

Name	<i>Tasma</i>	Reference No	
Address	7 Muir Street, Hawthorn	Survey Date	28 April 2006
Building Type	Residence	Grading	C*
Date	1878-79	Previous Grading	C*3



Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

Intactness ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor
(to Federation era)

Heritage Status ☐ HV ☐ AHC ☐ NT ☒ Rec BPS Heritage Overlay

History

The subject property was first listed in the Borough of Hawthorn Rate Books for 1878-79, when it was described as an unfinished brick house, with a net annual value (nav) of £30, and owned by a building contractor John Charles Smith.¹ The house was presumably completed within the next two years. Smith named his house *Tasma*, and the property was retained by his family for many years, until the end of the 1920s. Smith also apparently owned the property next door, at 11 Muir Street.

The property was positioned to take advantage of views across to towards the city, a feature that was subsequently formalized when Myrtle Street was extended from the north to join Muir Street, as a result of the subdivision of the *Fairmount Park* estate in 1880.

Rate books for the 1929-30 rate cycle recorded Frank Knight as the tenant of a new owner, John Lyons, a police officer; by the 1932-33 rate cycle Lyons was listed as both owner and occupier of the property. Mrs. Elizabeth Lyons was still resident at *Tasma* in 1946/47, when the property, described as a brick house of eight rooms, was rated with a nav of £80.² By 1950 the property had changed hands again, and was occupied by the O'Connell family until at least the early 1990s.³

(G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote Places (draft)*, 2000; additional research by Lovell Chen, 2006)

Description & Integrity

Tasma, at 7 Muir Street, Kew, is a double-fronted Italianate house with a return verandah, in exposed Hawthorn brick in a lively bichrome pattern, and with rough-faced bluestone ashlar to the wall bases. The house has a hipped roof with slate tile cladding and modern ridge capping (Colorbond or similar). The chimneys are in exposed brick with a distinctive pattern of white overpainted brick bars on each, and sturdily sculpted rendered cornices. The eaves are boxed with intermittent paired brackets, each pair interspersed with another, elongated set of white overpainted brick bars, one of which runs

through two intersecting brackets over the front door. The bichrome brick quoining around the windows and striped courses across the façade have been overpainted in white.

The original windows to the front bay are double-hung sashes, with a canopy over. A single-pane arched window near the front door is believed to be a later, albeit comparatively early, addition due to its awkward relationship to the verandah; similarly the leadlit bay window in the west façade appears possibly to have been added in the Federation period. The front door case also appears to have been renewed in the Federation period, and the glazing to the door has Art Nouveau leadlighting.

The verandah is separate from the main roof, with its roof positioned several brick courses below the eave line. The verandah frame and lacework may have been altered at a later stage, possibly in the Federation period when the bay window and front door were added. The junction of the verandah with the projecting front bay is awkward, perhaps suggesting that one or the other has been modified.⁴

A secondary wing is visible to the rear (north) of the principal brick wing, and is of timber with a hipped slate roof and brick chimneys matching those to the main wing. Probably used as a kitchen or general service wing, this element is thought to have been either original or an early addition and appears on the MMBW plan of c. 1901.

The low picket fence nearer the Myrtle Street corner is of recent origin,⁵ and the age of the hedge garden is uncertain - possibly early twentieth century. The rear timber wing is partly concealed by a high timber fence, thought to have been constructed in 1980.⁶

There are a number of unusual components in this design, reflecting its combination of Victorian fabric with later Federation detailing. These elements include the use of bichrome panels against eave brackets, the wide verandah framing intervals, and the intersection of verandah frieze and arched window.

Other than for the overpainting of the brickwork, as viewed from the street, the house appears to be basically intact to the Federation period, when it appears to have undergone a series of modifications. Unspecified alterations were made in 1945, the house was reblocked in 1978, and a garage was added in 1991.⁷

Historical Context

Muir Street was cut through land previously owned by the Henty family in the mid 1870s. Myrtle Street was extended from the north to join Muir Street, as a result of the subdivision of the *Fairmount Park* estate in 1880.

Comparative Analysis

Tasma, 7 Muir Street, Hawthorn, is a Victorian villa of the late 1870s which was modified in the Federation period. These may explain odd intervals in the bracketing, bichrome and verandah details, as those were often areas where Federation alterations made a deliberate intervention. *Tasma* compares with other houses similarly altered in the Federation period. 16 Kooyongkoot Road (C* graded), Hawthorn is similarly altered, as is 184 Power Street (C* graded), an 1869 house with a set of Arts and Crafts verandah framing and bays added somewhere between 1910 and 1925, and *Darley*, at 2 Merrion Grove, Kew (B graded), where a similar combination of verandah and front door bay were added to an 1869 house. As a rule, Federation additions and modifications to earlier buildings tended to be small scale and incremental, concentrating either on specific details such as bays or transparent layers such as verandah framing. In this case, the Federation era alterations add to rather than detract from the interest of the house.

Assessment Against Criteria

Amended Heritage Victoria Criteria

CRITERION D: *The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as a part of a class or type of places or objects.*

Tasma, 7 Muir Street, Hawthorn, is a handsome and externally relatively intact example of a Victorian villa of the later 1870s, albeit modified in the Federation period. It is of interest for its incorporation of what appears to be an original or early kitchen or general service wing.

CRITERION E: *The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.*

Tasma is an energetic and strongly formed design in bichrome brick which derives additional interest from its overlay of Federation period elements and detailing. The house is prominently sited and has a commanding presence in the streetscape.

Statement of Significance

Tasma, 7 Muir Street, Hawthorn, is of local historical and architectural significance as a handsome and relatively intact example of a Victorian villa of the later 1870s, modified in the Federation period. It is of interest for its incorporation of what appears to be an original or early kitchen or general service wing. The house is an energetic and strongly formed design in bichrome brick which derives additional interest from its overlay of Federation period elements and detailing. It is prominently sited and has a commanding presence in the streetscape. Though it incorporates a number of unusual elements, other than for the overpainting of the bichrome brickwork, the house appears to be generally intact as viewed from the street.

Grading Review

Unchanged.

Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Boroondara Planning Scheme.

In addition, it is recommended that Council undertake a detailed study of the housing stock within the area bounded by Barkers Road, Church Street and the Yarra River, which includes Oak, Muir, Mason, Calvin and Brook Streets, and is described here as the Oak Street precinct. The area has a comparatively high number of graded buildings.

Identified By

Meredith Gould Conservation Architects, *Hawthorn Heritage Study*, 1992.

References

General: (G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote Places (draft)*, 2000; Meredith Gould Conservation Architects, *Hawthorn Heritage Study*, 1992.)

Specific:

¹ Borough of Hawthorn Rate Books, 1878-79, #423, cited in G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote places (draft)*, 2000.

² City of Hawthorn Rate Books, 1922-23, #1263; 1929-30, #1292; 1932-33, #1283; 1946-47, #1503, cited in G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote places (draft)*, 2000.

³ Pattern of occupation derived from listings in the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years between 1945 and 1974; City of Hawthorn Building Card Index.

⁴ While not documented, it is possible that the verandah may have been rebuilt or modified.

⁵ City of Hawthorn Building Card Index, item 12662, dated 7 April 1976.

⁶ City of Hawthorn Building Card Index, item 15786, dated 22 April 1980 ('T/fence' – '900 mm'). Another fence was approved on 20 April 1977.

⁷ City of Hawthorn Building card Index, items 637, dated 2 July 1945 (cryptically annotated 'dwelling'); 14533, dated 21 September 1978 (reblocking, completed 2 October 1978); 0311/91, dated 26 November 1991 (garage).