
Name	House	Reference No	
Address	899 Toorak Road, Camberwell	Survey Date	27 September 2005; 25 November 2005
Building Type	Residence	Grading	B (Provisional)
Date	1921	Previous Grading	B



Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries

Intactness Good Fair Poor

Heritage Status HV AHC NT Rec BPS Heritage Overlay

History

Allotment 15 was purchased by Julia Cuise (?) in 1920 from Frederick W. Kerr, care of the Town Hall, Camberwell.¹ A brick house of five rooms was built on the allotment.² By 1924-25 the property was owned by Mrs Howard Atchison and occupied by Charles B. Atchison, a leather merchant who had earlier lived in Malvern³. Charles Bently Atchison occupied this property with Florence L. Atchison until at least 1945⁴. The property was occupied for a short period in 1935 by Sydney E. Tucker.⁵

(G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study)

Description & Integrity

The house could not be described in detail as it is not visible from the street and access was not available during the course of the Review. The following description is based on existing documentation (Camberwell Conservation Study 1991 and drawings) and would need to be confirmed on site.

The house is obscured from the street by a 2.5 metre high stained timber paling fence with galvanized steel gates. The upper section of the main gable, together with the clinker-brick chimney, is visible from the street, along with other elements of the roof. The roof is in its original terracotta tiles, and the gable has its original shingles and pattern of fascias, albeit repainted.

The photograph and description in the 1991 Camberwell Conservation Study⁶ show an asymmetrical composition with a bay balanced with a skillion-roofed porch-verandah around a simple clinker brick chimney with a cornice one course thick, in the manner of chimney tops from the bungalow period. The gable is linked to the front wall at the west end with a sheet of shingles applied down past a

simple three-light porthole. The gable has a small vent at its top and is supported by a single slender bracket, and is set off by a transverse gable to the rear, on similar shallow gradient to the verandah canopy and the front gable. The shaped rafter points, linear stylization and verandah supports build up a Japanese quality set off by the masonry walls in roughcast stucco cladding and clinker brick, a more consciously European reference echoing the general finish of Arts and Crafts Movement houses. The front door is located on the west side of the house.⁷

The garden is not visible from the street, though the presence of some mature trees is noted.⁸

The extent of alteration is unclear. A conversion to a medical centre was proposed in 1994, however the application appears to have been withdrawn.⁹

Historical Context

This section of Toorak Road was substantially built up during the 1920s, in part due to the improvement of public transport in the area, in particular the north-south Burke Road tram route, which connected with Gardiner and Camberwell railway stations. The local shopping centre also dates from this period, as does the area of south Hawthorn on the west side of Burke Road.

Comparative Analysis

This house has an elegance and boldness in composition which distinguishes it from many other contemporary examples. A comparable example in tarred wood at Monomeath Avenue, Canterbury, c.1917-19, has been demolished, though another in Currajong Avenue, Camberwell (q.v., B-graded) survives. Compositionally, the house has echoes of Horbury Hunt's Spurling house at Black Street Middle Brighton, but a more proximate source in composition might be the Bungalow courts illustrated in Henry Saylor's US *Bungalows* in 1911,¹⁰ again showing part-length verandah skillions terminated by stepped chimney breasts under shingled gables. This found some parallels in the Sydney architect Reginald Prevost's houses, included in his seminal *Australian Bungalow and House Designs* of 1912.¹¹ More locally, similar compositions recur in 1 Muswell Hill, Glen Iris, of 1927 (C-graded),¹² and 37 Normanby Road, Kew, of 1920 (B-graded).¹³ Further away it has compositional parallels with some of Algernon Elmore's tarred weatherboard Bungalows, as with 17 Main Street, Blackburn.¹⁴

As Graeme Butler has noted, the house cultivates a conspicuous Japanese character, which is of interest in the context of the influence of Japanese forms on the original houses of this type in the United States (Pasadena and Alameda).

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.

899 Toorak Road is a fine and relatively externally intact example of a sophisticated Bungalow design from the early 1920s.

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 asymmetrical composition is robust, elegant and powerful, and tending to the abstract in comparison with most local bungalow counterparts. It is also distinctive for its Japanese character.

Statement of Significance

Provisional only

899 Toorak Road, Camberwell, is of local historical and architectural significance, as a fine and relatively externally intact example of a sophisticated Bungalow design from the early 1920s. Its asymmetrical composition is robust, elegant and powerful, and tending to the abstract in comparison with most local bungalow counterparts. It is also distinctive for its Japanese character.

Grading Review

B (provisional)

Recommendations (provisional)

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Boroondara Planning Scheme on a provisional basis.

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, 1920-21, # 933; 1921-22, # 977.

² City of Camberwell Rate Books, 1920-21, # 933; 1921-22, # 977.

³ City of Camberwell Rate Books, 1924-25, # 21726; Electoral Roll, 1912.

⁴ *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, 1930; Electoral Roll, 1938; *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, 1944-45.

⁵ *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, 1935.

⁶ G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, vol. 4, p. 275.

⁷ As shown on

⁸ Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index, #29538, dated 10 August 1961 (sunroom); #33627, dated 28 August 1963 (garage).

⁹ Later preliminary drawings, n.d., City of Boroondara plan archive. Details sourced from the City of Boroondara Building Index, #40/408/20945, dated 1 February 2001; City of Camberwell Building Index, # 106808, dated November 1994.

¹⁰ Cited by Graeme Butler in *The Californian Bungalow in Australia*, Lothian, Melbourne, 1992, p. 33.

¹¹ Cited by Butler in *The Californian Bungalow*, p. 27.

¹² Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, p. 209.

¹³ Details sourced from Pru Sanderson, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988, B Grade Listings.

¹⁴ See Angela Taylor, 'The Elmore Bungalows'. *Historic Environment*, 1, 1983, provides a general outline of Elmore's life and work.