

<b>Name</b>	House	<b>Reference No</b>	
<b>Address</b>	660 Riversdale Road, Camberwell	<b>Survey Date</b>	16 November 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.

<b>Intactness</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor		
<b>Heritage Status</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> HV	<input type="checkbox"/> AHC	<input type="checkbox"/> NT	<input type="checkbox"/> Rec.	BPS Heritage Overlay

#### History

In 1938, Samuel Whitehead, himself a builder of Hope Street, Camberwell, commissioned builder L.R. Whitehead of Kew to construct a dwelling on this property.<sup>1</sup> The two-storied brick and timber dwelling was of seven rooms and was estimated to cost £1,400.<sup>2</sup> The property was vacant in 1940 but by 1944-45 had been acquired by Harold G. Williams.<sup>3</sup> A. Ambrose Erswell occupied the property in 1950 but Arthur Louey Gook had purchased and occupied the residence by September of that year.<sup>4</sup> During his ownership, the house was extended by one room.<sup>5</sup> By 1962 the property again had a new owner, F.L. Phelan.<sup>6</sup>

A number of alterations and additions have been made to the house; these are detailed below under Description and Integrity.

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

#### Description & Integrity

660 Riversdale Road<sup>7</sup> is an example of Old English suburban housing, dating from 1938.<sup>8</sup> It utilizes a corner site, at Riversdale Road and Woodlands Avenue, and is not similar to building stock in the nearby Golf Links and Hassett estates in its general style and approach. It is distinctive in using a vivid tapestry brick, interspersed with relieving bricks in burnt sienna and blue clinker. The roof is in terracotta tile, Marseilles pattern, with a roofline in three hips facing the corner. The third hip is over a large wing facing south-west, which is an addition, possibly dating from 1950),<sup>9</sup> with boxed eaves and simplified window treatment. This differs from the other first floor elevations which were corbelled and surfaced in appliqué half-timbering, on the original sides facing Riversdale Road and Woodlands Avenue.

Overall, the house reads as a set of wings rather than the near oblong which is its actual plan. A gabled 'wing', actually a stepped breakfront, projects toward Riversdale Road, fronted by a flat wall and bay, half timbered and corbelled on the upper level, left clear on the ground floor to accentuate a segmentally arched front door. To one side the main frontal gable cuts back to continue down in a long diagonal across a second half-timbered wing, this time under one of the roof hips. This element does not express the stair, which runs back at right angles to Riversdale Road, but rather, was probably intended to provide a visual link between the original garage entry and the front door. The original drawings show a double door in plank panels to what was originally an integrated garage under a second segmental arch to the immediate west side of the main entry.<sup>10</sup> The garage has been converted to a new use and the original doors replaced by a multi-paned casement window, with a single plate-glass eyelet filling the rest of the arch above it. There is no verandah, but the front door and former garage are also linked visually by an entry patio enclosed on the north side by a shallow wall.

Two other arched windows, drawn up into points and hinting at narrow 'archer slits', were positioned on the north-east side of the main wing and again on the east wing, one lighting the hall, the other lighting a nook by the lounge room chimney. The lounge room window alongside is a typical 1930s 'Chicago' frame with two casements on either side of a large fixed plate glass centre pane. The main bedroom windows are three equally-sized casements.

A series of alterations and additions are recorded in Council's files for the property. A brush fernery was added in 1940, and an addition to the house (possibly the two-storey hipped roof wing) was constructed in 1950. A new garage was added in 1951, at which time the original driveway may have been removed. Unspecified additions were made in 1957 (possibly the single-storey hipped-roof extension to the rear) and a carport (1963) and swimming pool (1975) were also constructed. Further additions were made in 1984 and 1988. These included the addition of a family room (1984), brick garage and a substantial corner lych-gate in tiles and timber to match the house. To the extent that they are visible, these later additions have been broadly sympathetic to the original exterior.

### Historical Context

By the beginning of the twentieth century the MMBW Detail Plan No. 76 (date unknown) shows this section of Riversdale Road had been substantially developed for residential purposes, with the building stock a mix of brick and timber and including some larger villa residences. A small number of larger residences (probably Victorian) are shown on more substantial allotments and set back from the street. A large area in the immediate vicinity of the subject site was shown vacant at this time (this appears to have formed part of the grounds of an earlier residence, *The Pines*) and was developed later.

### Comparative Analysis

660 Riversdale Road compares with 102 Mont Albert Road of 1937 (q.v., B-graded) in scale and general massing, and adaptive use of a corner site. 294 Camberwell Road, 1933 (q.v., B-graded) precedes the subject building in introducing a garage as integral with the main elevation, but in the case of No. 660 Riversdale Road, the original garage was drawn right into the structure of the house, making the latter of interest for its integrated garage. A strong visual connection was established between the original garage doors and the front door of the house.

Unfortunately the garage was moved later, leaving 660 as a vivid but otherwise fairly conventional 1930s house in its plan and detailing. The fenestration is more conventionally 1930s than that of the wayward and intense 32 Hortense Street Glen Iris of 1938 (q.v., B-graded). Externally, the house is of interest for the builder's capacity to make it read as a set of wings rather than as a fairly simple rectangular cube as in 35 Balwyn Road of 1931-2 or 1292 Toorak Road of 1931 (both q.v., B-graded) as its actual plan would suggest. The house is marked by attention to details such as the corbelled upper elevations, stepped and turned chimney and lively use of the bricks' patterning. The composition is bold in use of the diagonal, matching similar Camberwell examples as at Clayton and Porter Roads Balwyn or 11 Chatfield Avenue Camberwell of 1932-3 (B-graded).<sup>11</sup>

Two other houses in the Camberwell area still had fully integrated garages at the time of the 1991 Camberwell Conservation Study survey; these include 4 Marlborough Avenue and 49 The Ridge, Camberwell, of 1935-8, and 1936 respectively (both C-graded). Several other houses have equally or more striking compositions, as with 125 Highfield Road, 1933 (B-graded), 13 Marlborough Avenue,

1935 (C-graded), 66 The Boulevard, Balwyn North, 1938 (C-graded), and the earlier and magisterial Knowlton, by Marcus Barlow, 92 Mont Albert Road, of 1926 (A-graded).<sup>12</sup>

### 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.*

660 Riversdale Road is a lively and interesting example of a larger Camberwell house in the Old English manner. While it has had a series of additions over a long period, these are generally sympathetic to the original form and texture. Its plan is closer to the generalised stuccoed houses of the 1930s, leading toward the form now identified as 'post-war vernacular'.

*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.*

No. 660 Riversdale Road is of particular interest for its use of materials in expressing texture. The design is also of interest for its ability to generate a spreading wing form in appearance, belying a fairly compact working plan.

### Statement of Significance

No. 660 Riversdale Road is of local historical and architectural significance as a substantial brick residence in the Old English manner. It is distinctive for its incorporation of a garage (now converted) into the main body of the house, and for its use of materials in expressing texture, using a vivid tapestry brick, interspersed with relieving bricks in burnt sienna and blue clinker. The design is also of interest for its ability to generate a spreading wing form in appearance, belying a fairly compact working plan. While it has had a series of additions over a long period, these are generally sympathetic to the original form and texture.

### 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:*

<sup>1</sup> Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index #10990, dated 14 February 1938; Electoral Roll, 1938.

<sup>2</sup> Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index #10990, dated 14 February 1938.

<sup>3</sup> *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria* 1940; 1944-45.

<sup>4</sup> *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria* 1950; details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index, #5632, 21 September 1950.

<sup>5</sup> *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria* 1950; details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index, #5632, 21 September 1950.

<sup>6</sup> *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria* 1962; details sourced from City of Camberwell Building Index, #32434, dated 30 January 1963.

<sup>7</sup> No. 154 on the road's old numbering system.

<sup>8</sup> Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index # 10990, dated 14 February 1938.

<sup>9</sup> Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index, #5632, dated 21 September 1950.

<sup>10</sup> A separate application was made for a garage in early 1940 (#12568 in the City of Camberwell Building Index, dated 23 January 1940), but the integrated garage is shown on the original drawing for the house.

<sup>11</sup> 11 Chatfield Avenue is illustrated by G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, vol. 4, p. 88.

<sup>12</sup> G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, vol. 4: 92 Mont Albert Road, pp. 194-5; 4 Marlborough Street: pp. 176-7; 13 Marlborough Street, pp. 178; 49 The Ridge, pp. 271-2; 125 Highfield Road, pp. 132-3; 66 The Boulevard, pp. 269-70.