

PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM

ADDRESS

21 Isabella Grove

TYPE

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

TITLE

"Oxford"

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 42.21, 22, 23
 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 1887
 Architect J.B. Koch.
 Builder
 Elements -
 House and garden.



- Contributing garden
- Landmark tree
- Original or early hard landscape layout
- Original or early fence (shaved with no. 23)

NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICANCE

See attached

INTEGRITY Good 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.

21 ISABELLA GROVE

"OXFORD"

History

German Consul, William Alexander Brahe's "Frisia" (known now as "Oxford"), designed by the distinguished German architect, J.A.B. Koch, in 1887,² was listed for the first time in the 1887-88 Hawthorn rate book. It was described at that time as an eleven-roomed brick house with an NAV of 160 pounds.³ Koch had already designed its neighbour, "St. James", at 23 Isabella Grove in 1885.⁴ Both Nos. 21 and 23 were in Koch's name in 1899 and then both were owned by Brahe, with William Adena, the next German Consul, in No. 21.⁵

Born in Westphalia, Prussia, on 3 August 1825, Brahe arrived in Victoria in May 1849. For many years he practised as a solicitor in Melbourne and was also German Consul in Victoria. The consulate was in St. James Chambers, William Street. Brahe was a widower with one daughter, Sabina, who married Dr. Fritz Piepers of Collins Street East, president of the German Association. No. 23 was designed for Brahe's daughter and son-in-law.⁶

The designing architect of both residences, J.A.B. Koch, was Mayor of Richmond in 1882 and designed many notable Melbourne buildings including the Richmond Town Hall, the former German Club in Alfred Place ("Mietta's"), and a number of important Hawthorn buildings.⁷ The Koch family lived at No. 23 while No. 21 was occupied by Alfred Pfaff (later Consul for Peru) at the turn of the century.⁸

Some changes were made to "Frisia" as a result of WWI anti-German feeling. Its name was changed to "Oxford" and German eagles were removed from either end of the parapet.⁹

In c1913, "Oxford" was briefly occupied by Otto Romcke, a timber merchant, and owned by Phillip Pearce, a wool buyer.¹⁰

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2. *Argus* 19 March 1887 (p. 7) Tender notice for residence in Isabella Grove, St, James Park, Hawthorn for W.A. Brahe, Esq.
 3. Hawthorn RB 1887-88 No. 66.
 4. *Argus* 6 Feb. 1885 (p.3) Tender notice for 2 storey residence, St. James Park, Hawthorn.
 5. Gwen McWilliam, "Burwood Park", 1988, pp. 139-140.
 6. *Victoria and its Metropolis*, ed. Alexander Sutherland, 1888, Vol. 2, p. 463.
 7. McWilliam, op. at.
 8. *Ibid.*
 9. *Ibid.*
 10. *Ibid.*

21 Isabella Grove continued

Nos. 21 and 23 share a common cast iron fence with lions head and globe posts.¹¹

Description

A single storey mansion, strikingly different to the usual villa of the 1880s, primarily because the basis for the design is unrelated to the Anglo-Saxon origins of most colonial architects. This unusual building reflects the European origin of its designer, German architect, J.A.B. Koch.

The design presents to the street as a full width loggia, returning on each side, but with a second principle elevation on the garden side. The loggia wall is formed by a continuous balustrade and colonnade with engaged arches above. The keystones to each arch are exaggerated in a shield form and between each at the intersecting label moulds is a decorative moulding in render. On axis above are piers of the balustrade parapet, surmounted by an elaborate centrepiece.

Between the arches and the piers is red brickwork, carried down to the balustrade at the corners. The overall effect is similar to an Italian Renaissance palace.

The interior has not been viewed but it is understood to adopt an octagonal entry hall with lantern over, radiating to the principal rooms.

Assessment

J.A.B. Koch designed many houses in Melbourne including several in Hawthorn. His premier mansion was Labassa (Ontario) constructed two years later. The tight colonnade form to the loggias and the flat wall plane above used at Oxford can be seen also at Ontario as a small segment of that rich French Renaissance Palace. These designs are a marked departure from the sombre, standard Victorian mansion in evidence adjoining at 23 Isabella Grove (also by Koch). Although this design is clearly influenced by direct European sources, its flat wall surface and red brick were being pursued by other architects of the period as part of the "Modern Italian" style. Raheen by William Salway of 1884 is a classic example. A much grander structure and more massive than the delicate Oxford, its east facade has marked similarities with Oxford. The Argus reported on the construction of Yarra House in Anderson Street (corner Clowes St.) for William Cain at this time,

"There is too much, perhaps, stucco about Melbourne... A reaction however appears to be setting in into favour of brickwork. There is one house at South Yarra belonging to a member of the City Council which is built in the modern Italian style, and has the bricks uncovered. It has a very striking and pleasing appearance. Houses of the Queen Anne style of architecture, internally and externally, appear likewise to be becoming fashionable".¹²

¹¹. Ibid.

¹². In Dr. M. Lewis "Following the Red Brick Road", Dept, of Arch. & Building, Univ. of Melb., 1986.

21 Isabella Grove continued

The general change in mood towards more adventurous design appears to be in evidence here in Koch's work, allowing his European background to find acceptance whereas previously the stucco preference in Melbourne prevented its appearance.

With Labassa (Ontario), Oxford (Frisia) stands as Koch's outstanding design in his residential work.

Significance

State

1. Architecturally significant as one of the outstanding architect J.A.B. Koch's best works showing some details used on Labassa, and a very early example in the development of red brick designs in the 1880s and 1890s in Melbourne.
2. The former "Frisia", built in 1887 from the designs of the distinguished German architect, J.A.B. Koch, has historical significance as the home at first of William Alexander Brahe, solicitor and German Consul; William Adena, the next German Consul, in 1899; and Alfred Pfaff (later Consul for Peru) at the turn of the century.
3. A vital part of the St. James Park estate subdivision and a landmark in Isabella Grove.





21 Isabella Grove

PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM - PRIVATE GARDENS

ADDRESS 21 Isabella Grove
Hawthorn

TITLE "Oxford"

EXISTING DESIGNATION HBR [X] AHC [X] NT [] SIGN. T. [] VGS []

STREETSCAPE LEVEL 1 [X] 2 [] 3 []

GRADING A [] B [X] C [] D [] E []

RECOMMENDED FOR HBR [] AHC [] SIGNIFICANT TREE REG. [] PSP [X]
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE [] URBAN CONSERVATION AREA [X]

SURVEY DATE 12.12.91
NEG FILE EA 3/19,20
Title
Vol.
Fol.

THEME

- Early Settlement
- Mansions
- Victorian Garden Suburb
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DETAILS

Date 1887
Designer

Layout/Structures

1902 MMBW Plan No. 1804 shows an intricate formal layout with shared service driveway between No. 21 and No. 23. The garden has been sympathetically "recreated" with appropriate plantings incorporating the original layout. Mature trees include Magnolia grandiflora, cordylines, lillypillies. Terracotta tile edging is new. Gate posts, gate and fence original.

NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICANCE

Further investigation required.

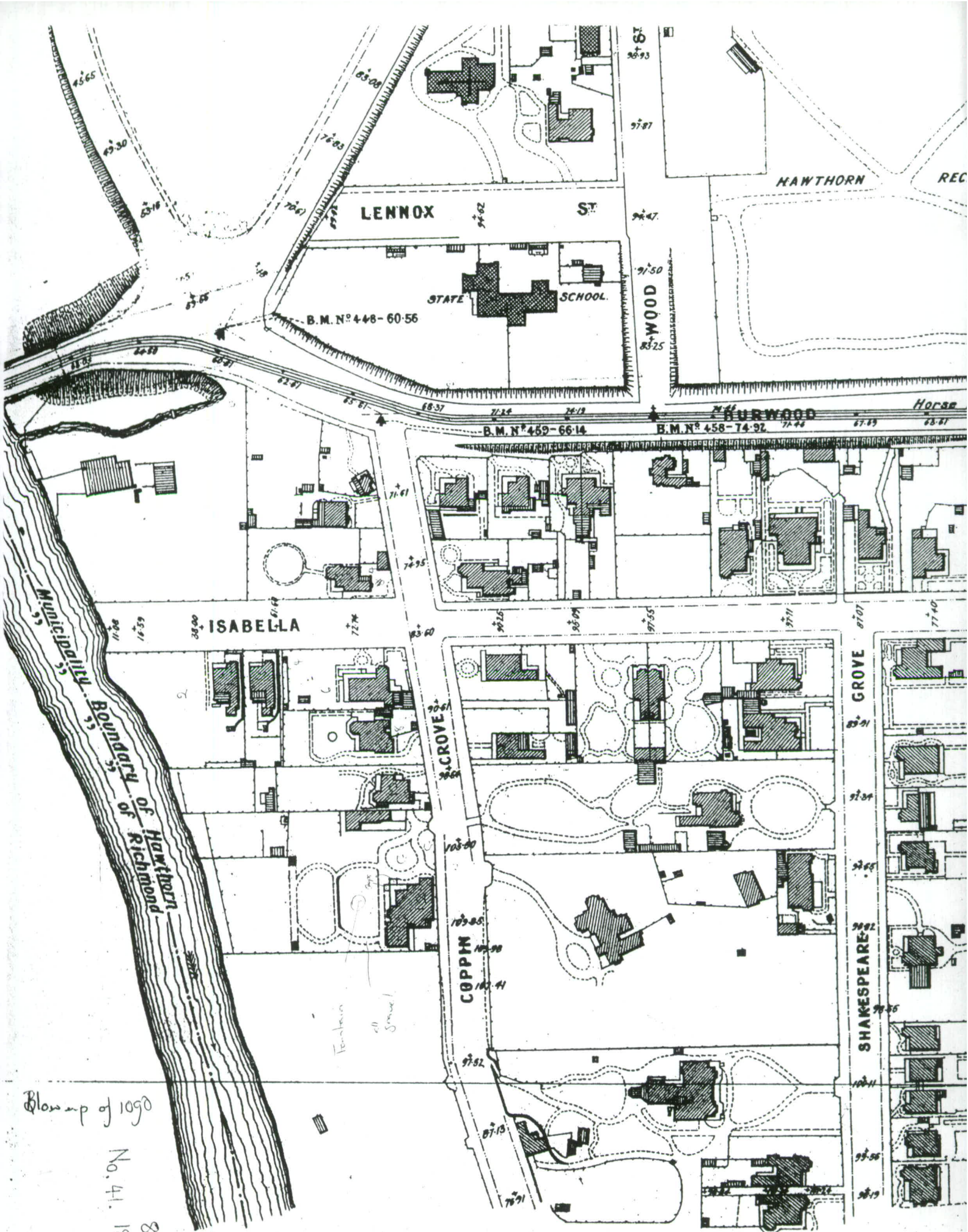
INTEGRITY	Good [X]	CONDITION	Good []
	Fair []		Fair []
	Poor []		Poor []
			Unclear

ALTERATIONS

CROSS REFERENCED INFORMATION

Associated Structures [X]

As the gardens were only surveyed from the front footpath, all assessments are incomplete and hence provisional. The scope of the study did not permit garden access which would be a pre-requisite for a more complete assessment.



Blow up of 1090

No. 41.

821.09A

0 an Inch





21 Isabella Grove.