

## Identification and location

**Name of place:**

**Other Name**

**Address**

**Place Identifier**

**Heritage Significance**

**Creation date(s)**

**Map (Melway)**

**Boundary description**

**Local Government Area**

**Ownership Type**

## Description

**Site Type:**

### Physical Description

Robertson's red brick Federation Bungalow style house contrasts with the conservative but contemporary Italianate style of his partner, Hooper's house at 10 Geelong Road. Composed around the main hip roof, with gabled wings set at right-angles, the house is distinguished by an octagonal corner turret in the verandah on the north side, return timber verandah, and a large bay window to the front wing with an unusual embossed dado. Otherwise timber slatting, unglazed Marseilles pattern terra-cotta roof tiles, tall tapered brick chimneys, embossed wall cladding and half-timbered details provide typical period ornamentation.

The house is similar to designs by, architects, HW & FB Tompkins (see example Ascot Vale Rd, Ascot Vale) who designed the Hooper store in Brunswick 1908.

### Condition

### Integrity

### Context

Set among stylistically related houses built for Footscray's elite in this part of Geelong Road and linked historically, by its first owner, to the adjoining 10 Geelong Road.

**Threats:**

Increasing development pressure from educational institution, unrelated external changes.

**History**

Historical background

In the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, many of Footscray's industrial and retail employers or managers lived within the community, often building quite substantial villas for their families. In the early years, these houses tended to be placed relatively near to work sites, thus the location of some old substantial houses near the river at Footscray and Yarraville. Later a trend developed of erecting such homes on major roads, such as Somerville Road, Geelong Road and Ballarat Road, especially at the eastern end of the latter two.

Despite the frantic subdivision of land in the late nineteenth century, most of the residential development of the City of Maribyrnong has occurred in the twentieth century. In the first two decades of the century housing spread out through Seddon, between Geelong Road and Somerville Road and at West Footscray { Barnard, 2000}.

Specific History

John Robertson, partner in the large drapery firm of J. H. Hooper & Co., was the first owner-occupier of this house in 1901. It was sited next to 10 Geelong Road, the home of John Hooper, also built in 1901. John, Mrs. C. E. Robertson and, in the late 1930s, James Robertson, maintained some 30 years of occupation by the Robertson family until the commencement of another long tenure by William Drever and family. The family tennis court to the east was built on after the sale to Drever. Coincidentally Hooper's house next door was occupied by K. W. Drever in the 1950s { Butler, 1989}.

Robertson was a joint owner with John and E. T Hooper of the Hooper business, providing a 'driving force' (in the words of John Lack) behind the firm's pressure for the shop assistants' half holiday early this century {Lack, 1986}. The neurologist and cast-iron enthusiast, Dr. E. Graeme Robertson was born into this house in 1903, his studies taking him to London and back to Victoria where he consulted to Melbourne's major hospitals and in the Royal Australian Navy { Robertson}. His interest in photography and cast-iron led him to publish many books on the subject { Butler, 1989}.

Photographs from the 1930s-50s show this section of Geelong Road as lined with Canary Island palms, hedges and well developed gardens as a reflection of the high amenity this area once had possessed { FHSPC}.

### Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme

PAHT Subtheme

Local Theme(s)

### Cultural Significance

The Robertson house is significant to the City of Maribyrnong because:

- the house is, architecturally, an adept and one of the best executed designs in the Queen Anne villa manner judged within the City (Criterion F1);
- of its historical association with one of Footscray's more famous commercial figures, John Robertson (Criterion H1);
- of its owner's association with the development of industrial relations in the City when Footscray led the State in obtaining uniformly more adequate working conditions (Criterion A4); and
- of its contributory role within a notable group of houses built by prominent persons, both within Footscray and the State during a number of key eras in the City's history (Criterion A3).

### Comparative Examples:

As with the other nearby houses in Geelong Road, this house is larger and a little more architecturally sophisticated than most similarly aged houses in the former City of Footscray and, underscored by the others in the group, provides an important expression of wealth within the City during a distinct phase of development. The similarly styled house at 34 Somerville Rd, associated with ICI management in Yarraville, is another example which is more architecturally significant and on a larger scale.

### Recommendations

Heritage Victoria Register

Register of the National Estate:

National Trust Register:

Other Heritage Listings

Planning Scheme Protection

External Paint Controls Apply?:

Internal Alteration Controls Apply?:

Tree Controls Apply?:

Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Act:

Are there Outbuildings or Fences not Exempt?:

Prohibited Uses may be Permitted

## Recommendations:

Conserve and enhance the identified significant fabric, with emphasis on fabric from the early 1900s and the Robertson occupation, with enhancement including reinstatement of missing original elements (i.e.. fence), colours and finishes and removal of the southern addition.  
Conserve the public view of the significant fabric.  
Promote the continuing original use of the place and its amenity.  
Continue historical research into the place and provide public access to the findings.  
Assess the interior for significant elements.

## Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

*A3 Importance in exhibiting unusual richness or diversity of flora, fauna, landscape or cultural features.*

forms part of a distinctive group within the City which is expressive of the desired location for Footscray's famous on the one hand and the stylistic progression this took over the Victorian & Edwardian-eras

*A4 Importance for their association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, state, region or community.*

its owner's association with the development of industrial relations in the City when Footscray led the State in obtaining uniformly more adequate working conditions

*F1 Importance for their technical, creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement.*

architecturally, an adept and one of the best executed designs in the Queen Anne villa manner judged within the City

*H1 Importance for their close associations with individuals whose activities have been significant within the history of the nation, state or region.*

historical association with one of Footscray's more famous commercial figures, John Robertson

historical significance  architectural significance  social significance  scientific significanc

## Documentation

### References

Butler, Graeme 1989, City of Footscray Urban Conservation Study cites:

- Sands and MacDougall Victorian Directories (D);
- Wyn Carruthers 1989 (nee Drever) verbal;
- Lack, J 1986: letter to MPE 30.7.1986;
- Robertson, E. Graeme 1974 'Carlton', Melb.;
- MMBW 1910 Record Plan 3

Footscray Historical Society picture collection (FHSPC) Geelong Rd 1951, Griffiths House Geelong Rd 1948, Geelong Rd 1939.

Butler, G. 1983 Twentieth Century Architecture in Victoria, RAIA (Vic);

Butler, G. Essendon Conservation Study: Ascot Rd example;

Barnard, J 2000. Maribyrnong Heritage Review Volume 2 Environmental History City of Maribyrnong;

Historic Places - Selected non-industrial significant places in former City of Footscray - not in the Planning Scheme

## Data recording

Assessed By:

Assessed Date: