

PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM

ADDRESS

4 Coppin Grove

TYPE

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

TITLE

"Placida"

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 Nov. 91.
 NEG FILE 42.13, 14
 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 1880-1881
 Architect
 Builder William Masson,
 Elements Contractor.



- 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 []

4 COPPIN GROVE

"PLACIDA"

History

This large two-storeyed house was built by and for William Masson, contractor, in 1880-81. The 1880-81 Hawthorn rate book listed Masson as owner/occupier of a house in Coppin's Grove with an NAV of 22 pounds.³⁶ By the next year, its NAV had risen to 80 pounds,³⁷ and in the 1882-83 rate book to ninety pounds.³⁸

William Masson had both personal and professional connections with the Victorian hotel trade. He was married to the daughter of the hotelier, John Ormond, and his firm built or extended some of the many hotels associated with Ormond. One of the most notable was the Glenferrie Hotel completed in 1888.³⁹

"Placida", as Masson's Coppin Grove residence was known, was occupied by John Clayton, Melbourne's Town Clerk, in the early 1890s, when it was listed in Isabella Grove. The Pralle family were the next long-term owners for over ninety years from 1896.

The garage near the front fence has been reconstructed and extensive alterations have occurred at the rear.⁴⁰

Description

An Italianate mansion of render with slate roof, it has an "L" shaped form with the principal facade incorporating a bay facing the river. In an effort to create a landmark house from the opposite bank and from the receding slope within St. James Park, the design incorporates a tower, quirkily placed in the centre of the "L", and jammed between the wings. The tower is then enclosed by a two storey verandah. At ground level the entry takes up the whole of the body of the house between the wings.

At the top, the tower incorporates unusual circular windows.

Assessment

This house ably illustrates the perceived need for even medium sized villas to be understood as mansions. In this case, the tower device is the key, marking element, which draws attention to the development and makes a statement about wealth.

³⁶. Hawthorn RB 1880-81 No. 4.

³⁷. Ibid. 1881-82 No. 4.

³⁸. Ibid. 1882-83 No. 4.

³⁹. Gwen McWilliam, "Burwood Park", 1988, p.87.

⁴⁰. Ibid.

4 Coppin Grove continued

Following subdivision of the St. James Park Estate in 1871, many of the houses constructed incorporated towers as symbols of a mansion. Not surprisingly this house is not designed by an architect, but is the work of its owner builder, who has packed in the "L" shaped form, a tower and a two storey verandah into what is a quite small house on a very tight site.

Significance

Metropolitan

1. Significant architecturally ^{and} historically for its obvious expression of wealth and status via an architectural devise in the boom of the 1880s.
2. A prominent building in the St. James Park Urban Conservation Area, the first garden suburb for the wealthy in Hawthorn and which set a trend for the wide development of Hawthorn as the garden suburb which exists today.

