
Name	House	Reference No	
Address	23 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn	Survey Date	19 May 2006
Building Type	Residence	Grading	C*
Date	c.1892	Previous Grading	C*2



Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

Intactness Good Fair Poor

Heritage Status HV AHC NT Rec. BPS Heritage Overlay

History

No 23 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn (previously no 13), was constructed in c. 1892 for Raymond Tovell, a dentist.¹ In the context of the development of this portion of Riversdale Road, this villa pre-dates the later Victorian group of villas further south, down to the corner of Power Street. The 1902 Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works plan #1481, indicates that the property in this period had a graveled carriageway on the west of the property (the alignment of which is retained), and a serpentine graveled pathway to the main entrance from a gate located east of the carriageway entrance (this has not been retained). Mr Tovell was listed in the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria* as resident at the address until c. 1913, after which date the property was occupied by the Harbison family for many years. Miss M Harbison was still listed at the address until the early 1950s. Norman A Hutchinson occupied the property between c. 1955 and 1958, and Dr O'Donnell was the occupant from c. 1960 until at least 1974.²

(Lovell Chen, 2006)

Description & Integrity

The house at 23 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn, is a substantial single-storey double-fronted Federation-era brick villa on an asymmetrical plan with Queen Anne overtones. The façade comprises a pair of projecting bays flanking a recessed central entrance porch, with a faceted bay at the south-west corner. The gabled slate roof features terracotta cresting and ball finials, some exposed rafters, and numerous corbelled red brick chimneys, one of which has an expressed breast. The walls display tuck-pointed, red face brick with moulded string courses and bands. The porch appears to have been altered with the introduction of small cast iron balustrade panels and frieze brackets. The front door case appears to be original, with timber-framed side and top-lights. Fenestration generally comprises tall window openings with timber-framed, double-hung sashes; the front windows also contain multi-coloured leadlight fanlight sashes. The eastern front gable is a half-timbered face corbelled out with a concave roughcast moulding. The west gable has been renewed at a later stage in a related but differing panel face, with the roughcast corbelling now absent. A timber finial (or flagpole) at the front

of this gable has been removed. A brick garage is visible to the rear; other alterations have also occurred to the rear of the property.³

Historical Context

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.⁴

Comparative Analysis

No 23 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn, is a substantial dwelling of large, straightforward and dignified proportions, and an unusual solidity in its exterior presentation for the Federation period. In contrast to most Federation designs in Boroondara, it reduces the verandah to a simple recessed porch. In Boroondara it compares most directly with 1 Berkeley Street, Hawthorn (1901), 51 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East (1905-6), and *Eurobin* at 42 Bryson Street, Canterbury (early 1900s). As these dates indicate, 23 Riversdale Road is quite early in its adoption of the formal simplification that marks many later Federation houses. Its south-west eave treatment, in the area of the canted bay which itself has an interesting sequence of re-entrant angles, is unusual in the simple and direct eave treatment, with exposed rafters and virtually no fascia. The expressed chimney breast, built clear of the western wing gable, is also unusual in the main run of Federation housing, although variants of it begin appearing around Australia after c. 1906. The house also complements the Christopher Cowper-designed 62 Riversdale Road (1906), and the group of 1898-1901 houses built immediately west in Riversdale Road, down to the Power Street corner (q.v.).

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.

No 23 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn, is a fine and well-executed example of a substantial Federation brick villa on an asymmetrical plan with Queen Anne overtones. It is prominently sited on the high side of the street, and in terms of its straightforward and dignified proportions, and unusual solidity of appearance, the dwelling epitomizes aspects of Federation period development in Hawthorn. It also complements, and pre-dates, the Federation-Italianate designs to its immediate west and likewise answers other notable Federation houses further east.

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.

No 23 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn, is distinctive when compared with many Federation designs in Boroondara. The house displays a formal simplification and plainness of massing, and window and wall treatments that mark many later Federation houses, although it is achieved here in an earlier period. This includes reducing the verandah to a simple recessed porch, and the simple treatment of the south-west eave in the area of the canted bay, which has exposed rafters and virtually no fascia. The expressed chimney breast, built clear of the western wing gable, is also unusual when compared to the main run of Federation housing, although variants of it begin appearing around Australia after c. 1906.

Statement of Significance

No 23 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn, is of historical and architectural significance at a local level. It is a fine and well-executed example of a substantial Federation brick villa on an asymmetrical plan with Queen Anne overtones. Its prominent siting on the high side of the street, and its straightforward, dignified and solid proportions, epitomize aspects of Federation period development in Hawthorn. The house is also distinguished when compared to many Federation designs in Boroondara, displaying an early use of formal simplification and plainness of massing, window and wall treatments that mark many later Federation houses. This includes reducing the verandah to a simple recessed porch, and the simple treatment of the south-west eave in the area of the canted bay, which has exposed rafters and virtually no fascia. The expressed chimney breast, built clear of the western wing gable, is also unusual when compared to the main run of Federation housing.

Grading Review

Unchanged.

Recommendations

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

Identified By

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

References

General: (Meredith Gould Conservation Architects, *Hawthorn Heritage Study*, 1992.)

Specific:

¹ *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, 1892.

² Pattern of occupation derived from listings in the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years between 1892 and 1974.

³ City of Hawthorn Building Index, Permit #1710, dated 16 August 1951.

⁴ G Butler & Associates, *Hawthorn Keynote places* (draft), 2000.