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Name	<i>Knottywood, Morley</i>	Reference No	
Address	61 Wattle Road, Hawthorn	Survey Date	9 May 2006
Building Type	Residence	Grading	B
Date	1863, 1868	Previous Grading	B



#### Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries, but excluding adjoining subdivision development. Line of extent of overlay at rear of house to be determined on site and following consultation with owner.

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Intactness  Good  Fair  Poor

Heritage Status  HV  AHC  NT  Rec BPS Heritage Overlay

#### History

*Knottywood* was constructed in 1868 for Thomas Williams, most probably a Burwood Road butcher.<sup>1</sup> It is reputed to have incorporated a circa 1863 three-roomed wooden cottage owned by Gottlieb Gottke, a gardener, who occupied the site from 1860.<sup>2</sup> This is no longer extant, but a possibly earlier brick kitchen does survive. A substantial six-roomed brick section with verandah was added in the early 1860s, builder unknown.<sup>3</sup> In 1873, the property became known as *Morley* and was owned by Joseph Dixon (related to the celebrated lawyer, Sir Owen Dixon, who came from Morley in England). The eastern brick wing may have been added about this time. Joseph, who was at first a warehouseman and by 1883 an accountant,<sup>4</sup> held *Morley* until 1909.<sup>5</sup>

In the twentieth century, this property had a long association with the McCowan and Simpson families. In the late nineteenth century, Henry McCowan, a builder from Hampstead and his wife Elizabeth came to Australia, settling first in Brunswick. They arrived to an unexpectedly slack economy, with few opportunities for building development by Henry, following the banking crisis of the late 1880s and the depression which followed. In 1905 the family moved to this property in Wattle Road, then a few acres in size, including the early timber building<sup>6</sup> and still supporting an orchard.<sup>7</sup> Mrs. Elizabeth McCowan<sup>8</sup> is recorded as owner in 1910. The property passed to their child Florence who married R.H. Simpson and subsequently to R.G. Simpson and his wife.

The notable architect Roy McCowan Simpson AO (1914-1997) grew up here. In 1958 the property was subdivided and Roy Simpson designed a residential development to the rear of the property, first a separate accommodation for his aunt, and later a more extensive separate development of sixteen units. The contractor for the first stage was A.V. Jennings.<sup>9</sup>

Roy Simpson undertook some of the alterations to the house including removal of some of the decoration to the verandah, removal of the eaves brackets, and replacement of the decorative coloured glass to the front door. The rear rooms were joined together to make one space and much

later, the freestanding kitchen, possibly belonging to the earliest German settlement, was upgraded into a modern kitchen and connected to the main house.

The architect Roy Simpson, of Yuncken Freeman, was awarded the Royal Australian Institute of Architects 1997 gold medal for his contribution to architecture. Its citation reads: *His sensitivity to the context of his projects displays an affinity with the true art of architecture.* He was an important member of the post war architects who consolidated the introduction of the modern movement, first introduced in the small pre war works of Grounds, Boyd and others, and who developed strong movement towards contextual development. Amongst his most important work is the master plan for La Trobe University. He died in March 1997.

(Meredith Gould, Conservation Architects, Hawthorn Heritage Study Review, 1995, Provisional B Grade Review, 1997)

### Description & Integrity

*Knottywood* is a single-storey Victorian villa of Hawthorn brick construction. The main section of the house is double-fronted with symmetrical façade, rendered quoins and plinth and a hipped slate roof with rendered chimneys with moulded caps; eaves brackets have been removed.<sup>10</sup> It is screened by a skillion-roofed timber verandah with paired posts, altered by the removal of some decoration.<sup>11</sup> The central entrance comprises a single door with glazed surrounds and timber-framed screen door which is flanked by timber-framed double-hung sash windows. While the principal elevations retain a face brick finish, the rear elevation appears to have been overpainted.<sup>12</sup>

To the east of the main house is a brick wing of nineteenth century origins, set back from the main frontage. Also constructed of brown brick, it differs from the main house with lower floor and ceiling levels but repeats the quoining and hipped slate roof form. Evidence of an ochre wash remains on the quoins.

A single-storey, skillion-roofed kitchen wing of brick construction is located at the north-west (rear) corner of the main house. Originally detached, it is now linked to the main house. This was not inspected during this review but was photographed and described by Meredith Gould in 1997. The age of this wing is unclear, though Gould has suggested that it may predate the existing house and have been the kitchen wing for an earlier timber cottage on the site.<sup>13</sup>

An attached flat-roofed carport has been constructed at the south-east corner of the eastern wing and a detached carport has been constructed between the house and the street. An application for alterations to the rear verandah and some rear window and door openings was made in 1998.<sup>14</sup> Additional conservation works, and works at the rear are apparently being carried out at the time of writing.<sup>15</sup>

The 1960s flats constructed at the rear of the property were not inspected.

### Historical Context

Wattle Road, first known as Weinberg Road, is an early street in Hawthorn and marks the location of a farming settlement established by a group of German immigrants in the 1950s. These farming allotments were gradually subdivided, a process which commenced as early as the late 1850s, with the result being an area which is mixed in character but which still retains some evidence of the early farming settlement.

### Comparative Analysis

While the overall double-fronted Victorian villa form of the main house is not uncommon, particularly in Hawthorn, the house is one of the smaller group of surviving examples in the suburb on larger allotments and dating from the 1860s. Despite minor alterations and rear subdivision, its unpainted masonry, generous garden setting and relatively high level of integrity demonstrate the early development of the area for small scale farming, prior to the suburban development of the 1870s. Not quite suburban and not a farmhouse, it has been suggested that the house combines a street address with the three dimensionality and functionality of a farmhouse.<sup>16</sup> The house compares favourably with other examples from a similar period of development in Wattle Road such as numbers 58, 60, 78 and 86 which exhibit a range of levels of integrity and significance (variously graded B, C\* and C).

## 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.*

*Knottywood* is associated with an early phase in Hawthorn's history, specifically with the establishment of a German settlement around Weinberg Road (prior to the transition to garden suburb during the 1870s) and the subsequent development of this settlement. Developed in a series of phases and possibly incorporating an early kitchen wing to the rear, *Knottywood* is one of a small surviving group of Hawthorn properties whose form and generous setting demonstrate the early development of the area for small-scale farming pursuits.

**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.*

*Knottywood* is a fine, representative and relatively externally intact example of a single-storey double-fronted Victorian villa set on a substantial allotment. The house has undergone some modification and new structures constructed. The broader site has also been subdivided and partly redeveloped, however, these changes have not fundamentally detracted from its presentation.

### Statement of Significance

*Knottywood*, 61 Wattle Road, Hawthorn, is of local historical and architectural significance. It is associated with an early phase in Hawthorn's history, specifically with the establishment of a German settlement around Weinberg Road (prior to the transition to garden suburb during the 1870s) and the subsequent development of this settlement. Developed in a series of phases and possibly incorporating an early kitchen wing to the rear, *Knottywood*, at 61 Wattle Road is one of a small surviving group of Hawthorn properties whose form and generous setting demonstrate the early development of the area for small-scale farming pursuits. The house is also significant in the local context as a fine, representative and relatively externally intact example of a single-storey double-fronted Victorian villa of the 1860s set on a substantial allotment. The house has undergone some modification and new structures have been constructed on the site, however, these changes do not fundamentally detract from its presentation.

### Grading Review

Unchanged, B.

### Recommendations

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

Note that the extent of the heritage overlay should extend to the title boundaries, but exclude the adjoining subdivision development at the rear and to the east.<sup>17</sup> The line of the extent of overlay at the rear of house should be determined on site with the owner.

### Identified By

Meredith Gould, Conservation Architects, Hawthorn Heritage Study, 1992.

### References

*General:* Meredith Gould, Conservation Architects, Hawthorn Heritage Study, 1992; Meredith Gould, Conservation Architects, Hawthorn Heritage Study Review, 1994.

*Specific:*

<sup>1</sup> City of Hawthorn Ratebook, 1868, #. 232.

<sup>2</sup> City of Hawthorn Ratebook, 1863 #. 201; 1864, # 206; Local History. Correspondence 877, Oct. 1860. (Research by Ruth Dwyer Nov 1991).

<sup>3</sup> Local History. Correspondence 877, Oct. 1860. (Research by Ruth Dwyer Nov. 1991).

<sup>4</sup> City of Hawthorn Ratebook, 1873, # 448; 1883, # 766.

<sup>5</sup> City of Hawthorn Ratebook, 1909 # 2194.

<sup>6</sup> Cited by Meredith Gould, personal communication, Mr. Simpson.

<sup>7</sup> Cited by Meredith Gould, personal communication, Mr. Simpson.

<sup>8</sup> City of Hawthorn Ratebook, 1910 # 2193.

<sup>9</sup> Research by Ruth Dwyer Nov 1991.

<sup>10</sup> Meredith Gould Architects, Hawthorn Heritage Study, Provisional B Grade Review, 1997.

<sup>11</sup> The extent of alteration is unclear. Meredith Gould Architects, Hawthorn Heritage Study, Provisional B Grade Review, 1997.

<sup>12</sup> Based on photographs produced in the previous study, Meredith Gould Architects, Hawthorn Heritage Study, Provisional B Grade Review, 1997.

<sup>13</sup> Meredith Gould Architects Pty Ltd, Provisional B Grade Review, citation for 61 Wattle Road, 'Knottywood'.

<sup>14</sup> Planning Permit #BOR 98/844, dated 3 September 1998, City of Boroondara Planning File 40/409/02994.

<sup>15</sup> *Pers comm.*, Michelle Hirst, owner.

<sup>16</sup> Meredith Gould Architects, Hawthorn Heritage Study, Provisional B Grade Review, 1997.

<sup>17</sup> Note that the c. 1960 residential development was graded C by Meredith Gould.