

**PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM**

ADDRESS

1 Hilda Crescent

TYPE

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

TITLE

"Zelnor"

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 16-27

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 1907  
 Architect Christopher Cowper.  
 Builder  
 Elements -  
 House, 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 [ ]

## 1 HILDA CRESCENT

### "ZELNOR"

#### History

Constructed in 1907, this brick villa on the corner of Hilda Crescent and Eric Street which is a dominant feature of the vista looking up Charles Street, was described in the 1908 Hawthorn rate book as a brick house of seven rooms owned by Frederick Taylor. Miss D.E. Taylor, music teacher, occupied the building in the 1960s when it was known as "Zelnor".<sup>1</sup> Many of the Edwardian houses in Grace Park, and particularly the row facing Hilda Crescent built between 1903 and 1907 (except no. 15) were designed by the architect, Christopher Cowper.<sup>2</sup>

#### Description

A Queen Anne house of standard "L" shaped form, but truncated in size to the extent that the corner turret and verandah becomes one overwhelming element, rather than a small part of a larger return verandah. The walls are red brick with render dressings. The roof, is clad with terracotta tiles, and the windows and the usual timber. The verandah is decorated with architect, Christopher Cowper's standard vertical valence, applied in an unusual way over the top of the fascia, and to curved elements below.

The garden setbacks on the corner allotment are small, but the siting of the house is very carefully organised to give the turret and its attached gables a long forecourt down Charles Street framed by its street trees. This careful siting makes 1 Hilda Cres. a gateway to the Queen Anne character of Grace Park.

#### Assessment

Ussher and Kemp were at the forefront of the development of the domestic Queen Anne in Melbourne and Australia. Early buildings such as Campion 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 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.

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1. Information supplied by Gwen McWilliam. (Recommend that entry no. should be searched to confirm original owner).
  2. Gwen McWilliam, Grace Park, Hawthorn, Hawthorn Historical Society, Area Walk IV, 1987-88.



## 1 Hilda Crescent continued

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 wealthier 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 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".<sup>3</sup>

This building is the gateway to Cowper's string of designs in Hilda Crescent. Whilst not the most adventurous of his works architecturally, 62 Riversdale Road takes that title. It has clearly been designed as a landmark, drawing attention to the precinct. The clever manner in which Cowper has adapted the turret to a small house, illustrates the creative way in which he used simple Queen Anne detailing to upgrade otherwise basic elevations. The verandah detailing is interesting. It again shows a creative use of simple details, similar to the use by pioneer architect Desbrowe Annear at 34 and 38 The

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<sup>3</sup>. George Tibbetts, "The So Called Domestic Queen Anne", *Historic Environment*, Vol. 2., No. 2., 1982, p.36.

## 1 Hilda Crescent continued

Eyrie, Eaglemont of 1903. There, Annear challenges the distinction between balustrade and valence decoration, this work is more fluid than at Hilda Crescent. These widely publicised avant garde houses may have been an influence on Cowpers design.

### Significance

### State

1. Architecturally significant as the gateway structure to the outstanding Queen Anne precinct of Grace Park which is of State significance.
2. Architecturally significant as an illustration of the adaptability of Queen Anne to small buildings. The best example of Cowper's small buildings in this style.
3. Architecturally significant as one of a group of Cowper's designs in Hilda Crescent and Grace Park.