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<b>Name</b>	House	<b>Reference No</b>	
<b>Address</b>	32 Hortense Street, Burwood	<b>Survey Date</b>	20 September 2005
<b>Building Type</b>	Residence	<b>Grading</b>	B
<b>Date</b>	1938	<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**

32 Hortense Street was designed by architect Leslie Reed and constructed by builder N Johnston for owner-occupier CM Johnston in 1938. A brick garage was added the following year.<sup>1</sup> Johnston remained at the property until the 1950s.<sup>2</sup> Alterations and additions were made in 1957, a sunroom was added in 1970s, and further alterations and additions were made to the house in 1990. A swimming pool was added in the same year, and alterations were also made to the fence and garage (refer details below under Description & Integrity).

The architect Leslie J R Reed practiced predominantly in the interwar period, specializing in residential work with some small industrial commissions.<sup>3</sup>

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

**Description & Integrity**

32 Hortense Street is a triple-fronted, two storey house of 1938, designed by the architect Leslie Reed.<sup>4</sup> It has double brick walls clad in rough stone, with half-timbering over a north wing and a thickly grained slate roof with no ridge-capping. It has unusual cement or fireclay chimney shafts, halfway between a stack and a chimney pot, with a spiral external pattern. The stair window is a lancet; the ground floor living room windows in a trio with a blind arch over each; the first floor main bedroom window is a plate glass and sash 'Chicago' type. The north wing windows are plain sheets, and the upstairs wing, with half timbered spandrels, looks glassed-in. The front fence in scoria stone looks original, though the metal pickets may be later, the general garden layout and large trees all look original. The original plan was a simple, tight arrangement of rooms in an L shape with the stair well positioned in the angle of the L, forming three steps to the north east side, the intersection of Ariel Street. Behind the house, on the Ariel Street side, is a large extension in stone similar to that of

the original house that alters the original geometry and makes the house appear more expansive.<sup>5</sup> Behind that is a newer garage (possibly replacing or incorporating the original) and some later fence additions, which look quite different from those of the original house.<sup>6</sup> Notwithstanding these additions, the original front section still reads as a distinct entity from the north-east, east and south-east sides.

### **Historical Context**

Comprising almost 600 houses, the Summerhill Estate was laid out in 1925, with the sole selling agent local entrepreneur T M Burke. 'Gas, water and electric light' were to become available and the Council had acquired land for nearby Summerhill Park, in anticipation of development. Like many other subdivisions of the period, years passed before the estate was fully developed, though a good deal of Summerhill was built up by the late 1930s. Within the estate, Hortense Street is characterised by predominantly 1930s houses.

### **Comparative Analysis**

32 Hortense Street is of similar scale and proportions to the post-war suburban vernacular seen as emerging in the late 1940s.<sup>7</sup> It has some applied half-timbering on its north wing, and a thickly grained slate roof without hip flashing. The cement or fireclay chimney shafts with external spiral pattern give a medieval touch that is most unusual in Melbourne.<sup>8</sup> This is complemented, albeit rather shakily, by three living room windows with blind arches facing east, and a large, more conventional 'Chicago' plate and sash window for the main bedroom immediately above. This juxtaposition is naïve but not incongruous in a suburban house that strives all out for vivid and rich effect. The lancet stair window is unusual in twentieth century Melbourne applications, though double height rectangular stair windows were in vogue in the Camberwell region, particularly in the Mont Albert Road area. The house has an extensive addition to the rear, north-west, and a newer, visibly dissimilar garage. The front fence facing Hortense Street and Ariel Avenue is original (though the metal pickets may be later), and the garden looks mature in its smaller plantings, front path pattern and main trees. The house is unusual in its intense projection of the suburban refuge in fantasy, piling a series of Tudor and Medieval references into a fairly small site and footprint.<sup>9</sup> In its heated delight in the Medieval, 32 Hortense Street has a Hollywood touch of theatricality, and compares in this stylization with 125 Highfield Road, also rated B.<sup>10</sup> 32 Hortense Street may have been a source for other rough stone dressed houses in the region, as in Clyde Street, Box Hill North, or Huntingdale Road, Jordanville, in the early post-war period.

### **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.*

32 Hortense Street is located within a major interwar residential subdivision in Burwood by a prominent local developer, TM Burke. In considering this historical association, however, the building is not considered to be of more importance than others of the period in the Summerhill Estate.

*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.*

The Medieval and Tudor bearing of this house makes it a rich, intense example of Tudor eclecticism in standard-sized Melbourne houses of the 1930s. The house has an original plan that is simple and direct in its spatial usage, though rather stiff and vertically proportioned. The external materials are richly applied and varied, and well linked to the texture and scale of the garden. The window configurations are rather naïve in their juxtaposition, but this complements the general boldness of the design in a standard suburban setting. It makes an important contribution to Hortense Street and this section of Burwood, where many 1930s houses used this general approach.

### **Statement of Significance**

32 Hortense Street is of local historical and architectural significance. Located in one of Boroondara's major interwar residential subdivisions, the Summerhill Estate, the building is a distinctive example of the application of eclectic Tudor styling to a standard size two-storey 1930s Melbourne residence. Designed by experienced residential practitioner, architect Leslie Reed, 32 Hortense Street is a

confident composition which is distinguished by a combination of Medieval and Tudor references and its varied and richly applied external materials. Though altered through the construction of rear additions, the principal street presentation of the building remains generally unaltered and the property retains its original fence and a sympathetic garden setting. The building makes a strong contribution to the predominantly interwar character of Hortense Street.

### **Grading Review**

Unchanged.

### **Recommendations**

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

In making this recommendation, it is noted that the subject building is located within a precinct (Summerhill Estate) which was identified in the 1991 Camberwell Conservation Study, where it was recommended for planning scheme control. While not surveyed as part of this review, it is likely that the precinct retains a high proportion of graded buildings and may still warrant consideration for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay.

### **Identified By**

G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study, 1991.

### **References**

*General:* G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study, 1991.

*Specific:*

<sup>1</sup> Details and drawings sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index, #10703, dated 5 December 1938. Drawings by Leslie J W Reed, architect, 23 November 1938. For the garage, details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index #11878, dated 4 August 1938.

<sup>2</sup> D1950

<sup>3</sup> List of Leslie Reed projects compiled by Allom Lovell & Associates in 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Buildings Index, #10703, dated 5 December 1938. Plans drawn by Leslie J W Reed, architect, 23 November 1938, in City of Camberwell archives.

<sup>5</sup> Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Buildings Index, #20806, dated 28 June 1957.

<sup>6</sup> Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Buildings Index, #63842, dated 2 October 1978.

<sup>7</sup> Compare with the Newton house, 177 Glen Iris Road, Glen Iris.

<sup>8</sup> Spiral patterned chimney stacks are more usually seen in terra cotta on brick pedestals, as with Guyon Purchas' *Tay Creggan* at Yarra Street, Hawthorn, of 1887. See Philip Goad, ed., contrib., *Melbourne Architecture: a guide*, Sydney, Watermark Press, 1999, Ch. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Its Medieval and Tudor references were characteristic enough for the time, but the range of materials employed- stone, plaster, window pane detailing, suggest an antiquarian intensity of that was unusual.

<sup>10</sup> G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, v. 4, p. 132-3.