

Balwyn Road Residential Precinct
Place Citation

8 Balwyn Road, Canterbury

Name	<i>Hazeldene</i>		
Place	Residential		
Type			
Date	1889	Survey Date	Dec 2005
Architect	Not known	Previous Grading	B
Builder	Not known	Grading	B



Intactness ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

Heritage ☐ HV ☒ AHC ☒ NT ☐ BPS Heritage Overlay

History

This site was part of allotment 28 of the Shrublands Estate when it was purchased by George Mercy in 1886. At the same time, Mercy also purchased other land (2, 4, 6 and 8a Balwyn Road).¹

The house was built in 1889 for Mercy who lived there until c1904. At that time the house was described as being of 11 rooms.² George Mercy, an importer by trade, was a prominent local citizen and was elected Mayor of Camberwell in 1906-07.³

The site was purchased from Mercy by Sir Aaron Turner Danks in 1904.⁴ Danks undertook alterations to the site and the building in two

- 1 R Da Costa-Adams, 'Notes of Balwyn Road, Canterbury Heritage Precinct'
- 2 Rate book entries cited in R Da Costa-Adams, 'Notes of Balwyn Road, Canterbury Heritage Precinct'
- 3 G Butler, 'Camberwell Conservation Study', 1991, vol 4, p15
- 4 G Butler, 'Camberwell Conservation Study', 1991, vol 4, p16. Aaron Danks was born in 1861 in Tasmania and was educated in Ross. He became a

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principal stages. In 1905, alterations to the house were undertaken including the construction of the projecting front room which created the asymmetrical façade and further additions at the rear.⁵ By this time the house had been named *Hazeldene*.⁶

In 1905, Danks increased his holdings by purchasing a strip of land (20 feet wide) from his northern neighbour and at the same time the timber outbuildings were replaced with brick structures.⁷ In 1909, Danks extended the house to 19 rooms including the construction of the large music room in the north east corner. The building works were undertaken by R J James.⁸ As a result of the additions, the valuation for the site increased by about a third between 1904 and 1911.⁹

Aaron Danks owned and occupied the house until his death in 1928, when it passed to his widow, Lady J B Danks. In 1932, the house passed to their daughter, Annie Danks. Subsequently Annie divided the house into two flats, the work being undertaken by the builders T R & L Cochram. Annie Danks occupied one of the flats until her death in 1969.¹⁰

In 1970, the property was purchased by Leslie and Helen Charlton from the Dank's estate. In 1971, the land on which 6 Balwyn Road is located was excised.¹¹ Eight years later, Helen Charlton exercised further land, creating the site at 8A Balwyn Road.¹² In 1992, the current owners purchased the site and have subsequently undertaken substantial internal restoration works.¹³

Description & Integrity

Hazeldene is a single storey rendered and painted masonry house with a decorative slate clad hip roof. The Victorian era detailing includes a number of decorative features such as paired brackets to the eaves and string course mouldings. The extensive verandah has cast iron columns, frieze, brackets and distinctive balustrade panels. There is a large basement to the southern side of the building. The windows to the north projecting room (1905) have lead lighting and stained glass.

The music room to the rear on the north side (added in 1909) has Arts and Crafts influences being Tudor Revival in form with a steeply pitched, timber lined ceiling and bay windows with Art Nouveau glass

hardware merchant, working in the family business. He was interested in a range of medical/health/welfare issues and became involved in various related institutions as a committee member such as the Royal Melbourne Hospital, the Walter & Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research and Children's Welfare League. He also became a magistrate of the Children's Court. A devout Methodist, Danks donated the site to the church on which the Epworth Hospital is located. He was knighted in 1925.

5 These alterations are shown on the MMBW plans prepared during 1905. Plan no.71 shows the original configuration and the detailed plan no.2221, shows the outline with the additions.

6 MMBW detailed plan no.2221 (1905).

7 R Da Costa-Adams, 'The Pines - Tennis Court & Curtilage', p13

8 Information provided by R de la Costa Adams, 25 January 2006

9 G Butler, 'Camberwell Conservation Study', 1991, vol 4, p15

10 G Butler, 'Camberwell Conservation Study', 1991, vol 4, p15

11 R Da Costa-Adams, 'Notes of Balwyn Road, Canterbury Heritage Precinct', January 2006

12 Personal communication provided by R Da Costa-Adams, 4 May 2006

13 Personal communication provided by R Da Costa-Adams, 25 January 2006

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and timber brackets.¹⁴ The music room was built to accommodate a two-manual organ of 17 speaking stops, built in 1909 by George Fincham & Son. The organ remains intact, retaining its original tubular-pneumatic action, attached stop key console, pipe work, and blackwood case containing diapered pipes.¹⁵

Hazeldene, which was constructed in stages, remains mostly intact to its early twentieth century form. One known subsequent alteration is the relocation of the front stair from the southern end of the façade to the north-west corner.

Statement of Significance

The place is of historical and architectural significance. It is of historical significance for its associations with George Mercy and Sir Aaron Danks. George Mercy, an importer by trade, was a prominent local citizen and was elected Mayor of Camberwell in 1906-07. Aaron Danks was a hardware merchant, committee member of numerous public institutions, magistrate of the Children's Court and philanthropist. He was knighted in 1925.

Hazeldene and was built in 1889 for George Grenville Mercy. It is a typical house of the late 1880s, of architectural note for its unusual cast iron balustrading and friezes (assumed to be original) and the substantial semi-basement which is uncommon.

Hazeldene was enlarged by the subsequent owner, Sir Aaron Danks in two stages. The second phase of work was undertaken in 1909, and included the large music room which has Arts and Crafts detailing. It was designed specifically to accommodate an organ, which remains *in situ*.

According to the National Trust, the two-manual organ is also significant as it is believed to be the only organ in a residence of its period to remain in its original location. It is of interest for its symphonic tonal design, incorporating two sets of undulating ranks on the swell and a Vox Humana stop placed beneath the music room floor.¹⁶

Grading and Recommendations

The site is part of the identified Balwyn Road Residential Precinct, which is recommended for inclusion within the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay.

Identified By

G Butler, 'Camberwell Conservation Study', 1991, vol 4, pp15-17

References

G Butler, 'Camberwell Conservation Study', 1991

R Da Costa-Adams, 'The Pines - Tennis Court and Curtilage - A Brief Cultural History and Assessment of Cultural Heritage Significance', 2005

R Da Costa-Adams, 'Notes of Balwyn Road, Canterbury Heritage Precinct', January 2006

Land Victoria, Subdivision plans: LP91961 & LP126753

14 Register of the National Estate, place ID - 5636

15 National Trust of Australia (Victoria), citation B2414

16 National Trust of Australia (Victoria), citation B2414

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MMBW detailed plan no.2221 (1905).

National Trust of Australia (Victoria), citation B2414

Register of the National Estate, place ID - 5636