

PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM

ADDRESS

23 Isabella Grove

TYPE

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

TITLE

"St. James"

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 42.23,24

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 1885.

Architect J.A.B. Koch.

Builder

Elements



- ☒ Contributing garden ☐ Original or early hard landscape layout
☒ Landmark trees ☒ Original or early fence (shared with no. 21)

NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICANCE

See attached

INTEGRITY Good ☒
 Fair ☐
 Poor ☐

CONDITION Good ☒
 Fair ☐
 Poor ☐

CROSS REFERENCED INFORMATION

Associated significant garden ☒

23 ISABELLA GROVE

"ST. JAMES"

History

"St. James" was designed in 1885 by the distinguished German architect, J.A.B. Koch,¹³ and was listed in the Hawthorn rate book of that year as vacant and consisting of twelve rooms.¹⁴ It was built for the daughter and son-in-law of the German Consul, William Alexander Brahe who, in 1887, had the adjoining property constructed at No. 21 (known at first as "Frisia").¹⁵ Brahe's daughter, Sabina, had married Dr. Fritz Piepers of Collins Street East, President of the German Association.¹⁶ Both Nos. 21 and 23 were in Koch's name in 1899 and then both were owned by Brahe.¹⁷ The Koch's lived at No. 23 while No. 21 was occupied by Alfred Pfaff (later Consul for Peru) at the turn of the century. The Koch family were still at No. 23 during WW1 but by March 1923, the 1880s residence had been converted into four superior self-contained flats known as "St. James House".¹⁸ Nos. 21 and 23 share a common cast iron fence with lion's head and globe posts.

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.¹⁹ 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.²⁰

Description

This building is in large part concealed by existing vegetation. Requires on-site inspection.

A two storey villa, flat front with a full width verandah executed in cast iron, returned for three bays to one side. Window openings reach to the floor to give access to the verandah at first floor level. The wall surface is plain except for the small moulding to the corner of each window reveal.

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13. *Argus* 6 Feb. 1885 (p. 3) Tender Notice for 2 storey residence, St. James Park, Hawthorn.
 14. Gwen McWilliam, "Burwood Park", 1988, pp. 139-40.
 15. Hawthorn RB 1887-88 No. 66.
 16. *Victoria and its Metropolis*, ed. Alexander Sutherland, 1888, Vol. 2, p. 463.
 17. McWilliam, op cit.
 18. Ibid.
 19. McWilliam, op. at.
 20. Ibid.

23 Isabella Grove continued

The cast iron to the verandah is particularly fine. Executed within a timber valence frame, the ground floor incorporates Koch's Greek maze pattern lace trademark. Fine brackets are used below. On the first floor the balustrade panels are standard, but the upper level utilizes particularly large frieze pieces extending to the brackets.

Assessment

A typical large villa design by Koch, similar to the detailing used at 45 Chrystobel Cres. of 1888. The use of the maze pattern here, the fine shallow brackets and the purposefully varied cast iron patterns are typical. This design at 23 Isabella Grove does not adopt the common 1880s bayed form as seen at Koch's Coppin Grove house, or the flat front, bay window form so popular with architect John Beswicke. It relies instead on the simplicity of its proportions and the fine cast iron for its gracious impact.

The cast iron fence set on a staged bluestone plinth with accompanying gates is particularly fine and arguably the best in Hawthorn.

Significance

Metropolitan

1. The former "St. James", built for Dr. Fritz Piepers, president of the German Association, in 1885, from the designs of the German architect, J.A.B. Koch, has historical significance as the home of the Koch family from the turn of the century until the WW1 period. It has historical importance for its associations with W.A. Brahe, German Consul, and with his daughter, Sabina, Piepers' wife. Both No. 21 (formerly "Frisia") and 23 Isabella Grove were designed by Koch and owned by him in 1899 and then by Brahe.
2. Architecturally significant as a simple but gracious villa from the hand of J.A.B. Koch, illustrating Koch's fine use of cast iron and the elegant proportions of his composition.
3. An important component of the St. James Park estate.



PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM - PRIVATE GARDENS

ADDRESS 23 Isabella Grove
Hawthorn.

TYPE

☐ Cottage Garden ☐ Suburban Garden
☐ Terrace House Garden ☐ View
☐ Villa Garden ☐ Landmark
☐ City Mansion Garden ☐ Other

TITLE "St. James"

EXISTING DESIGNATION

HBR ☐ AHC ☐ NT ☐ SIGN. T. ☐ VGS ☐

STREETSCAPE LEVEL

1 ☒ 2 ☐ 3 ☐

GRADING

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☒ E ☐

RECOMMENDED FOR

HBR ☐ AHC ☐ SIGNIFICANT TREE REG. ☐ PSP ☒
 CULTURAL LANDSCAPE ☐ URBAN CONSERVATION AREA ☒

SURVEY DATE 12.12.91

NEG FILE EA 3/21

Title

Vol.

Fol.

THEME

☐ Early Settlement
☒ Mansions
☒ Victorian Garden Suburb
☐ Municipal dev.
☐ 1870s growth
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☐ Working enclaves
☐ Commercial Centres
☐ Edwardian Prosperity
☐ Interwar Housing
☐ Flats and Offices

DETAILS

Date 1885

Designer

Layout/Structures

Apart from shared service driveway with no. 21, nothing remains of the original formal layout of the garden as shown on the 1902 MMBW Plan No. 1084. Fence original.

Mature trees include three Magnolia grandiflora, lovely old oak and large lillypilly.

NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICANCE

Further investigation required.

INTEGRITY Good ☐
 Fair ☐
 Poor ☒

CONDITION Good ☐
 Fair ☒
 Poor ☐

ALTERATIONS

CROSS REFERENCED INFORMATION

Associated Structures ☒

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.



