

2 Lascelles Avenue, Toorak



History & Description

In 1933 Ernest Leviny, woolbuyer, was rated for Lot 22, vacant land at 2 Lascelles Avenue, Toorak.²¹¹ The following year, an eleven-roomed brick house was recorded on the site owned and occupied by James E. C. Leviny, woolbuyer.²¹² Leviny's residence was designed by the architect Marcus William Martin, one of Victoria's most prolific domestic architects of the inter-war period.²¹³

According to one writer, the Leviny house was typical of this architect's interest in decorative detailing at this period. Such houses ,

'were not symmetrical, and sometimes featured one long vertical window which was quite different from all others in terms of its glazing bars or some other form of distinctive decoration, and acted as a light to the stairs in the entrance hall. Good examples of this device are found in the John house , Wilks Ave., Malvern (1933), and the Leviny house...These buildings presented to the street either a flat facade with hip roof, as in the Johns and Leviny houses, or else a hipped and gabled section projecting from the main building mass.....Their chimneys were simplydetailed.'²¹⁴

This house has an asymmetrical two storey facade with a distinctive Mediterranean character in the rendered surfaces, the use of shutters and the semi-circular wrought

211. City of Prahran Rate Book 1933-34 Toorak Ward No.1475.

212. City of Prahran Rate Book 1934-35 Toorak Ward No. 1584. NAV 200 pounds.

213. Bryce Raworth, 'Marcus Martin: a Survey of his Life and Work,' p.19, illustration fig.38.

214. Bryce Raworth, 'Marcus Martin: a Survey of his Life and Work,' p.19.

iron balcony with French doors above the quoined and arched entrance. The matching fence and sparsely planted garden are complementary to the design.

Marcus Martin (1893-1981) was born in Launceston, Tasmania, the son of Marcus Dumas Martin, bank manager. The family settled in Melbourne in 1908. After his schooling at Melbourne Grammar School, Marcus William Martin served his articles with the architects, A. & K. Henderson, who specialised in designs for shops, banks and warehouses. In 1921, Martin entered into partnership with Rodney Alsop. He established his own practice in 1924 and in 1926 entered a new partnership with Walter Butler and his nephew, Austin Richard Butler. The firm specialised in residential and commercial work. By 1929, it was noted that Martin had been associated with designs for residences, flats, banking offices, factories and other commercial work.²¹⁵

Martin designed a number of important Toorak houses, particularly in Domain Road, between 1920 and 1950. His town houses were characterised by their elegance.²¹⁶

Significance

This 1934 brick residence, the home of James Leviny, woolbuyer, is of State significance as a fine example of the work of Marcus Martin, one of Victoria's most prolific domestic architects in the inter-war period. It is a fine example of Spanish Mission domestic architecture, which with the Old English and Neo-Georgian styles were popular architectural influences in the 1920s in the Prahran area. The matching fence and sparsely planted garden are complementary in design.

Sources

Age, 15 Dec, 1981 (obituary).

City of Prahran Rate Book, Toorak Ward.

Raworth, Bryce, 'Marcus Martin: a Survey of his Life and Work', Investigation Project, Univ. of Melbourne, 1986.

Analysis & Recommendations

It is recommended that this property be retained at A1 level.

215. Bryce Raworth, 'Marcus Martin: a Survey of His Life and Work'.

216. *Age*, 15 Dec. 1981-obituary.