

PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM

ADDRESS

7 Yarra Street

TYPE

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

TITLE

"Aldboro"

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 42.31.

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 1892  
Architect John Beswicke  
Builder (possibly)  
Elements



- Contributing garden
- Original or early hard landscape layout
- Landmark tree *E. Camaldulensis* (on Hawthorn Creek at rear).
- Original or early fence

NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICANCE

See attached

INTEGRITY Good  Fair [ ] Poor [ ]  
CONDITION Good  Fair [ ] Poor [ ]

CROSS REFERENCED INFORMATION

Associated significant garden [ ]

## 7 YARRA STREET

### "ALDBORO"

#### History

This is one of three houses at Nos. 5, 7, 9 Yarra Street, sometimes known as the "Glucksberg Trio", completed in 1892 as an investment for the Albert Building Society.<sup>1</sup> They stand on land owned the year before by the architect, Francis Wilson.<sup>2</sup> Earlier, in 1888, the site was occupied by a popular skating rink.<sup>3</sup> Two houses (most probably Nos. 7 and 9) were described in the 1891-92 Hawthorn rate book as brick houses of eleven rooms, each with an NAV of 80 pounds. The third site, also owned by the Albert Building Society, was vacant land still, NAV 26 pounds.<sup>4</sup>

#### Description

One of a group of three tall garden villas, each similar but with purposefully different detailing. The design takes advantage of the steep site to produce a third storey at the rear. Two storeys are visible from the street, their apparent height exaggerated by the narrow allotments and the incorporation of a tower to each building. No. 5 is painted, however it appears to be brickwork of a plain colour with render dressings. No. 7 is executed in red brick with cream brick dressings as quoins and string courses. Rendered embellishment is added to the window architraves and for a bracketed balconette at first floor level. A verandah extends across the full width of this property at the ground floor. The eaves are returned at the gable end to form a broken pediment. Matching brackets are used on the squat tower. No. 9 is the most elaborate of the three. It is executed in brown bricks with cream dressings used in similar fashion to No. 7 but in addition it has: a prominent, French renaissance tower roof with a tiny widows walk; elaborate picturesque brackets to a window hood on the first floor; a prominent rendered bay at ground floor level, and intricate gable end detailing including cast iron panels and Aesthetic Movement like brackets.

All three houses appear to have the same plan. The entry is under the tower. Three living spaces are provided at street level. The main room occupying the front, the second room gaining light from a small projection on the side and the third facing the rear. Kitchen and servant facilities were provided in the lower ground floor.

Although painted and with alterations to the tower, No. 5 is likely to be the most intact internally and at the rear.

#### Assessment

These houses occupy much narrower allotments than the usual size in St. James Park. Their subdivision to three rather than two indicates a desire for a

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<sup>1</sup>. Gwen McWilliam, "Burwood Park", 1988, pp. 174-175.

<sup>2</sup>. Hawthorn RB 1890-91 No. 1059. (NAV 60 pounds).

<sup>3</sup>. McWilliam, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup>. Hawthorn RB 1891-92 Nos. 788, 789, 790. (Feb. 1892).

## 7 Yarra Street continued

keen return from the speculative venture by the building society which developed the sites. The character of St. James Park was by this time so well established as a prestigious suburb, that the smaller allotments would still sell here, justifying the construction of such large houses. Notwithstanding, the architect has used the narrow sites to great advantage by combining them with a strong vertical emphasis and an intricate picturesque form, to create a landmark in the street. The overall appearance is very similar to London town houses of the period. They differ however in their purposeful separation from the property boundary, a quality which would have been inconsistent with the St. James Park garden suburb. This has been done despite the absence of windows looking sideways except for the lower ground rooms.

The architect has not been certainly attributed. It may be Beswicke however. They are similar to his work elsewhere in particular the picturesque mansion at 16 Harcourt Street of 1891, and the "Modern Italian" mansion at 106 Church Street of 1890, both of similar construction date. No. 7 is most similar in its intent to the Church Street property. There, the same red brick is used, with render quoins and an extensive verandah, but with the same basic features of projecting gabled wing, central tower and cast iron verandah.

Architects were working on several innovative styles around the turn of the century, in one way or another all influenced by William Morris' red house at Blexley Heath in Britain and the reaction to the industrial revolution in Britain during the second half of the nineteenth century. By the turn of the century these are roughly grouped together as the red brick styles. Conservative Victorian period villas which had developed through the 1870s and 1880s adopted some of the characteristics of these avant garde groups in a decorative way - sometimes referred to as Freestyle Edwardian.

Although individually significant the houses are primarily significant as a compatible group executed in picturesque style. They can be compared with the Fitzroy Old Colonists homes constructed from the 1870s to the 1930s. These homes were set up by Coppin, the developer of St. James Park. He gave the Old Colonists homes a picturesque garden suburb setting with serpentine paths and pretty gardens, and commissioned complementary picturesque paired houses to be built within this idyllic setting. These buildings are similar in: their repetitive but purposefully varied design; the exaggerated form, necessary to fit all the requirements of garden villa in; and the villa form, purposefully selected to emphasise the garden suburb feeling. All the Old Colonists designs are single storey however. Two storey designs in the inner suburbs do not yield a useful comparison because a row house form was generally adopted there e.g. Janet Terrace at 92-96 Hotham Street, East Melbourne of 1881.

### Significance

### Metropolitan

1. Architecturally significant as a rare two storey group, executed in exaggerated picturesque form to achieve garden villas on narrow sites, which are true to the garden suburb ideal.
2. Historically significant for the illustration of the influence of building societies in the development of Hawthorn even during the 1890s depression.



5, 7, 9 Yarra Street.