
Name	<i>Mount Gambier</i>	Reference No	
Address	32 Barkers Road, Hawthorn	Survey Date	26 April 2006
Building Type	Residence	Grading	C*
Date	1897-98	Previous Grading	C*2



Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

Intactness Good Fair Poor

Heritage Status HV AHC NT Rec. BPS Heritage Overlay

History

The subdivision of the *Fairmount Park* estate in 1880 was the spur for the beginning of residential development on the south side of Barkers Road. One of the first houses constructed was a brick villa - today 26 Barkers Road - built by and for contractor August Muller. Muller also owned two adjoining allotments with 60 foot frontages, eastwards to the corner of Findon Street.¹ In March 1898, the *Building Engineering and Mining Journal* illustrated a recently completed nine-roomed brick residence designed by architect John A B Koch and built by George Braid, at the corner of Barkers Road and Findon Street. This is a reference to the subject property. The client was Rudolf Boehnke, a brewer, previously of East Melbourne.² The house was described as being 'built of red pressed bricks, and treated with cement dressings, overhanging eaves and gables, giving the whole a very neat appearance'.³ Boehnke remained in residence until c. 1914, at which time he moved to 534 Tooronga Road. George Lynch, a manufacturer, occupied the property from this date until c. 1926, at which time the Thornton family took up residence, remaining at this address until the early 1960s. From c. 1963 until at least 1974, L Divita was the occupant.⁴

(G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote Places (draft)*, 2000; additional research by Lovell Chen, 2006)

Description & Integrity

Mount Gambier, 32 Barkers Road, Hawthorn, is a richly detailed house from the early to middle Federation period, built in 1897-98. It has some Federation characteristics: chimneys with short straps near their tops, walls in exposed red brick with double rowed cream-brick course lines, and a concern for climate evident in the northeastern verandah alignment and the perforated screens over upper windows. The gable brackets are Queen Anne in their stylization, and the use of verandah lace has been minimized. Also reflective of the Federation style, *Mount Gambier* dominates the street corner site with a concentration of detail and projected vigor. The buildings' general form and details also incorporate Italianate elements, such as the return verandah, paired wing windows with segmental arches and scroll consoles, a hipped roof with slate tile cladding and galvanized iron ridge

capping, and a separate bull-nose verandah roof in striated galvanized iron, with boxed and bracketed eaves. The verandah is missing some of its lacework and frieze bracketing on the Findon Street side. The jerkin-headed gables facing east and north are unusual, and were a motif associated with early architectural reformism, being advocated by Viollet-le Duc and others at the 'free style' end of the French *beaux-arts* system. They are also found in Victoria's school architecture, of the late 1870s and early 1880s. With *Mount Gambier's* wall striping and crisp-carved window detailing, these elements lend the house a High Victorian, rather Gothic Revival energy which is not usual in the Italianate mode. The front door has an original case which is characteristically Italianate; a door in the return verandah appears to be later, and the windows are a more recent plate glass. The long rear east side elevation, to Findon Street, is evident in the 1902 MMBW plan, although this has been altered externally through the addition and alteration of openings. A glazed belvedere and other additions have been made behind the house in more recent years, along with a red brick garage (1965) opening onto an alley at the rear.⁵ A chimney has been removed from the roof on the east side, facing Findon Street. The iron picket fence is of recent origin, although set in a bluestone footing. The cottage garden complements the house setting.

Historical Context

The subject property is on a site which was eventually developed following the subdivision of the *Fairmount Park* estate in 1880. Development on the subdivision, including on the south side of Barkers Road, was slow until the opening up of the bridge linking Victoria Street, Richmond to Hawthorn, in the late 1880s. The arrival of the cable tram service in this period was another spur to local development.⁶

Comparative Analysis

Mount Gambier compares with other Federation-Italianate hybrids in the general area, most particularly with houses in the Victoria Road-Scott Street-Stanhope Grove area of central Camberwell, and with some Kew houses such as *Mynda* at 5 Molesworth Street (1885), by Lloyd Tayler, a contemporary and colleague of Koch's, and 27 Belmont Avenue, by Reed, Henderson and Smart, of 1888. These have both been graded A, and chronologically *Mount Gambier* follows them by a substantial margin.⁷ *Mynda* has similar chimney toppings and similar proportions, as well as a polygonal belvedere. There are also parallels with larger Boroondara houses of the same period, such as Richard Guthridge's *Coolattie* at 29 Canterbury Road, Camberwell, graded B, of 1896.⁸ The High Victorian, rather Gothic Revival energy of the house, which is not usual in the Italianate mode, also renders it comparable with other Hawthorn examples such as 5-9 Yarra Street in the St James' Park area, also thought to be by Koch. It also complements the High Victorian experimentation in Koch's Record Chambers of 1887, where he mixed banding from High Victorian Gothic with an extruded array of classical elements, highly mannered and Hellenistic as in his earlier *Labassa* at Caulfield (1889-91).

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.*

Mount Gambier, 32 Barkers Road, Hawthorn, is a fine and substantially intact example of a 'Federation Italianate' style that flourished in the 1890s. Few of its additions are visible from Barkers Road, and it dominates the corner with its rich detail, jerkin-headed gables and return verandah. It has particular affinities with Lloyd Tayler's *Mynda*, a noted Grade A house in Kew.

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.*

Mount Gambier 32 Barkers Road, Hawthorn, fuses late nineteenth-century Italianate elements with a series of Federation and later nineteenth century free style elements that make it an accomplished and stimulating hybrid.

Statement of Significance

Mount Gambier, 32 Barkers Road, Hawthorn, is of historical and architectural significance at a local level. It is a fine and substantially intact example of a 'Federation Italianate' style that flourished in the 1890s. It is also associated with architect John A B Koch who was a noted designer, responsible

for a number of important houses in Melbourne including *Labassa*. The subject house also fuses late nineteenth-century Italianate elements with Federation and later nineteenth century free style elements in an accomplished manner. Few of its additions are visible from Barkers Road, and the house dominates its corner position with its rich detail and striking architectural features such as jerkin-headed gables and return verandah.

Grading Review

Unchanged.

Recommendations

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

Identified By

Meredith Gould Conservation Architects, *Hawthorn Heritage Study*, 1992.

References

General: G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote Places (draft)*, 2000; Meredith Gould Conservation Architects, *Hawthorn Heritage Study*, 1992.

Specific:

¹ City of Hawthorn Rate Books, 1895-96, #90-92, cited in G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote places (draft)*, 2000.

² *Building Engineering and Mining Journal*, 19 March 1898, p. 78; *Sands & McDougall Melbourne Directory*, 1895.

³ *Building Engineering and Mining Journal*, 19 March 1898, p. 78.

⁴ Pattern of occupation derived from listings in the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years between 1915 and 1974.

⁵ Details sourced from City of Hawthorn Building Index, Permit #5881, dated 21 April 1965.

⁶ G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote places (draft)*, 2000.

⁷ Details sourced from Pru Sanderson, *Kew Urban Conservation Study*, volume 2, 1989, designation A, citations 13 and 17.

⁸ Details sourced from Graeme Butler, *Camberwell Conservation Study*, volume 4, 1991, p. 74.