

PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM

ADDRESS

41 Coppin Grove

TYPE

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

TITLE

EXISTING DESIGNATION

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

STREETSCAPE LEVEL

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

GRADING

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

RECOMMENDED FOR

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

SURVEY DATE Nov. 91.

NEG FILE 41.05

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 1870-1879

Architect
Builder
Elements



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

NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICANCE

See attached

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

CROSS REFERENCED INFORMATION

Associated significant garden []

41 Coppin Grove continued

Description

Bluestone and render building, now considerably altered. Inadequately visible from the street and requires on-site inspection. No architectural assessment possible.

Significance

1. Historically significant for the association with the pioneer organ builder in Victoria, George Fincham.

41 COPPIN GROVE

History

This house is notable as the home of George Fincham, pioneer master organ builder, from 1878²⁸ until his death in 1899.²⁹ It was built for Fincham and was one of the longest remaining in the ownership of one family in suburban Hawthorn.³⁰ George Fincham was listed in the 1878 Hawthorn rate book as the owner/occupier of a house in Coppin's Grove, NAV 45 pounds.³¹ Its site was described in the *Argus* of November 1875 as a "beautifully situated allotment, quadrant shaped", costing two pounds ten shillings per acre.³²

Fincham, who was born in England in 1817, came from a family which began organbuilding in England in 1770. He was trained in the craft before he arrived in Melbourne in 1852. In the middle-1850s, Fincham went to live in Richmond, building a house for himself and his sister, Anne, and a two-storey factory in Bridge Road, Richmond. In 1858 he married Margaret Tilley. They had a daughter and three sons, two of whom died at an early age. The first of Fincham's organs reported in the local press was for St. George's, Malvern in 1861. In 1866 an award was made by the government to George Fincham for establishing the industry of organbuilding in Victoria. His firm built organs for many notable colonial churches including Christ Church and the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Hawthorn. The firm also built organs for churches and private residences in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia and New Zealand. After moving to Coppin Grove in 1878, Fincham attended Christ Church in Hawthorn and became active in local community life. He was involved with the Yarra Ward Progressive Committee, the Hawthorn Bowling and Rowing Clubs and the Christ Church choir. He was also associated with the Victorian Chamber of Manufacturers, the Workingmen's College (later RMIT), the Victorian Society of Organist, the Melbourne Liedertafel, and the Old Colonists Association.³³

After Fincham's death in 1899, his sons, grandsons and great-grandsons carried on the organbuilding business in Richmond.³⁴ It survives today, still in Richmond, and recently renovated the Christ Church organ in Hawthorn.³⁵

There have been many alterations and additions to the Fincham house at 41 Coppin Grove, which remained in the hands of the Fincham family over an unusually long period.

28. E.N. Matthews, *Colonial Organs and Organbuilders*, MUP, 1969, p.5.

29. Ibid. p.104.

30. Gwen McWilliam, "Burwood Park", 1988, p.121.

31. Hawthorn RB 1878-79 No. 53.

32. Quoted in McWilliam, op. cit.

33. Ibid and Matthews, pp. 4, 5, 104-105.

34. Ibid.

35. McWilliam, op. cit.