
Name	<i>The Gables</i>	Reference No	
Address	1 Berkeley Street, Hawthorn	Survey Date	26 April 2006
Building Type	Residence	Grading	C*
Date	1903	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 allotment occupied by the subject building was originally part of the estate of iron founder Peter Johns, whose home *Tudor* was once sited further south of the subject property. Blocks fronting Riversdale Road in its immediate vicinity were for sale in 1900, with houses under construction a short time later. The subject property, known as lot 4, was recorded as vacant in records of the City of Hawthorn 1901-02 rate cycle, but occupied by a completed brick house of nine rooms, by the following year.¹ The owner of the new residence was recorded as J A Boyd of Port Melbourne, and it was let to Arthur Woods. Woods remained in residence until c. 1910 before the property was let to James Morrow. The house was then owned and occupied by the Booth family (c. 1914-1921) and then by E J Bolger, owner and resident until the end of the 1930s. The house, described by this time as consisting of eleven rooms, and rated at £115, was listed as occupied by Alexander Cameron, a music teacher and Mrs. Sinclair-Fordyce from the mid-1940s.² Subsequently *The Gables* was occupied for many years by Dr I O Stahle, from the late 1950s until at least 1974.³

Most recently, the house was auctioned for around \$2.25m in early 2006, under the web title 'Late Victorian sublimity' with a notional date of construction set around 1890. By this time it had a new picket fence and extensively restored interior with 'Rococo' ceilings; it had also lost its original return verandah. The auction publicity shows a plan dominated by a long oval central hall, described as a ballroom, with rooms placed radially around it, and a deep, narrow attic spine of rooms leading to the front dormer.⁴

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

Description & Integrity

The Gables, 1 Berkeley Street, Hawthorn, is an attic-storey Federation house with a steeply pitched roof clad in slate tile, a secondary hip and three gables, and a dormer window to the principal elevation. The main roof ridge caps are in scalloped terracotta tiling with terracotta scroll finials; the

hip ridges are in Colorbond. A gryphon to the apex of the main gable may be a later addition. The chimneys have stucco clad bases, tall brick stacks exposed on the upper levels with vertical strapwork, cornices to the tops with concrete hips, and paired terracotta pots. The roof gables are roughcast stucco with half timber patterning; their spandrels are stepped on the north and northwest, while the southwest gable has a square indentation with an unusual decorative cartouche. The main eaves are boxed and supported by evenly spaced brackets interspersed with plaster swags. The external walls are in exposed red brickwork, plain coursed, with an ornamented stucco course. The west-facing windows are hooded with slate-tiled skillions on fretwork timber brackets; the north hood may not be original given that the original verandah has been removed (see below); the southwest window hood is fronted by a gablet. The main window on the north façade is round arched, while the two principal west casement windows have a tripartite arrangement with leaded fanlights and sculpted segmental arches over, springing from scroll consoles. The entrance door has leaded sidelights and fanlights, and a sculpted segmental arch over. The dormer on the west roof face has two small double-hung sashes and shingle siding, and different detailing to the gables below, which may indicate a later addition. The house also originally had a return verandah angled north west, and its outline can be seen in places in the external brickwork to the facade. The verandah floor, now exposed, appears to be of asphalt, with bluestone edging to the verandah base. The steps up to the front door, and verandah floor, have short cube-balustrades topped with lions. The front garden setback, with paths and rose plantings, is bounded by a timber picket fence and gates which are recent and replaced a brick fence and timber gate, evident in the Hawthorn Heritage Study image taken in 1992.⁵

Historical Context

The allotment occupied by the building known as *The Gables* formed part of the estate of iron founder Peter Johns, whose home *Tudor* was once sited further south of the subject property. Blocks fronting Riversdale Road to the north of the site were for sale in 1900, with houses under construction a short time later. This area of Hawthorn was highly regarded by the late nineteenth century, due to its proximity to cable trams on both Riversdale and Glenferrie Roads, and the Yarra River environs to the west.

Comparative Analysis

The Gables, 1 Berkeley Street, Hawthorn, is a mixture of Federation and Italianate elements which make it an unusual hybrid form in the context of Hawthorn's Federation housing. Houses in the Ryeburne Avenue area of Hawthorn East are more typical of Federation house design, as are those in the Grace Park estate. The nearest parallel is found in the Federation-Italianate houses in Victoria Road, Camberwell, although no 1 Berkeley Street has a steeper pitch to the roof than is usual in the Federation period, and vigorous arch mouldings, thick course lines and a high incidence of applied, rhythmic ornament. The solidity of the design, and the grounded pressure of its heavy roof, also gives the house a heavy Free Romanesque demeanour, in the manner of HH Richardson's free Romanesque designs of the 1870s and 1880s in the United States. This assembly of elements, and the sharp-edged angularity of the design, maintain a continuing High Victorian flavour, which in Federation architecture is best seen in Alexander North's contemporary Launceston churches (1901-3). Surrounding houses were built at this time by John Kaiser, but this one is quite distinct from Kaiser's well-known triple gabled canted bay form, quoin usage and fairly straightforward Italianate planning.

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.*

The Gables, 1 Berkeley Street, Hawthorn, is a fine exemplar of Federation ideas in house design. Its roof expresses elements of the internal planning, the arch and course detailing is robust and energetic, and the composition has a forceful diagonality characteristic of the period. The loss of the verandah detracts from the presentation of the building, but generally does not impact on an understanding or appreciation of the overall original form.

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 Gables, 1 Berkeley Street, Hawthorn, successfully combines Federation characteristics with a steeply pitched roof and a consistent richness in ornament that makes it unusual and inventive. The house differs from the more horizontally proportioned Federation–Italianate fusions seen elsewhere in Boroondara, and the more mainstream Federation designs generally. It is in fact one of the most interesting Federation hybrids in the Hawthorn area, distinguished by individual elements such as vigorous decoration, sharp edges, angularity and sturdy proportions.

Statement of Significance

The Gables, 1 Berkeley Street, Hawthorn, is of historical and architectural significance at a local level. It is a fine exemplar of Federation ideas in house design, with its roof expressing elements of the internal planning, robust and energetic arch and course detailing, and a composition which reflects the forceful diagonality characteristic of the period. The house is also distinguished from many of the more conventional and mainstream Federation designs of the municipality, including other Federation–Italianate fusions, through the use of individual and distinctive elements such as the vigorous decoration, sharp edges, angularity and sturdy proportions. While the removal of the verandah detracts from the presentation of the building, its loss does not impact on an understanding or appreciation of the overall original building form.

Grading Review

Unchanged.

Recommendations

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

In addition, it is recommended that Council undertake a detailed study of the housing stock within the area bounded by Glenferrie, Riversdale and Auburn Roads, and the Monash Freeway to the south. The area, described here as the Berkeley Street/Kooyongkoot Road precinct, also includes Kembla, Illawarra and Robinson Streets, and part of Riversdale Road. The area has a comparatively high number of graded buildings.

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, 1901-02, #3261, 3257-; 1902-03, #3265, cited in G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote places (draft)*, 2000.

² City of Hawthorn Rate Books, 1946-47, #4162, cited in G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote places (draft)*, 2000.

³ Pattern of occupation derived from listings in the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years between 1945 and 1974.

⁴ Details sourced from domain.com.au, Noel Jones Real Estate, Property ID 2005395588, dated 7 February 2006.

⁵ See photograph in Meredith Gould, *Hawthorn Conservation Study*, datasheet, 1992.