

PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM

ADDRESS

40 Chrystobel Crescent

TYPE

- Single Residence
- Shop
- Office
- Landscape feature
- View
- Multiple Unit Res.
- Outbuildings
- Industrial Building
- Public building
- Other

TITLE

"Wembden"

EXISTING DESIGNATION

HBR [] GBR [] AHC [] NT [] VAS []

STREETSCAPE LEVEL

1 [] 2 [] 3 []
SIGNIFICANT [] SIGNIFICANT [] STREET TREES KERB & GUTTERS

GRADING

A [] B [] C [] D [] E []
KEYNOTE BUILDING []

RECOMMENDED FOR

HBR/GBR [] AHC [] URBAN CONSERVATION AREA [] VAS [] PLANNING SCHEME PROTECTION [] CULTURAL LANDSCAPE [] OTHER []

SURVEY DATE *Oct. 91.*
NEG FILE *14.23, 24.*

Title
Vol.
Fol.

THEME

- Early Settlement
- Mansions
- Victorian Garden Suburb
- Municipal dev.
- 1870s growth
- Garden villas
- Working enclaves
- Commercial Centres
- Edwardian Prosperity
- Interwar Housing
- Flats and Offices

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

Date *1910-1911*
Architect *Christopher Cowper*
Builder
Elements - *House and garden.*



- Contributing garden
- Landmark tree
- Original or early hard landscape layout
- Original or early fence

NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICANCE

See attached

INTEGRITY Good [] Fair [] Poor []
CONDITION Good [] Fair [] Poor []

CROSS REFERENCED INFORMATION

Associated significant garden []

40 CHRYSTOBEL CRES.

"WEMBDEN"

History

Robert Walters, gentleman, was listed as the first owner/occupier in the 1910-11 Hawthorn rate book of a brick house of eight rooms in Chrystobel Cres., NAV 100 pounds.³⁰ The following year, the property was listed as "Wembdon" at 40 Chrystobel Cres.³¹ Earlier, in the 1909-10 rate book, Walters of Glenferrie Road was rated for vacant land, Lots 121 and 122 in Chrystobel Street, each with an NAV of fourteen pounds.³² Robert Walters was still the owner/occupier of "Wembden" in 1928.³³ According to McWilliam, both 40 and 44 Chrystobel Cres. were designed by Christopher Cowper, who designed so many of the second wave of homes in Grace Park.³⁴

The Grace Park estate was formed from several lots purchased by Michael or Julia Lynch between 1846 and 1847, forming grounds to "Grace Park House", constructed by the Lynch's before 1858.

After Lynch's death in October 1871, Julia Lynch became the owner/occupier of the house and 3 acres. In 1884 the Grace Park Estate was leased to the Grace Park Leasehold Syndicate headed by Henry Byron Moore and was subdivided soon after into the broad Serpentine Street form of the Grace Park area. Moore became insolvent in 1891 and there followed a series of convoluted lease arrangement until in 1904 the Settled Lands Act made sales possible. These commenced in 1904. Architect Christopher Cowper bought and developed 33 allotments between 1908 and 1912. An architectural competition for new buildings for this elegantly designed suburb, set a standard of high quality homes in up to date designs, on large allotments. The designs in the competition, some of which were built, and those which came later, emphasised the open garden nature of the Estate by constructing houses which addressed at least two sides. Extensive lanes to the rear kept horse/carriage and later car access away from the frontages, and allowed the high amenity of the footpath promenade under tree avenues to dominate. The centrepiece of the Estate was the creation of a Park - "Grace Park" on the lower lying land. Associated facilities for lawn tennis and cricket added status to an already desirable location, well served by train routes.

The curving railway easement to Kew was formed in 1887 but was in use for only a few years. This fortuitously reinforced the garden suburb planning by providing a park spine through the centre of the estate.

³⁰. Hawthorn rate book 1910-11 Power Ward No. 2647.

³¹. Ibid. 1911-12 No. 2644.

³². Ibid. 1909-10 Nos. 2658, 2659.

³³. Ibid. 1928-29 Yarra Ward No. 1921.

³⁴. Gwen McWilliam, *Grace Park, Hawthorn*, Hawthorn Historical Society, 1987-88.

40 Chrystobel Cres. continued

Despite the economic conditions of the 1890s several properties were developed in the twentieth century. The character set by the earlier development was reinforced with Queen Anne and Garden Bungalow designs often by architect/developer Christopher Cowper. By the end of the First World War most land was fully developed and the distinctive character of the Precinct was set.

Description

A sprawling late Queen Anne house executed in brick and rough cast under an intricate terracotta tiled roof. The house adopts the standard features of the style, which were so frequently adapted to the second wave of development in Grace Park. It incorporates a large steeply pitched, hipped roof with prominent gable projections at two co-ordinates, a separately pitched return verandah with corner entrance gable and a variety of attic projections add to the complexity of the roof. The central attic comprises of multi-faceted balcony with shingled walls. This feature and the balcony incorporate the typical grace Park doric columns, set on brickwork at the ground level.

The red brick walls are divided to produce a deep rough cast band below the eaves, roughcast extends to the half timbered gable ends. Purposefully different bay windows with multiple casements complete each co-ordinate projections.

The return verandah and central entrance emphasise the extensive side garden.

Assessment

Christopher Cowper designed 33 of the garden villas at Grace Park. This is the largest, sited on a large allotment, to give maximum visibility to the highly plastic design. The return verandah, co-ordinate point gables and garden emphasis seen here were modified and adapted over two decades at Grace Park to produce a range of house forms which illustrate the garden suburb ideal in metropolitan Melbourne up to the first World War. This design is the best of Cowper's in Grace Park in his Queen Anne style developed and adapted to the suburban houses in Melbourne from the late 19th century, principally by Ussher and Kemp.

Ussher and Kemp were at the forefront of the development of the domestic Queen Anne in Melbourne and Australia. Early buildings such as Champion College (former Dalwraith) of 1906, (Studley Park Road, Kew) and Woodlands of 1888 (Woodlands Street, Essendon) were instrumental in the development of the style to suit the typical suburban form which reached its peak in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Ussher's work falls into two categories, the gabled design - usually a two storey form and the hipped design where gables on two co-ordinate points project from an overall hip - usually a single storey form. In general, Ussher's largest houses e.g. Dalwraith in Kew of 1906, adopt the gabled designs. These houses fall into the mansion category. It is the single storey designs, which usually apply to large houses rather than mansions, which have developed into the distinctive Australian style, Queen Anne domestic and which were the most popular in the first decade of the twentieth century e.g. Hedges Residence, 1897 in Canterbury and Clarke's Residence in

40 Chrystobel Cres. continued

Toorak of 1897. Ussher joined with Kemp and developed the style with the characteristic features of tiled hipped roofs, timber verandah decorations, and a strongly three dimensional form with a corner emphasis.

Several key practitioners worked within the style. Ussher and Kemp, Walter Butler, Christopher Cowper amongst others. The early development occurs in the last decade of the nineteenth century culminating in the first decade of the twentieth century. The key practitioners were widely copied by builders up to the first world war.

The Queen Anne style, combined with some of the principals of Australian homestead planning and design, around the turn of the century, to produce a new suburban style continuing to the end of W.W.1. Sometimes loosely referred to as "Edwardian" or "Federation" it is more appropriately referred to as "Garden Bungalow", because it does not relate just to the period around Federation at 1901, and because it is intimately related to the garden suburb concept. What sets the "garden bungalow" and "Queen Anne domestic" apart from the other red brick styles of the period, is a purposeful and close relationship with the garden as the dominant feature. A variety of decorative forms are used within this framework. The "garden Bungalow" eventually developed into the ubiquitous Californian Bungalow of the 1920s and 1930s.

The "domestic Queen Anne" had an ongoing influence on vernacular designs which can be seen up to the 1960s. The domestic Queen Anne buildings which survive from the turn of the century had a vital role in the development of the urban form of metropolis.

"Art-architecture in the Melbourne Queen Anne manner was aimed at the wealthy but for the less wealthy, more restricted, less picturesque and utilitarian designs were created. An architect (developer) with just such a diverse practice was Christopher A. Cowper (1868-1954). He was born in Cape Town, South Africa, and arrived in Melbourne in 1883 at the age of 15. He was articled to Evander McIvor whose practice is chiefly remembered today for its fine gothic revival churches in brick with stone dressed lancet and geometric windows. (In 1888 Henry Kemp was married in McIvor's Presbyterian Church at the corner of Whitehorse Road and Highbury Grove, Kew). Cowper was in architectural practice until 1895 at which time he retired to the land and farming. He then worked with the Equitable Life Assurance Company. From this varied background he went on a world tour in 1906 perhaps as an architectural refresher, for after that tour he returned to architecture. The years after his return to architecture were to be occupied with the development of the Grace Park Estate in Hawthorn. Architecturally, this area of Hawthorn is of special interest as a sanctuary of houses in the Melbourne Queen Anne manner. It offers a cross-section of the variety and scale of designs from Cowper's office".³⁵

³⁵. Tibbits 6. "The so-called Melbourne Domestic Queen Anne", *Historic Environment*, Volume 2, No. 2., 1982.

40 Chrystobel Cres. continued.

Significance

State

1. Although Wemden is a late use of Queen Anne, and breaks little new ground architecturally, it represents the dominant character and aspirations of the second wave of Grace Park development during prosperous Edwardian time, better than any other property in the Estate. Significant as an architectural landmark in the State significant garden suburb of Grace Park.
2. The largest example of architect Christopher Cowpers work in Grace Park, and the landmark house of this style in the Estate, where Cowper contributed many designs.



³⁵. Tibbits 6. "The so-called Melbourne Domestic Queen Anne",
Historic Environment, Volume 2, No. 2., 1982.