Walter Vernon's Ranger's Cottage at Centennial Park, NSW, of 1899 (p.146), marked by a single transverse gable pitch and large central dormer, with a richly textured elevation at each end. This was certainly among the earliest examples of this newer simplification of the Federation style.

¹³ Pru Sanderson, *City of Kew Urban Conservation Study*, 1988, Grade B Buildings lists. 33 Willsmere Road has been regraded to C in the current review.