

## PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM

## ADDRESS

12 Grandview Grove

## TYPE

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

## TITLE

"Uxbridge House"

## 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 63.12-14.

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 1889-90, 1905, 1907

Architect } see below.

Builder  
Elements -  
House, garden.



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

## NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICANCE

See attached

INTEGRITY      Good ☒ 1905, 06  
                  Fair ☐  
                  Poor ☐

CONDITION      Good ☒  
                  Fair ☐  
                  Poor ☐

## CROSS REFERENCED INFORMATION

Associated significant garden ☐

The site information given above has been determined from external street level inspection.

Architect: Hyndman and Bates (1905-06 additions/alterations)  
 Builder: Huddleston and Brown (1889-1890)

12 GRANDVIEW AVENUE

"UXBRIDGE HOUSE"

History

This unusual villa residence in its fine garden setting was built in 1889-90 by and for Huddleston and Brown, builders, who may also have been the designers.<sup>1</sup> The registered owners of the property were the Fourth Victorian Permanent Property Building and Investment Company and the Fifth Original South Melbourne Terminating Building Society.<sup>2</sup> Building societies played a major role in the building boom of the 1880s in Victoria, buying, selling, and mortgaging freehold and leasehold property.<sup>3</sup> Another organisation, the Australian Widows Fund, was also associated with the early history of "Uxbridge House", being listed as registered owner during the pre-1900 period.<sup>4</sup> Founded in 1871, its chairman was the son of a prominent Melbourne contractor, James Lawrence, who built the E. S. and A. Bank in Elizabeth Street, Goldsbrough Mort's wool stores, and several other notable buildings. The Australian Widows Fund, which acted as a building society, loaned large sums of money to such notorious speculators as Theophilus Kitchen, of the well-known soap and candle family, and B.J. Fink. After suffering losses during the 1890s depression, in 1910, the company merged with the Mutual Life Association of Australasia to form an amalgamation which became the giant M.L.C. organisation of today.<sup>5</sup>

In 1890, "Uxbridge House" was listed in the Hawthorn rate book as an eight-roomed brick house, NAV of 110 pounds, owned by Huddleston and Brown, builders. Later rate books described the house as nine-roomed.<sup>6</sup> From 1889 to the early 1900s, the rate books listed a variety of businessmen, professional men and widows as occupiers. They included Edwin Charles Elliott, shareholder and financial agent, in 1892-94 and Edmond Cook, manufacturer, in 1894-95.<sup>7</sup>

The Bates family members were the most notable occupiers during this period and were associated with the building from 1896 to 1907. Annie Cramer, Williams Bates was the widow of parliamentarian, William Bates (1826-1891), Member for Collingwood in 1868-74 and Minister in the McCulloch government. "Uxbridge" was named for William Bates' birthplace in Middlesex, England. The couple married in 1857 and had two sons and five daughters. Annie engaged her son, the architect, E.A. Bates, to make additions to the house in 1905.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>. National Trust of Australia (Vic). FN 5892.

<sup>2</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>. Michael Cannon, *The Land Boomers*, pp. 18-20.

<sup>4</sup>. National Trust. FN 5892.

<sup>5</sup>. Cannon, loc. cit. pp. 168-171.

<sup>6</sup>. National Trust FN 5892.

<sup>7</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>. Ibid.



## 12 Grandview Avenue continued

E.A. Bates was born in Fitzroy in 1865 and educated at Scotch College. He was articled for four years to the firm Reed, Henderson and Smart. In 1887, Bates commenced practice with R. Gordon Hyndman, a partnership which lasted until Hyndman's death in 1901. Their main work included residences for such notables as H.G. Turner in St. Kilda, Sir Samuel Gillott in Fitzroy, and S.T. Staughton in South Yarra, as well as the AMP office in Melbourne. Bates practised on his own until 1907. During 1908, the businesses of Hyndman and Bates, and Smart, Tappin and Peebles amalgamated to form Bates, Peebles and Smart. Bates was associated with the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects for many years and was its president in 1908-10, the youngest architect to hold that office.<sup>9</sup>

Frederick Robert Abrecht, importer and jeweller of 114 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, became the new owner of "Uxbridge House" in 1907. The firm that bears his name is still operating in Collins Street. Abrecht stamped his personality on the Grandview Avenue residence by installing mirrors and enclosing verandahs to form a conservatory off the dining room and a gallery off the main bedroom. Descendants of the Abrecht family lived in the house until 1985.<sup>10</sup>

A detailed description of the grand and unusual residence appeared in an Age real estate article of 13 April 1985. The writer spoke of the Wunderlich metal ceilings in various pastel shades (possibly original), the stained glass windows (of almost "Cathedral proportions) and a "Curious tower with its slender finial".

### Description

This garden villa has been extensively altered, first by Bates in 1905, then for Abrecht. The extent of each phase of alterations is not clear. They would appear to include the conservatory, leaded glass and gallery additions, and the alterations to the verandah and probable addition of the gabled bay. The quirky tower may relate to either the original house or the major alterations.

The present condition appears to be substantially intact to the 1905/6 form. It comprises a single storey house built relatively close to the road and executed in render with a slate roof. An octagonal tower provides a corner element which addresses the garden on two sides. Adjoining is a tall gabled bay incorporating intricate fretwork and an almost Art Nouveau sinuously framed window. This is joined by a small entry porch with timber valence, then a wide hipped bay returning to a verandah recess. Elaborate leaded glazing is used in most openings.

### Assessment

The mixed collection of elements produces an unexpected arrangement. The basic bayed Victorian period house incorporated a shallow pitch to the slate roof and a house of average size for the type. Bates appears to have sought

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<sup>9</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>. Ibid.

## 12 Grandview Avenue continued

to effect two changes. First to update the design utilizing primarily Queen Anne elements and second to give the villa a mansion house character by the addition of a tower.

The Queen Anne elements are the applied gable end, the eaves brackets, the fish scale parapet and bay window, entry verandah and the bellsnuffer roof tower. But although these elements are elegantly detailed, their application to a rendered building, to the shallow slate roof and in such condensed form sets them at odds with Queen Anne design. In addition some elements are quirky in themselves, notably the oculi and double hung window arrangement and the Art Nouveau influenced head to the bay window. The later is reinforced by the sinuous fretwork panel in the gable end. This bold combination is consistent with the work of Bates and Hyndman, and the amalgamated Bates, Peebles, Smart office to follow in 1908. Bate's Tomasetti house in Flinders Lane of 1905 shows equal vigour and inventiveness of design in Romanesque Revival mode, again to an existing building, but utilizing the existing structure to produce an almost mannerist, unexpected relationship of scale.

Comparison with contemporary residential examples from Bates is recommended. It has no clear stylistic precursors in residential buildings in Hawthorn.

### Significance

### State

1. Built 1889-90 for and possibly by the builders Huddlestone and Brown, with additions in 1905 to the designs of the architect, E.A. Bates, of Hyndman and Bates, "Uxbridge House" has historical significance as an example of the important role of building firms, building societies and architects in the boom years in suburban Hawthorn. The house has associations with at least three building societies - the Fourth Victorian Permanent Property Building and Investment Company, the Fifth Original South Melbourne Terminating Building Society and the Australian Widows Fund. It has historical significance, also, for its associations from 1896 to 1907 with the notable Bates family. Annie Cramer Williams Bates was the widow of parliamentarian, William Bates (1826-1891), Member for Collingwood 1868-74 and Minister in the McCulloch government. "Uxbridge" was named after William Bates' birthplace in Middlesex, England. Annie engaged her son, the architect, E.A. Bates, to make additions to the house in 1905. Bates later joined the firm Bates, Peebles and Smart, the forerunner of the present Bates, Smart and McCutcheon.
2. "Uxbridge House" has historical significance, also, for its associations from 1907 until 1985 with the Melbourne jeweller, F.R. Abrecht, and his descendants. The firm that bears his name is still operating in Collins Street.
3. Architecturally significant as the design for his own family home by the important Melbourne architect E.A. Bates.
4. Architecturally significant for the illustration of the change in taste in dwelling style from the Victorian villa into the Edwardian period. An unusual example of the application of primarily Queen Anne details to a Victorian villa.





12 Grandview Grove