
Name	House	Reference No	
Address	91 Maud Street, North Balwyn	Survey Date	25 November 2005
Building Type	Residence	Grading	B
Date	1940	Previous Grading	B



Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

Intactness Good Fair Poor

Heritage Status HV AHC NT Rec. BPS Heritage Overlay

History

In 1940, Alexander Harold Lowe commissioned Thornbury builder, J.G. White, to erect a residence to a design of the State Bank Building Department.¹ The two-storied brick house was of nine rooms and had an estimated cost of £1,733.² Alexander Lowe, a secretary, lived at this address with Mavis A. Lowe until at least 1974.³

The house was considered for demolition and replacement with two units in 2005,⁴ and was also considered for a conversion into a child care centre (there is one diagonally opposite), however, a covenant on the title limits the use of the land to be for a single dwelling of brick construction.⁵

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

Description & Integrity

91 Maud Street, is a two-storey, flat-fronted brick house in a careful and thoroughly typical neo-Georgian style: type CF 7 by the architectural office of the State Savings Bank of Victoria under G Burridge Leith, who had run that office since the 1920s.⁶ It has simple cube form, a hipped roof with a single chimney at the east end, and symmetrically placed windows and front door. A wrought iron balconette frames the central first floor window, and shutters frame the outer windows on both floors. The smaller upstairs windows suggest an attic level; while the course line and vaguely ceremonial front steps, with their wrought iron balustrade, hint at a basement.

The low picket fence, noted by Graeme Butler as part of the original specification,⁷ has been removed since the 1991 Camberwell Conservation Study, though the side paling fence, with flat top may be early. The garage, with stepped top, was added either at the end of construction or just after the houses was completed.⁸ It is a simply treated brick box with boarded and braced doors, typical of

many of the interwar and early post-war years.⁹ Apart from a kitchen, meals and patio area added at the rear in 1986,¹⁰ the house appears to be intact externally.

The plan was comparatively open for its time, with a stair hall opening into living and dining rooms through double doors to either side. This may reflect Leith's wide experience in weatherboard Bungalow design during the 1920s. Surprisingly, the house has little if any climatic recognition, its generously windowed west and north walls topped with almost vestigial eaves in a way that suggests suburban house design of the 1990s.

Historical Context

This area of North Balwyn developed slowly from the late interwar period; the subject property was one of the earliest houses built in this street, completed before the ban on private building was enforced in 1942 as a result of the Second World War. Development of the area had resumed by the late 1940s, with the street nearly fully developed by the early 1960s.

Comparative Analysis

A conservative design by 1940, 91 Maud Street, reflects the broad acceptance of the Georgian or Mediterranean amalgams as the preferable style for Australian housing. Two-storey variants of this type were being designed in numbers by Stacey Neave, Augustus Aley and John D Moore and others in Hardy Wilson's circle from 1919 on.¹¹ The exterior of the house reflects an increasing gravitation to Neo-Georgian that appears in the State Bank's Garden City housing of the late 1920s and early 1930s. But it also evokes Toorak, South Yarra and other elite suburbs as well, and had clear overtones of gracious living. 91 Maud Street's open plan recalls the earlier Bungalow work done by the State Savings Bank's architectural office.

Another conservative neo-Georgian residence is *Xanadu* at 119 Doncaster Road, North Balwyn (q.v., B-graded), a comparatively ornate house and surgery was designed designs by Vincent Ward in 1948.

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.

91 Maud Street is a representative and externally highly intact example of a two-storey Neo-Georgian brick residence of the late interwar period. It demonstrates one form of the State Bank housing prototypes for use by the general public, as they were conceived in 1940. The Neo-Georgian form of the design was a response to suburban aspirations to graciousness and substantial achievement, and is refined and unassuming while still economical.

Statement of Significance

91 Maud Street is of local historical and architectural significance as a representative and externally highly intact example of a two-storey Neo-Georgian brick residence of the late interwar period. It demonstrates one form of the State Bank housing prototypes for use by the general public, as they were conceived in 1940. The Neo-Georgian form of the design was a response to suburban aspirations to graciousness and substantial achievement, and is refined and unassuming while still economical.

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.

¹ Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index, # 13592, dated 7 October 1940; MMBW Drainage Plan Application, # 220337.

² Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index, # 13592, dated 7 October 1940.

³ *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, 1944-45; 1950; 1963; 1974.

⁴ City of Boroondara Planning File # 40/409/10851.

⁵ City of Boroondara Planning File # 40/409/10851.

⁶ Leith's designs figured prominently in *Home Beautiful* and elsewhere during the 1920s, and he remained prominent as a house designer during the 1930s, developing designs that were prototypes for the post war 'brick veneer'. For Leith and the State Bank Office, see Peter Cuffley, *Australian Houses of the 1920s and 1930s*, Five Mile, Melbourne, 1989, passim.

⁷ G Butler, City of Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, vol.4, p. 181. The fence appears in Butler's photograph.

⁸ Detail sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index, # 13592, dated 7 October 1940.

⁹ The City of Camberwell Building Index lists unspecified 'Additions and alterations' (costing \$25,000) in # 81111, dated 5 September 1986.

¹⁰ Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index, #81111, dated 5 September 1986, and working drawings (86-148 F) by Allan A Armstrong Pty Ltd.

¹¹ For general accounts of this tendency see Conrad Hamann, 'Paths of Beauty: the afterlife of Australian Colonial architecture', *Transition*, Spring 1988; Peter Cuffley, *Australian Houses of the 1920s and 1930s*, Five Mile, Melbourne, 1989, Ch 5; and Philip Cox and Clive Lucas, *Australian Colonial Architecture*, Part 3, Lansdowne, Melbourne, 1974.