
Name	House	Reference No	
Address	6 Kitchener Street, Balwyn	Survey Date	21 June 2005
Building Type	Residence	Grading	B (Provisional)
Date	1913	Previous Grading	B



Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

Intactness Good Fair Poor

Heritage Status HV AHC NT Rec BPS Heritage Overlay

History

This house was constructed by owner builder John Maule Rule in 1913.¹ The house was described as being of six rooms with 'concrete walls'.² John and Ella Rule and later their son David Rule, a plasterer, resided there until at least 1974.³

A change of ownership occurred after this time and applications for the construction of a swimming pool and a two-storey bedroom and kitchen extension to the house were made in 1991 and 1992 respectively.⁴

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

Description & Integrity

6 Kitchener Street, Balwyn, is a single storey double-fronted Edwardian bungalow. The reported concrete construction of the house has not been confirmed and a more detailed physical inspection is required.⁵ External walls have a textured rendered finish. The roof is a steep bellcast hipped roof clad with corrugated galvanised steel; this relatively common roof form is distinguished in this case by an unusual combination of a King post, which projects through the apex of the roof, flanked by dormer windows and slender brick chimneys with rendered corbelled caps. The return verandah has slender tapered concrete posts and concrete floor. The end bay of the verandah is infilled and clad with fibre cement. The windows generally contain timber-framed double-hung sashes with casement sashes to the dormers. The entrance contains a glazed timber door and the enclosed section of verandah is accessed via a panelled timber door.

Extensive additions have been constructed at the rear of the property. While visible, these additions are set well into the site, to the rear of the original residence.

The property has a non-original picket fence and lych gate.

Historical Context

The subject property is sited in a portion of Balwyn which developed immediately after the turn of the previous century. Kitchener Street's location near to the Outer Circle railway may have spurred development in this area, and the subject property sits harmoniously within its predominately Edwardian and inter-war streetscape.

Comparative Analysis

Assuming that the subject property is of concrete construction and depending on the specific nature of its construction, there would appear to be few directly comparable buildings in Boroondara. Two examples of concrete houses of the c.1910s-20s have been identified in earlier studies of Camberwell. The *Banff House* at 150 Winmalee Road, Balwyn of 1915 (q.v., B-graded), is a bungalow which is thought to have been designed by noted concrete technologist Hugh R Crawford. Crawford had also been responsible for some earlier Queen Anne styled concrete houses in Mont Albert Road, Canterbury and Camberwell East (though to have been demolished).⁶ These had reinforced concrete walls and brick chimneys. A later example is the distinctive 7 Warwick Avenue, Surrey Hills (1923), which was designed by Walter Burley Griffin and constructed using his patented Knitlock roof and wall tiles. This building is included in the Victorian Heritage Register.

Again, assuming the concrete construction can be confirmed (including the specific form used), 6 Kitchener Street may prove to be of technological interest and potential significance in the wider context. Note that until its demolition, a house constructed entirely of reinforced concrete in 1912 in Beaumaris (the *George Higgins House*) was said to be the earliest surviving complete concrete house in Victoria.

Setting aside the issue of the concrete construction, the building is broadly conventional in terms of its form and architectural style (compare with the residence at 7 Bowen Street, Kew, for example), albeit differing from other examples in terms of the unusual elements which are incorporated into its roof form.

Assessment Against Criteria

Amended Heritage Victoria Criteria

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 application of concrete construction, slender verandah posts and projecting King post provides an atypical composition for this otherwise relatively conventional house type.

CRITERION F: The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.

The house is potentially of technological significance for its relatively early and uncommon method of concrete construction.

Statement of Significance

Provisional only

The residence at 6 Kitchener Street, Camberwell, is of local historical, scientific (technological) and architectural significance as a relatively early surviving example of a concrete residence. While relatively conventional in terms of its form and architectural style, the building incorporates some unusual features (projecting King post and slender verandah posts) which appear possibly to be related to its concrete construction.

Further physical and historical investigation is required to confirm its significance in this context.

Grading Review

B (Provisional)

Recommendations (provisional)

On the basis that the concrete construction of the house can be confirmed, 6 Kitchener Street, Camberwell is recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay.

It is recommended that a further site inspection be carried out to confirm the provisional grading.

Identified By

G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study, 1991.

References

General: G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study, 1991.

Specific:

¹ City of Camberwell Rate Books, 1912-13, #2275; 1913-14, #2240, cited in G. Butler, *Camberwell Conservation Study*, 1991, Volume Four, p. 154.

² Details sourced from City of Camberwell Building Index, # 92069 (swimming pool), and # 95269 (additions and alterations).

³ Information compiled from the City of Camberwell Rate Books and the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years.

⁴ Planning Permit #92096, dated 18 January 1991 and #95269, dated 7 July 1992, City of Boroondara Building File 40/408/011809.

⁵ Note however that Graeme Butler's inspection confirmed concrete construction. *Camberwell Conservation Study*, 1991, Volume Four, p. 154.

⁶ M Lewis, *200 Years of Concrete*, p.26.