
Name	House and Surgery	Reference No	
Address	169 Canterbury Road, Canterbury	Survey Date	16 November 2005
Building Type	Residence	Grading	B
Date	1903-4	Previous Grading	B



Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

Intactness ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

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

History

Surgeon, George H. Armstrong practised from this house after its construction for him in c. 1903-4, to the design of renowned domestic architects, Ussher & Kemp.¹ The builders were E. and N. Lyon.²

Armstrong remained there until the 1920s when Emily Scipell of Box Hill owned the house.³ After serving as a boarding house it was subsequently bought by the Baptist Union,⁴ who later built the church next door. The residence was subsequently converted by the Baptist Union for use as a special accommodation Lodge for Boys.⁵ The laundry was extended in 1958; the kitchen, staffroom and cool room were altered and extended slightly in 1971, and a fire escape was added at the rear.⁶

No. 169 was converted to a house and consulting rooms for a new owner, Mr Li Wong, in 1983 and gained new rear and side fences in 1988.⁷

(G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, additional research by Lovell Chen, 2005)

Description & Integrity

169 Canterbury Road is a two-storey Federation house with a south-facing verandah flanked by a gabled wing, facing Canterbury Road, to the immediate south, and a corner tower formed from a curved bay built into the verandah. A smaller single-storeyed bay is built into a half-timbered screen near the front door. The roof is terra cotta tiles in a Marseilles pattern; the large Gryphon is a more recent addition. There is no verandah valance and the balustrading combines timber slats in groups of three, arranged into a rather Japanese-looking pattern with paired slats supporting balustrade. A round arch with slats is over the entry toward the front door. The arches around the verandah's western tower bay are pointed, and the verandah posts are in turned timber. The south gabled bay has its upper storey in a hung tile surface of terracotta which flares into a bracketed hood over the ground floor's bay window. All four bay windows on the south side are canted, with large casements,

glazed in a grid of small panes, with large segmentally arched or flat topped sashes in three of the bays, and surmounted in three of the bays by smaller lights, again in segmentally arched frames. The upper floor bedroom windows are in a differently sized paning and thinner in their framing and trim, suggesting they have been altered. The walls are otherwise in a plain coursed red brick, with a half timbered roughcast stucco frieze running across the ground floor corner bay and entrance screen. The west side is marked by an asymmetrically stepped chimney breast with a stack that pierces another half-timbered gable, which in turn is played off against three roof slopes alongside and below. The roof, south, west and east elevations appear intact, and the north side has not had substantial alterations either. The cyclone-wire fence dates from 1957, as does the gravelled car court to the immediate west. The garden is relatively dense and contains at least one mature tree.

Historical Context

By the early twentieth century, this section of Canterbury Road had developed with a mix of residences and commercial buildings, the latter concentrated around the railway line.⁸ It is noted that the c. 1905 MMBW Detail Plan does not show No 169, this anomaly perhaps suggesting that it had not been completed at the time the survey was undertaken for the plan.

Comparative Analysis

169 Canterbury Road compares directly with other Canterbury and Camberwell houses by Ussher, and by Ussher and Kemp after 1899. The nearest is their house and pharmacy, 198 Canterbury Road, next to the railway station, of 1899.⁹ Their Camberwell designs also include the Cupples house, *Travancore*, at 104 (now 608) Riversdale Road of the same year (A-graded), the Halsey house, 69 Broadway, 1900-1 (B-graded), and 27 Balwyn Road (1906, A-graded). Larger Ussher and Kemp houses in Canterbury area include Ussher's highly influential Hedges house at 20 Knutsford Street, c. 1895, now hemmed in by subdivisions, and his Mellor house, *Coorinyah*, 150 Mont Albert Road, 1898-9, the latter being graded A in the Camberwell Conservation Study of 1991.¹⁰ No. 169 is one of several doctors' houses and surgeries designed by Ussher and Kemp, and is similar in proportions and detail to one at Bellair Street, Kensington in 1898-9¹¹ and the 1904 Laidlaw house at Hamilton in Western Victoria.¹² Both No. 169 Canterbury Road and the Hamilton house use similar window framing ribbons of half timbering across their ground floors, almost an Ussher and Kemp signature, and they counterbalance square flanking wings with a semicircular or faceted bay. Some aspects of No. 169's detail recur in Henry Kemp's best known house design, *Dalswraith* at 99 Studley Park Road, Kew, of 1906 (A-graded in the Kew Urban Conservation Study), particularly the double bracketing under the tile-hung upper gable wing, which is very similar, the double-bracketed half-timbered gable and the ribbons of half timber and roughcast stucco.¹³ In general No. 169 Canterbury Road has a tightness and verticality in its composition that suggests Kemp as the controlling designer.¹⁴

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.

169 Canterbury Road is characteristic of Federation two-storey houses at the high tide of that period in Australian architecture.

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.

169 Canterbury Road, Canterbury is an accomplished composition combining corner bay and flanking wing and making inventive use of half-timbered patterning. It reflects the main compositional elements running in Ussher and Kemp's design work of the period.

CRITERION G: The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations

169 Canterbury Road is one of the more prominent designs by the renowned residential partnership of Ussher and Kemp at a time when the practice was at its peak. It compares directly- and favorably- with other leading designs of theirs, particularly among their two-storey houses, and is a direct predecessor to Kemp's renowned *Dalswraith* in Kew.

Statement of Significance

Designed by Ussher and Kemp for surgeon George H Armstrong and constructed in 1903-4, No. 169 Canterbury Road is of local historical and architectural significance. It is a fine, representative and externally intact example of a two-storey Federation residence which is distinguished architecturally by its accomplished design, combining corner bay and flanking wing and making inventive use of half-timbered patterning. It is of significance as a prominent commission by renowned domestic architects Ussher and Kemp, completed at a time when the practice was at its peak. It compares directly- and favorably- with other leading designs of theirs, particularly among their two-storey houses, and is a direct predecessor to Kemp's renowned *Dalswraith* in Kew.

Grading Review

Unchanged.

Recommendations

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

Identified By

G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study, 1991.

References

General: G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study, 1991.

Specific:

¹ Shire of Boroondara Rate Book, 1904-5, 38; Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria, 1905; MMBW Drainage Plan Application, No. 57777. George Tibbits dates the house at 1903. See Ch 4 in Trevor Howells, *Towards the Dawn: Federation Architecture in Australia 1890-1915*, Sydney, Hale and Iremonger, 1989, pp. 62-3. Ussher and Kemp form a major part of Tibbits' discussion in this chapter, and comparative examples discussed in this report draw from that account in dating and other information. This chapter was a development from an earlier essay, 'The so-called Melbourne Domestic Queen Anne', *Historic Environment*, 2, 2, 1981, pp. 4-42, 2, 3, pp. 42-3.

² City of Camberwell Building Applications, 1899-1918, # 385.

³ MMBW Drainage Plan Application, No. 57777.

⁴ MMBW Drainage Plan Application, No. 57777.

⁵ Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index: unspecified alterations to *Weller Lodge*, for the Baptist Union, dated 17 September 1934; # 5425, dated 23 August 1950; #19150, dated 7 September 1956. Described as a boarding house, 13 February 1956; a hostel, # 37586 (??), dated 3 August 1965. The fence was #50155, dated 25 November 1971 (as a Lodge for Boys).

⁶ Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index, # 23139, dated 24 July 1958 (laundry); #49185, dated 25 May 1971, (kitchen area) and RJ O'Connor, working drawings, same date.

⁷ Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index, # 84564, # 84680, dated 19 January 1988 and 11 February 1988 respectively.

⁸ See *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, 1901, MMBW Detail Plan No. 71, c. 1905.

⁹ Listed in Andrew Trollope, 'Henry Kemp', architectural research project, University of Melbourne, c. 1969.

¹⁰ These houses are discussed by George Tibbits in Ch 4 of Trevor Howells (ed., contrib.), *Towards the Dawn: Federation architecture in Australia 1890-1915*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1989, pp. 47-86. The Canterbury chemist's is listed by Andrew Trollope in his study of Henry Kemp, Faculty of Architecture, University of Melbourne, c. 1969. The Hedges house, not listed in Butler's study, was illustrated extensively in the *Building, Engineering and Mining Journal*, 16, 576, 13 November 1897, p. 355, cited by Tibbits, n. 27, p. 209. Tibbits' biography of Kemp is in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 9, 1891-1939, MUP, Melbourne, 1983, pp. 562-3.

¹¹ Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, v. 4, p. 79.

¹² Illustrated in Howells, *Towards the Dawn*, front and rear endpapers.

¹³ Tibbits, in Howells, *Towards the Dawn*, pp. 54-5, 57-8. Rated A by Sanderson, Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988.

¹⁴ Graeme Butler has suggested that this house has a more pronounced European demeanour rather than the American affinity common in Federation architecture (as, perhaps, in H H Richardson's Watts Sherman house at Newport, Rhode Island, of 1874).¹⁴ But Federation architecture was syncretic by nature and these components were more a matter of degree than defining stylistic characterizations.

