

Name	<i>Leongatha</i>	Reference No	
Address	5 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn	Survey Date	28 April 2006
Building Type	Residence	Grading	C*
Date	c.1898	Previous Grading	C*2

#### Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.



Intactness ☐ Good ☒ Fair ☐ Poor

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

#### History

*Leongatha* was the third of a row of six houses, the construction of which is attributed to builder John Kaiser.<sup>1</sup> The 1898 edition of the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria* listed Kaiser as the occupant of the first house (1 Riversdale Road) north of the corner of Power Street, for that year only. The neighboring houses, 3 and 5 Riversdale Road, were listed as vacant, probably indicating that they had just been completed. No 1 Riversdale Road was not identical to its neighbours – it was a two-storeyed residence, demolished some years ago along with 3 Riversdale Road for intersection works (widening) to Power Street. Hence, the subject property at 5 Riversdale Road enjoys an increased prominence and degree of visibility. Mrs Mary Hennerbein or Hunebein was listed as the occupant of the property in the 1899 edition of the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria* and was rated as the owner and occupier in the City of Hawthorn's rate records for the 1900-01 rate cycle. At this time the house was described as consisting of ten rooms with a net annual value (nav) of £80.<sup>2</sup> Mrs Hennerbein occupied *Leongatha* until c. 1910, after which time she apparently let the property to tenants. The house was tenanted for many years until the late 1920s, and the ownership of the house had changed by the mid-1940s when Winifred West was recorded as the property's owner.<sup>3</sup> The property remained tenanted, with Stanley Jeffers in occupation until the late 1950s. Subsequently, *Leongatha* ceased to be a private residence and appears to have been occupied by a Commonwealth government department. It served as the office for the Department of External Affairs (Antarctic Division) in c. 1960, and in 1970, as the office of the National Civic Council, a function it was still fulfilling in 1974.<sup>4</sup> The property is now privately owned.

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

#### Description & Integrity

No 5 Riversdale Road is a large house from the early Federation period. It is a single-storey dwelling of red face brick construction with stucco trim, with multiple-hipped slate-clad roofs with iron ridge capping, and a return verandah. The original bay on the south-east corner of the building has a

canted bay window which appears to be an addition, possibly an early alteration (although it is not evident on the 1903 Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works plan). The west façade behind the return verandah also has a canted bay addition, which dates from the 1980s. The building addresses the south and west, and combines Federation and Italianate elements. A decorative layer of three courses in hexagonal slate tiles runs across the roof, and the chimneys have stuccoed bases above their flashing, stacks in exposed face brick and sculpted stucco cornices. The eaves are boxed, supported with paired brackets interspersed with moulded swags applied to a frieze layer. The verandah roof is separate from the main roof, and is a skillion of galvanized steel that begins just below this frieze; the gutter is visually integrated with a dentilled moulding that runs the length of the verandah. The verandah posts, frieze and balustrades have been renewed; it is not known if they are based on the original elements. The main walls are in a plain-coursed red face brick, with a moulded stucco-dressed courseline running under the window heads; the wall corners are dressed externally in a stuccoed quoin pattern.

On the south wing, the stucco course runs around the canted bay which has three pent-topped windows crowned with vermiculated keystones; the windows are timber-framed, double-hung sashes. These are incised from below and linked by moulding runs into the cornice immediately above. The canted bay has a parapet and blind balustrade, behind which is a flat gable which has a combination of High Victorian and 'Queen Anne' detailing: High Victorian in the scrolled ends, intermittent bosses and panels of diagonal timber planking; and 'Queen Anne' in the cross tied finial base, with its fanned slatwork and small quadrant beams. The front steps up to the verandah are framed by two block balustrades with urns, and the front door with its fan and sidelight case appears to be original. Windows generally, including those under the verandah, are timber-framed, double-hung sashes. The non-original canted bay to the west has pointed pent window heads echoing those on the south bay. Beyond are a number of additions and extensions to the building, which have very limited visibility to the street. These include a wing, rear additions and a deck added in the period from the early 1980s to the early 1990s, and substantial internal renovations and works.<sup>5</sup>

The property has, on its western side, a composite retaining wall of bluestone and brick, a sloping concreted drive to a new garage at the rear. The south and west setbacks are planted with a garden in a formal style.

### Historical Context

*Leongatha* was constructed in an area of Hawthorn which supported market gardens in the 1850s. The earliest residential development in the area was generally located closer to Glenferrie Road, but from the 1860s several grand houses were established in this vicinity. By c.1900 a number of substantial dwellings had been built on the north side of Riversdale Road, east of Power Street, including the subject building.<sup>6</sup>

### Comparative Analysis

*Leongatha*, at 5 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn, was one of a group of six houses on the north side of Riversdale Road, of similar form, scale and siting which are evident on the 1902 Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works plan #1481. It has been suggested that the series may be associated with the builder, John Kaiser, who lived in one of these houses.<sup>7</sup> The design is certainly very similar in proportion and some details to other houses ascribed to Kaiser, including 254 and 256 Barkers Road, Hawthorn (q.v. no 254), and 387 and 389 Barkers Road, Kew. In appearance and detailing, the subject dwelling is closest to 9 Kooyongkoot Road, Hawthorn (q.v.) and to 387 Barkers Road, Kew. The latter properties also used main walls in exposed face brick, a return verandah separate from the main roof, and a canted bay below a flat-faced wing gable, with arches (stilted and segmental at 9 Kooyongkoot Road) springing similarly from a large moulded stucco course line, and timber finials and cross beams on the wing gables instead of half-timbering. Kaiser was associated with a range of these houses in Hawthorn, Kew and Camberwell, most of which were built in the period 1898-1901. They are also associated with the Camberwell-Hawthorn builder Henry Hutchinson and the Hawthorn-based architect John Beswicke.<sup>8</sup> In general configuration the combined Italianate, High Victorian and Federation components of the design link it to a 'Federation Italianate' genre that flourished in Camberwell at this time, particularly in the Victoria Road-Broadway area. It was also common to find these houses in pairs or groups, and in Hawthorn there is another cluster at the Hawthorn Grove-Kincora Road section of the Grace Park Estate.<sup>9</sup> A variant in this general group used a canted bay with three small, steeply pitched gables over each facet.

## 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.*

*Leongatha*, 5 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn, is a well executed, albeit partly altered, example of a substantial 'Federation Italianate' style villa, a style which was popular in the Boroondara area in the late nineteenth century. It may have been associated with the prolific local builder, John Kaiser, who lived in one of the nearby houses in Riversdale Road, and is similar in proportion and some details to other houses ascribed to him. The house also has a commanding site, emphasized by its current proximity to the Riversdale Road and Power Street intersection, and is largely true to its original overall form.

**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.*

*Leongatha*, 5 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn, is a striking fusion of Italianate, High Victorian and Federation forms, incorporating a single-storey, red face brick construction with stucco trim, with multiple-hipped slate-clad roofs with iron ridge capping, and a return verandah. The canted bay window to the original bay on the south-east corner of the building, appears to be an addition, but likely an early alteration and one that is sympathetic to the overall direction of the dwelling. The house's iron-framed verandah has also been renewed, but this is very common in houses of this age, and does not detract from the presentation of the building.

### Statement of Significance

*Leongatha*, 5 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn, is of local historical and architectural significance. It is a well executed, if partly altered, example of a substantial 'Federation Italianate' villa, of a type which was popular in the Boroondara area in the late nineteenth century. The house occupies a commanding site, emphasised by its current proximity to the altered and widened Riversdale Road and Power Street intersection. It is also largely true to its original overall form, incorporating a single-storey, red face brick construction with stucco trim, with multiple-hipped slate-clad roofs with iron ridge capping, a return verandah, and a bay at the south-east corner. The addition of the canted bay window to the south-east bay and the renewal/replacement of the verandah materials and detailing, do not detract in any significant way from the presentation of the building or an appreciation of the original building form. Overall, the building elements combine to produce a striking fusion of Italianate, High Victorian and Federation forms.

### 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 Burwood, Glenferrie and Riversdale Roads and Power Street, for possible inclusion in a broader Heritage Overlay area (precinct). The streets within this area – particularly Manningtree Road, Wattle Road and Lisson Grove – as well as the main roads bounding the area, contain substantial numbers of graded Victorian and Federation era 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:*

<sup>1</sup> Draft citation, G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote places (draft)*, 2000.

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<sup>2</sup> City of Hawthorn Rate Books, 1900-01, #2077, cited in G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote places* (draft), 2000.

<sup>3</sup> City of Hawthorn Rate Books, 1945-46, #8591, cited in G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote places* (draft), 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Pattern of occupation derived from listings in the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years between 1950 and 1974.

<sup>5</sup> City of Hawthorn Building Index, Permit #17206, dated 18 September 1981; #2210, dated 2 March 1984; #2262 (0401), dated 11 May 1984; #7804 (8577), dated 12 July 1991; and #568193 (11925), dated 9 December 1993.

<sup>6</sup> G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote places* (draft), 2000.

<sup>7</sup> G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote places* (draft), 2000.

<sup>8</sup> See, esp., Graeme Butler, *Camberwell Conservation Study 1991*, v. 4; Pru Sanderson, *City of Kew Urban Conservation Study*, 1989, v. 2; Meredith Gould, *Hawthorn Heritage Study*, 1991, v. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Noted in Graeme Butler's *Hawthorn Keynote Places*, p. 170.