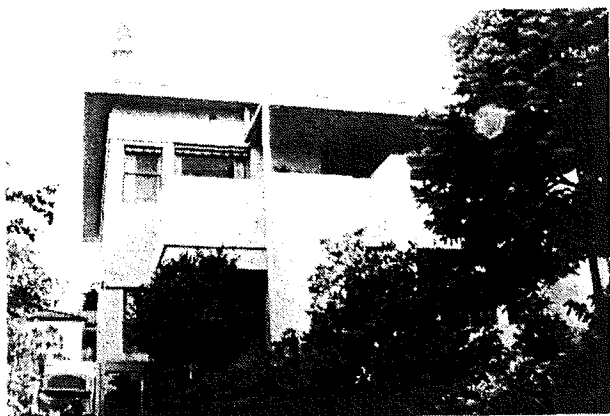


Camberwell Conservation Study 1991

BUILDING CITATION

Flats, 7 Rochester Road



Study Grading: A
Streetscape: 1
Construction Date: 1928-30
First Owner: Bond, Mary
Architect: Grant, Les
Builder: Bond, D W

History

Mary Bond of Canterbury was the nominated owner of a 20 square, two-storey dwelling built by D W Bond: the estimated cost was £2000². The *Melbourne Directory* for 1929 first lists the property as 'flats being built' and it was not until 1984 that it was converted into a single dwelling³. The design has been attributed to Eric Nicholls.

The progressive styling and innovative use (flats) point to the pioneering role of the building. Flats had been built in Camberwell in the 1920s but not until after this building was completed did the flat become a more common element of Camberwell design. It is important as an innovative building use as well as interesting for its stylistic originality.

Description

Cement rendered and symmetrical, these flats take on the geometric severity of a Prairie School design. Aztec in form and detail, the building's bold horizontal forms and voids are counterpointed by vertical fins or piers, symmetrically arranged on both the street elevation and chimney shaft.

Some comparison may be made with Wright's Millard residence, Pasadena (1923), and the Booth (1911), and Gale residences, Illinois (1904-9). This example lacks the eclectic detailing but shares the interlocking rectanguloid forms, as did also the contemporary European Modern movement, but without the decorative 'unfunctional' use of massing. Chevron pattern glazing is shared with other Griffin school designs; the terrace balustrade also comprising a chevron but in three dimensions. The stuccoed fence has been stepped with the incline, both vertically and laterally, whilst gate posts have flared Aztec-like, plinths. A similarly unusual divided front garden is enclosed between the house and boundary.

Comparative Examples

The following Camberwell sites may be compared with this site.

354, BURKE ROAD, 1926
 92, MONT ALBERT ROAD, 1926
 14, PINE AVENUE, 1926c
 452, BURKE ROAD, 1927-28
 2, BARNSBURY ROAD, 1927
 360, BURKE ROAD, 1927
 47, CAMPBELL ROAD, 1927
 38, HIGHFIELD ROAD, 1927
 1, MUSWELL HILL, 1927
 294, WARRIGAL ROAD, 1927
 3, ROCHESTER ROAD, 1928-30
 2, HIGHTON GROVE, 1928-9
 27, YARRBAT AVENUE, 1928-c
 21, CHRISTOWEL STREET, 1928
 26, CHRISTOWEL STREET, 1928
 17, LANSELL CRESCENT, 1928
 12, STODDART STREET, 1928
 8, CHRISTOWEL STREET, 1928c
 226, DONCASTER ROAD, 1929
 19, FAIRMONT AVENUE, 1929
 300, WARRIGAL ROAD, 1929
 34, ELLIOTT AVENUE, 1929c
 15, FREEMAN STREET, 1929c

External Integrity

The stucco has been painted.

Streetscape

The building has little in common with its pitched roof eclectic neighbours except in scale, materials, and siting.

² BA 1927, 2110
³ BA 1984, 74925

Camberwell Conservation Study 1991
BUILDING CITATION (Continued)

Significance

Architecturally, distinguishable as of a small group of designs from the internationally known Prairie School in Victoria, showing also a move towards the severe geometry of much Modernist architecture to come in contrast to the contemporary eclectic designs; of regional importance and state interest.

Historically, little is known of the first owner in the Camberwell context, but it is one of the early examples in a city where flat building was discouraged.
