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| Name | <i>Alice Bale House</i> | Reference No | |
| Address | 83 Walpole Street, Kew | Survey Date | 20 September 2005 |
| Building Type | Residence | Grading | B |
| Date | 1886 | Previous Grading | B |



Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

Intactness Good Fair Poor

Heritage Status HV AHC NT Rec. BPS Heritage Overlay

History

The residence at 83 Walpole Street, (originally 63 Walpole Street) was built for the teacher and prominent naturalist, William Mountier Bale and his wife Marian Bale in 1886.¹ Their only child was Alice Marian Ellen Bale (AME Bale), born in 1875. Alice Bale lived at 83 Walpole Street for her entire life. An accomplished artist, AME Bale first studied painting privately with Hugh Ramsay before enrolling at the National Gallery School in 1895. A long time member of the Victorian Artists' Society and one of the *Twenty Melbourne Painters* group, AME Bale's paintings were conservative and traditional in style and subject matter. Her work is represented in several Australian public collections, including the Art Gallery in Castlemaine, where she also owned a house. Many of her flower studies or interiors were painted at either Kew or Castlemaine. After her death in 1955, her estate established a scholarship for Australian art, giving the successful candidate, who painted in a representational and traditional style, a stipend for further art education and the free use of her Kew home and studio. The scholarship continued for nearly twenty-five years but was not awarded after 1980, due to a lack of funds. Subsequently the house was sold to provide funding for a cash scholarship.² The new award, known as the AME Bale Travelling Scholarship, allows the participant to travel and study overseas.

83 Walpole Street is now privately owned.

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

Description & Integrity

The *Alice Bale House* at 83 Walpole Street, Kew, is a single-storey double-fronted Victorian villa of brick construction. The foundations of the house are concrete, and its use in the construction of this house was noted by Professor Miles Lewis, University of Melbourne, during an inspection in 1981.³

The hipped slate roof has bracketed eaves and a pair of rendered brick chimneys with moulded caps. A return verandah with bullnose corrugated galvanized steel roof supported on cast iron posts with cast iron frieze and brackets, bluestone steps and timber floor, screens the east and north elevations. The essentially symmetrical façade of the original house displays tuckpointed polychrome brickwork with red brick elsewhere and is divided into two bays by a central entrance containing a panelled timber door with leaded surround and non-original timber-framed screen door. The entrance is flanked to the north by a tripartite window group containing timber-framed double-hung sash windows with barley sugar pilasters to the mullions, and to the south by a faceted bay window with matching sashes. To the south of the original building is a relatively recent addition which is constructed of red face brick and which is set back from the front alignment by a single room's depth. Other non-original elements include the timber picket fence and gates, an open carport and small outbuilding in the south-west corner of the garden.

The entrance to the property is marked by a very large Eucalypt and a Palm sp. The landscape appears otherwise relatively recent.

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.⁴ 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.

Comparative Analysis

The *Alice Bale House* at 83 Walpole Street, Kew, compares with a number of similarly scaled and detailed Victorian villas in the municipality. Nearby, the neighbouring single-storey polychrome brick villa at 90 Walpole Street (C-graded) is a comparable composition and 96 Walpole Street (q.v., B-graded), is equivalent in period, general presentation and detail, albeit of a slightly larger scale. 23 Wellington Street, Kew, (q.v., B-graded) is also comparable, although the return verandah there is truncated by a projecting bay and the house is not fully surrounded by garden with the eastern boundary constructed on the boundary alignment of the side street, Queen Street.

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 house is of historical interest for its connection with the artist Alice Bale and – after her death – for its role as a studio for a range of visiting artists between 1955 and 1980.

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.

Alice Bale House is a fine, representative and externally relatively intact example of a comfortable Victorian Italianate polychrome brick suburban house of the later nineteenth century.

Statement of Significance

Alice Bale House is of local historical and architectural significance as a fine, representative and externally relatively intact example of a comfortable Victorian Italianate polychrome brick suburban house of the later nineteenth century. The house is of historical interest for its connection with the artist Alice Bale and – after her death – for its role as a studio for a range of visiting artists between 1955 and 1980.

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 *Sands & McDougall Melbourne Directory*, 1886. For Bale see Brian J Smith & Jeanette E Watson, 'A Short Biography of William Bale', , *Victorian Naturalist*, April 1967; Vol. 53, Jan. 1941: 170; Vol. 52, December 1940: 140.

² McCulloch, Alan & Susan. *The Encyclopaedia of Australian Art*, 1994, p. 861.

³ Lewis, Miles. *200 Years of Concrete in Australia*, 1988, p. 5.

⁴ 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.