

<b>Name</b>	<i>Rothbry</i>	<b>Reference No</b>	
<b>Address</b>	35 High Street, Kew, also known as 2 Miller Grove	<b>Survey Date</b>	23 August 2005 10 January 2006
<b>Building Type</b>	Residence	<b>Grading</b>	B
<b>Date</b>	1914	<b>Previous Grading</b>	B



#### Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries

Refer also to Recommendations.

**Intactness** ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

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

#### History

The house at 35 High Street, Kew, was built in 1914 for Alfred Beckett, an importer, and was designed by Arthur Purnell.<sup>1</sup> Constructed of brick with 8 rooms, it was oriented towards Miller Grove, with a prominent entrance from its corner with High Street. Initially the house was numbered as 39 High Street, changing to 35 High Street in c.1923.<sup>2</sup> Alfred Beckett occupied the house until 1919 at which time it was acquired by George and Lillian Rothberg, draper.<sup>3</sup> It is thought that the name *Rothbry* dates from their period of ownership. James Harrison acquired *Rothbry* in c.1932, retaining ownership until the early 1950s.<sup>4</sup> Subsequently the house was acquired by Mrs Elizabeth Puzey, and the property functioned as a guest house under her ownership.<sup>5</sup> In 1955 a building permit was granted for the construction of separate brick living quarters, commensurate with the use of the building as a guest house with a live-in manager.<sup>6</sup> B M Bridges fulfilled this role for several years during the 1960s, and C A Boakes continued the role during the 1970s.<sup>7</sup> An examination of the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria* listings during the 1970s showed that Mrs Puzey also conducted a guest house at 114 Barkers Road, Hawthorn, as well as owning the adjacent property at 4 Miller Grove. It has not been established whether Mrs. Puzey ever lived at the subject property; as for many years she lived at 397 Toorak Road, South Yarra. In 1992 she gave the South Yarra property to the University of Melbourne, and in 1994, a bequest of her will set up the Elizabeth and Vernon Puzey Postgraduate Research Scholarship in Science, at the same institution.<sup>8</sup>

Today the property is identified as 2 Miller Grove, Kew.

(G Butler & Associates, Kew B-graded buildings study (draft), 2001, additional research by Lovell Chen, 2005)

## Description & Integrity

*Rothbry*, 35 High Street, Kew, (also known as 2 Miller Grove, Kew) is a large attic-storey Federation villa of brick construction. The complex gabled roofscape is clad with slate and finished with terracotta ridge cresting and finials and penetrated by slender tapered rendered chimneys with brick banding. The multiple gable ends are shingle-clad with timber fretwork screens and the broad gable over the main entrance contains an open attic balcony, whereas a formerly open roof terrace on the north-eastern side of the house has been enclosed. The asymmetrical façade displays a rendered finish with red face brick plinth and dressings and is screened by a deep verandah which is accessed via wide bluestone steps and features tapered brick columns and arched timber fretwork. Elsewhere, projecting bays contain bays of timber-framed casement sash windows with leaded awning highlight sashes. The entrance contains a pair of polished timber doors with leadlight glazing.

A double-storey outbuilding/garage, which matches the main house in construction and detail, is located in the south-west corner of the property. The origins of this building remain unclear.

The property is generally screened by an early (if not original) timber paling fence with matching V-jointed timber and lattice gates and pergolas, the exception being a section of later paling fence adjoining the outbuilding and extending east along Miller Grove. The landscape includes mature exotic plantings designed around a circular driveway and a non-original swimming pool in the north-east corner of the garden.

## Historical Context

The subject property was constructed on land which in the nineteenth century had formed part of a very large Victorian estate, *Findon*, home of the Henty family and subsequently of the financier, Henry Miller.<sup>9</sup>

## Comparative Analysis

*Rothbry* is a large transitional design, predominantly Federation in its detailing but showing the simpler profile that would lead to the Bungalow and Attic house forms prevalent in Australia during the early and mid-1920s. It lacks the Chinese components normally ascribed to Purnell's house designs. It appears to be relatively intact, with the enclosed balcony toward the rear the only major note of discord. In Boroondara it compares directly with 12 Grange Road Kew of c.1920 (q.v., B-graded), 2 Young Street, Kew, by Alsop and Klingender, of c.1915-6 (B-graded),<sup>10</sup> 24 Albion Street, Surrey Hills, from c.1911 (q.v., B-graded), and 930 Burke Road Camberwell, of 1920 (q.v., B-graded).<sup>11</sup> In its mixture of Federation and Bungalow elements *Rothbry* compares with some single-storey designs of this period also, such as 9 Edward Street, Kew, built the following year (originally A-graded but heavily altered and subsequently reduced in classification level), a design also attributed to Arthur Purnell.<sup>12</sup> Among A-graded Kew designs it compares with the architect Henry Kemp's house at 5 Adeney Avenue and with 17 Selbourne Road, both of 1914 and both attic types.<sup>13</sup> The free standing house on the site, has a textured stucco walling and red brick quoin pattern that links them with earlier Federation designs such as Hyndman and Bates' similar looking stables at *Belmont* in Balwyn of 1891-2 (demolished).<sup>14</sup> But it is not clear whether this building is contemporary with the house. In 1914, *Rothbry* itself comes on the eve of a building recession that would see the eclipse of the Federation mode generally and its replacement by a related but different form, the Bungalow, in its single storey and attic variants, which would be the prevailing suburban mode from 1919 through to the full onset of economic depression in 1928.<sup>15</sup>

## 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.*

*Rothbry* is a fine example of a substantial house of the 1910s which demonstrates the shift in larger houses from the Federation mode to a simpler patterning and an attic storey expressed directly through the main gable, associated with the Bungalow mode of the early inter war period, 1919-1928. It is generally externally intact with some sections of its original fencing.

### Statement of Significance

*Rothbry* is of local historical and architectural significance as a substantial residence of the 1910s which demonstrates the shift in larger houses from the Federation mode to a simpler patterning and an attic storey expressed directly through the main gable, associated with the Bungalow mode of the early inter war period, 1919-1928. It is generally externally intact, and retains part of its original or early fence.

### 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 review of the housing stock in the broader area including both sides of High Street from Barkers Road to the Junction. While 6 High Street is related to and complemented by a series of nearby Federation era houses graded B and C in the 1988 Kew Conservation Study, this section of High Street also contains a substantial number of Victorian and interwar properties. Depending on the outcome of this review, consideration should be given to identifying a Heritage Overlay precinct.

### Identified By

Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988

### References

*General:* Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988, G Butler & Associates, Kew B-graded places study (draft), 2001.

*Specific:*

<sup>1</sup> Borough of Kew Rate Books, 1915-16, #3643, nav £110; *Sands & McDougall Melbourne Directory* 1915.

<sup>2</sup> *Sands & McDougall Melbourne Directory*, 1921-1923. Dating: the MMBW Plan of Drainage, dated 12 October 1914, shows a sewer connection to the completed house and names Arthur Purnell as the architect. The works number is unclear, readable, possibly, as 95970.

<sup>3</sup> *Sands & McDougall Melbourne Directory*, various years between 1918 and 1935.

<sup>4</sup> City of Kew Rate Books, 1935-6, #6573, nav £190.

<sup>5</sup> *Sands & McDougall Melbourne Directory*, 1955.

<sup>6</sup> Details sourced from the City of Kew Building Index, #56, dated 12 September, 1955.

<sup>7</sup> *Sands & McDougall Melbourne Directory*, 1960-1974.

<sup>8</sup> Details sourced from the home page of the Faculty of Science, University of Melbourne web-site.

<sup>9</sup> Refer Rogers, Dorothy, *A History of Kew*, pp. 63-65, MMBW Plan No. 40, Collingwood and Kew.

<sup>10</sup> Pru Sanderson, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988, Grade B section, dated from a *Real Property Annual* illustration of 1916.

<sup>11</sup> Pru Sanderson, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study of 1988 and Graeme Butler's City of Camberwell Conservation Study of 1991.

<sup>12</sup> Pru Sanderson, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988, Designation A, Citation 50. This classification was altered to a B in a later survey undertaken by Bryce Raworth.

<sup>13</sup> Pru Sanderson, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988, Citations 48 and 49.

<sup>14</sup> See Miles Lewis' section 2 of P Goad (ed., contrib.), *Bates Smart*, Thames and Hudson, Melbourne, 2004, pp. 79-81.

<sup>15</sup> Rather than 1929, when the Great Depression is deemed to have commenced in the US, Australia was widely perceived as being in severe depression from 1928. The Prime Minister, Stanley Melbourne Bruce, pronounced this after commodity prices collapsed and the London money market closed to Australian government borrowing, and was instrumental in Bruce's loss of government to Labor in October 1929. See Ian Turner and I Louis, *The Depression in Australia: Documents*, Melbourne, 1970. In Victoria a widespread building recession had already set in following a major timber and transport strike of 1926.