

INDIVIDUAL HERITAGE PLACE – CITATION

HO160

NAME OF PLACE: Ballara

OTHER NAMES OF PLACE: Hudson-Eastwood house.

ADDRESS / LOCATION: 49 Lansell Road, Toorak

PROPERTY INFORMATION: part subdivision of Towers Estate

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local.

ASSESSED BY: Graeme Butler, Francine Gilfedder.

ASSESSMENT DATE: March 2002

REVISED ASSESSMENT October 2003

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

(as visible from the street)

Ballara, house, at 49 Lansell Road, Toorak is locally significant historically and architecturally:
- as an externally well-preserved representation of the turning point in Cowper's design vocabulary from the terra-cotta character of his Queen Anne revival style houses to the simpler creations that followed as a reflection of international trends away from the ornate architecture of the 19th century towards the simplicity of the Bungalow and Prairie styles that emanated from North America (Criterion D2, E1).

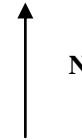
PLAN

NAME: Ballara

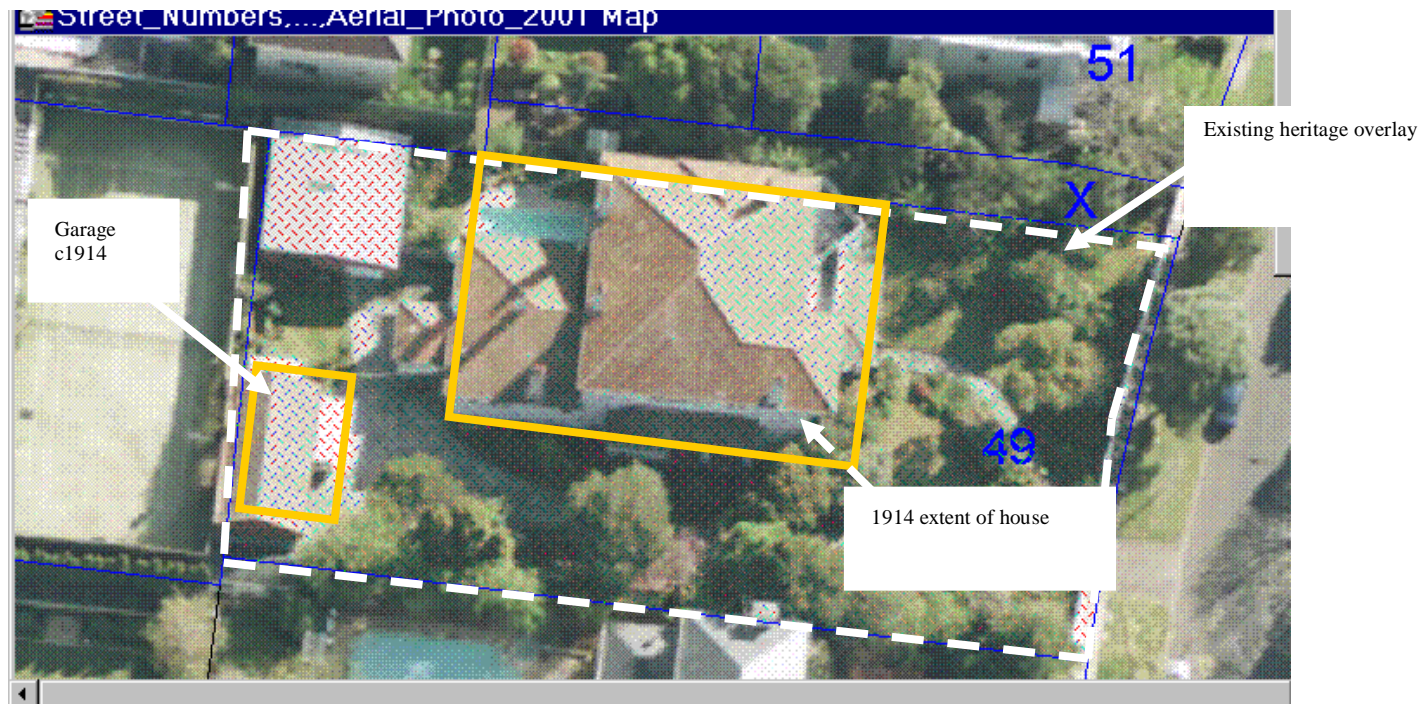
OTHER NAMES: Hudson-Eastwood house

ADDRESS / LOCATION: 49 Lansell Road, Toorak

Not to Scale¹



49 LANSELL RD, TOORAK



¹ Cadastral plan and aerial photograph supplied by the City of Stonnington

PHOTO:



(Source: Graeme Butler & Associates) March 2002

DESCRIPTION:

(as assessed from the street)

This large rough-cast stuccoed, hipped roof two-storey residence, has Marseilles pattern terra-cotta roof tiles, a two-level bay window to the front elevation, multi-pane glazing to the toplights of the window casements, verandahs on both ground and first floors with an unusual perforated solid balustrade to the upper level and an angled bay at the lower level, long slender eaves struts, exposed rafter ends, and Cowper's trademark tapered columns, tapered fence piers and tapered chimneys with terra-cotta pots. The design addresses the north east aspect, with the angled corner bay as the pivot, but the south elevation is slab-sided and plain.

The detail and massing of the house suggest the Indian Bungalow style, as inspired by tea planters bungalows in the British colonies of India and Ceylon (see Butler, 'The Californian Bungalow in Australia').

The extensive front pier and panel fence, with its wrought-iron gates, is of face red brick (over-painted), and has tapered piers with rendered caps. It may have had draped chain or wrought-iron panels before the brick panels were erected. An early garage, with glazed timber doors, is at the end of the drive at the rear of the house.

Interior

not inspected

Condition & integrity

(as assessed from the street)

The house needs minor maintenance but is near original externally. The fence has been modified (added brick panels between piers) and the bricks painted over.

Context

Ballara is sited close to the top of a rise in Lansell Road, a broad, tree lined street that links Toorak Road and the Yarra River to the north. Lansell Road is asphalted, has concrete footpaths and crossovers, concrete kerb and channel with some early bluestone kerbs. The nature strips are wide and have rows of mature street trees.

HISTORY

Historical background

(see History of the Development of Prahran

By George Tibbits, for Nigel Lewis and Associates, Architects and Conservation Planners, 1983)

Development in Toorak (20th century)

The Toorak area was also the scene of intensive development in the period of 1920 to 1930. An important group of residences were erected near the corner of Heyington Road and Toorak Road, designed by architect Harold Desbrowe Annear. Annear also designed the garden for Sydney Myer's Cranlana, 62 Clendon Road in 1930. Annear employed the Italianate style with the inclusion of fountains, ferns and statues. Nearby in Clendon Road, Walter Burley Griffin's office had designed Clendon Lodge in 1923 for Mary Williams. Three years later Griffin designed the Langi flats also for Mary Williams. Another contribution to the architecture of the 1920s in this area was 'Mullion' (6 Stonehaven Court) designed by Eric . Nicholls in 1927 28 for W H Smith. The building was erected when Sir Francis Ormond's property at the corner of Clendon and Orrong Roads was subdivided and many of 'the mature trees from his garden were retained on the site of Mullion. South of Mullion another subdivision, Stradbroke Avenue was developed at a slightly later period. Buildings were all constructed of rough cast and masonry and today the feeling of the road conforms very much to its original appearance although. recent exterior redecoration to many residences has slightly lessened the overall effect.

The large allotments in the elevated areas of Toorak have seen two major subdivisional stages after the first large mansion allotments were created. This (aerial) view in 1950 of Irving Road shows the first pattern of subdivision of the original allotments which took place mainly from the 1880s (and) 1920s. The 1960s and 70s have seen a further subdivision of many of these allotments. (Tibbits, 1983)

Specific History

(see Foster 1998)

1840

First Crown Land Sales - three large allotments bounded by Orrong Road, Toorak Road, Kooyong Road and the Yarra River, were sold, one of 70 acres to Sylvester J. Brown.

1849-50

James Jackson built a large mansion with a formal garden on 148 acres (part being Brown's lot), most of which was kept as bush. Jackson named the property Toorak House, which gave the area its name, and Kearney's map of 1855 shows the property extending from Orrong Road to the east side of the present-day St. George's Road.

1854-1873

Victorian Government leased Toorak House as a residence for the governor of the Colony, starting in 1854 with Sir Charles Hotham, attracting other wealthy residents to the area.

c1874,

Solicitor Edward Klingender sold the property to George Lansell, the Bendigo mining entrepreneur, who subdivided the estate into large allotments facing Orrong and Toorak Roads and created the distinctive curving lines of Lansell and St. George's Roads. The estate was aimed 'specially for the gentry of Victoria', and the sale attracted wealthy pastoralists, merchants and professionals who chose this prestigious area to build their mansions.

Heritage Overlay Review - Amendment C5, C6
Ballara 49 Lansell Road, Toorak heritage assessment

1880s

Only a few houses were built in Lansell Road during these boom years, one being The Towers built for landboomer Sir Matthew Davies.

1890

Extension of the railway through Heyington and the new cable tram in Toorak Road added to the attraction of this prestigious district for new property owners.

1890s

Davies' bankruptcy in the depression however meant The Towers remained empty for some time.

1912

Most of the estate, including land to the south of the house was subdivided and Towers Road was created.

1914-15

On one of these allotments (possibly the site of the Tower's tennis court), a two storey brick house was built for Dr. F. Hudson-Eastwood, to the design of architect Chris Cowper.

Rate books list it as vacant land (100'x220') in 1914-15 and a 12 room brick house in 1915-16.

c1922, Hudson-Eastwood sold the property to John Pletzecker who occupied the house known as Ballara for more than twenty years.

1927

The Towers was demolished and its grounds subdivided into housing allotments.

1939

Kingsley Court was created to the north of 49 Lansell Road, under a private street scheme.

1986

Application for alterations and additions

1999

Owner describes house as 4 main rooms on both ground and 1st floor levels accessed by central hallways, a kitchen at the rear with servants rooms, and an added vestibule rear entry: the condition or integrity was stated as 'basically original' and that 'no major refurbishment' had been undertaken.

Chris A Cowper

1869

Cowper was born in South Africa

1883

Emigrated to Melbourne

1892

Established an architectural practice

1906,

Travelled the world to study domestic architecture.

1908-12

Heritage Overlay Review - Amendment C5, C6
Ballara 49 Lansell Road, Toorak heritage assessment

Purchased allotments in the Grace Park estate, Hawthorn, and designed and built 33 houses there, 13 in Linda Crescent, 11 in Crystobel Crescent and 3 in Moore St, largely in a single-storey, mainly hipped roof Melbourne Queen Anne revival style.

1912 onwards

Cowper undertook larger domestic and commercial commissions,

1920-1

Designed Summerland Mansions 17 Fitzroy Street, St Kilda.

1921 onwards

Cowper, Murphy and Appleford designed Bryn, a block of flats in Orrong Road, Toorak and other flats in Middle Brighton and East Camberwell

1928

Designed Chancery House extension, Bourke St, Melbourne

1934, 1939

Designed Ard Rudah, Devonshire Lane, Mt Macedon for his own use

1939-40


Cowper, Murphy and Appleford designed St Moritz skating rink and cafe on The Esplanade, St Kilda, the Dendy Theatre in Church Street, Middle Brighton, and the reconstruction of the Regent Theatre, Collins St.

1949

Cowper, Murphy and Appleford ceased

1954

Chris Cowper died aged 85.



ANALYSIS

Thematic context

The Principal Australian Historic Themes (PAHT) have been developed by the Australian Heritage Commission to allow assessment of historical significance within a national historical thematic framework.

PAHT	Subtheme	Category
Building settlements, towns and cities	Making suburbs	house, urban

Comparative analysis

Summary

The house represents a turning point in Cowper's design vocabulary from the terra-cotta character of his Queen Anne revival style houses to simpler, stuccoed Bungalow-style creations. This change reflects, in turn, international trends away from the ornate architecture of the 19th century towards the simplicity of the Bungalow style that emanated from North America. This style (termed the Californian Bungalow style) was adopted en masse after WW1 as the form for major residential developments across the country: this was an early example of a two-storey approach to this dominantly one-level style.

Cowper's work:

Ballara (1914), along with Cowper's own house in Studley Avenue, Kew (1907), Constantia in Hilda Crescent, Hawthorn (1907-12) and an attic storey English vernacular villa at 71 The Broadway, Camberwell (c. 1915), is amongst the earliest examples of Cowper's work to draw inspiration from the English domestic revival. His earlier domestic work is characterised by Queen Anne houses in the suburbs of Kew, Hawthorn and Camberwell and by 33 houses in the Grace Park Estate in Hawthorn (1908 onwards). These typically employed the standard Queen Anne Revival vocabulary of red brick walls and complex terracotta tiled hipped roofs, with houses of single storey or attic storey. He has been highlighted as one of the major practitioners of the Queen Anne revival style in Melbourne by architectural historian, George Tibbits (see 'Historic Environment' V2,N2 1982)

Identified Cowper house designs in the City of Stonnington:

House, at 9 Towers Road, Toorak built 1915
House, at 45 Lansell Road, Toorak built 1915 (?)
House, at 25 Hopetoun Road, Toorak built 1916
House, at 3 Mernda Rd, Kooyong 1939 (CM&A)

Outside the City

House at 71 The Broadway, Camberwell;
House at 14 Studley Avenue, Kew
House at 22 Studley Avenue, Kew
House at Barry & Stawell Streets corner, Kew
Constantia at Hilda Crescent, Hawthorn (1907-12)
House at 62 Riversdale Rd & Fordham St corner, Hawthorn (multiple roof gables against a hipped main roof, using colonial Bungalow forms)

Other contemporary houses identified in heritage studies of the city as significant:

House at 310 Glenferrie Road, Malvern built 1912-13
House at 6 Stonnington Place, Toorak built 1912-16

Heritage Overlay Review - Amendment C5, C6
Ballara 49 Lansell Road, Toorak heritage assessment

House in Lansell Road, Toorak built 1913
 House at 17 Munro Street, Armadale built 1913
 House at 1181 Malvern Road, Malvern built 1913
 House at 221 Burke Road, Glen Iris built 1913-14 (demolished)
 House at 6 Munro Street, Armadale built 1914
 House at 679 Toorak Road, Kooyong built 1914 (demolished)
 House at 8 Stonnington Place, Toorak built 1914
 House at 4 Como Avenue, South Yarra built 1914
 House at 14 Power Avenue, Toorak built 1914
 House at 1059 Malvern Road, Toorak built 1914-15
 House at 12 Somers Avenue, Malvern built 1914-15
 House at 4 Belmont Avenue, Glen Iris built 1914c (demolished)
 House at 23 Monaro Road, Kooyong built 1915
 House at 9 Towers Road, Toorak built 1915
 House at 3 Mernda Road, Kooyong built 1915
 House at 45 Lansell Road, Toorak built 1915c
 House at 1097 Malvern Road, Toorak? built 1915c
 House at 19 Alleyne Avenue, Armadale built 1915c
 House at 4 Finch Street, Malvern East built 1915c
 House at 15-17 Webster Street, Malvern East built 1915c
 House at 5 Towers Road, Toorak built 1916
 House at 1088 Malvern Road, Armadale built 1916
 House at 25 Hopetoun Road, Toorak built 1916
 House at 1078 Malvern Road, Armadale built 1916
 House at 704 Toorak Road, Kooyong built 1916
 House at 16 Chesterfield Avenue, Malvern built 1916 (demolished)
 House at 1050 Malvern Road, Armadale built 1916-17 (demolished)
 House at 76 St. Georges Road, Toorak built 1918
 House at 28 Clendon Road, Toorak built 1918
 House at 28 Clendon Road, Toorak built 1918
 House at 304 Glenferrie Road, Malvern built 1918
 House at 64 Hopetoun Road, Toorak built 1918 (demolished)
 House at 3 Yar Orrong Road, Toorak built 1919
 House at 719 Toorak Road, Kooyong built 1919
 House at 395 Glenferrie Road, Toorak built 1919 (demolished)

Assessment against the criteria adopted by the Australian Heritage Commission

Summary of Australian Heritage Commission criteria

Code	Summary	Assessment at local significance	Assessment at contributory significance
A.4	Association with important events or historical themes		reflection of international trends away from the ornate architecture of the 19th century towards the simplicity of the Arts & Crafts, Bungalow & Prairie styles

D.2	Good example of type	externally well-preserved representation of the stylistic turning point in the designer's vocabulary	
E.1	Aesthetic importance to the community or a cultural group	the turning point in the designer's vocabulary from the terra-cotta character of his Queen Anne revival style houses to the simpler Bungalow & Prairie style	
H.1	Association with important person or group		Key example of Cowper's work, as part of his distinguished architectural career

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The house and land should remain in the heritage overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme.

Proposed extent of heritage place for the heritage overlay

The house and title land, specifically external fabric from its construction c1914.

Planning Scheme Protection in a heritage overlay: Recommended

Other heritage registers

Heritage Victoria Register: No
Register of the National Estate: No

REFERENCES

Raworth & Foster 1998 cite:

John Clare, The Post Federation House in Melbourne, unpublished B. Arch. thesis, University of Melbourne.
Context Pty Ltd, City of Prahran Conservation Review, Vol 4.
Deacon, Christopher A. Cowper 1868-1954, unpublished thesis, University of Melbourne.
D L Johnson, 'The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin', South Melbourne 1977.
D L Johnson, 'Australian Architecture 1901-51', Sydney 1980.
Malone, Betty, Section 13, North East Toorak, unpublished essay.
MMBW plan 1895.
MMBW drainage plan 93786, 49 Lansell Road.
Sawyer, Terry. Residential Flats in Melbourne, unpublished B. Arch thesis, University of Melbourne, 1982.
Subdivision plan, Governor's Park Viceregal Estate, Toorak, 1974, Prahran Archives.
Subdivision plan and sale notice, The Towers Estate, 1912. plan 164, Prahran Archives.
Tibbits, George. The So-Called Melbourne Domestic Queen Anne, Historic Environment, Vol 2, No 2, 1982.

Further References

Prahran Rate books Toorak Ward: 1914-15, 1044; 1915-16, 1051.

Heritage Overlay Review - Amendment C5, C6
Ballara 49 Lansell Road, Toorak heritage assessment

Further work

Other occupiers/ owners?

Appendix 1 Previous citation

Council has considered a series of amendments to the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme. During the exhibition period of former Amendments L47 and L61 objections to the inclusion of some properties in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay were received. Therefore Council resolved to undertake further analysis of the heritage citations of affected properties prior to holding an independent panel hearing. The amendments are now known as C5 and C6(2) respectively. The following citation was exhibited with amendment L61.

INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd with Di Foster, historian, to investigate the significance of Ballara, 49 Lansell Road, Toorak, and to determine the appropriateness of its inclusion within the schedule to the Heritage Overlay within the planning scheme. The report builds on work carried out by Context Pty Ltd in the City of Prahran Conservation Review, 1993.

The City of Prahran Conservation Review graded the building as A2+ (almost certainly of regional significance), but suggested that the building would warrant an A1 grading if found to be the work of a significant architect. It is not presently listed on the Victorian Heritage Register or the Register of the National Estate, nor is it classified by the National Trust.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This report finds that 49 Lansell Road is of high regional significance and should be added to the schedule to the Heritage Overlay in the local section of the Stonnington Planning Scheme and nominated to the Australian Heritage Commission for inclusion in the register of the National Estate.

At the first Crown Land Sales in June 1840, three large allotments bounded by Orrong Road, Toorak Road, Kooyong Road and the Yarra River, were sold to speculators. Lot 16, consisting of 70 acres was purchased by Sylvester J. Brown and then with lot 17, by James Jackson.[1] In 1849-50, Jackson built a large mansion with a formal garden on 148 acres, most of which was kept as bush. Jackson named the property Toorak House, which gave the area its name, and Kearney's map of 1855 shows the property extending from Orrong Road to the east side of the present-day St. George's Road.

From 1854-1873 the Victorian Government leased the property and in 1854, Sir Charles Hotham took formal possession. The Governor's occupancy helped attract other wealthy residents to the area. Around 1874, solicitor Edward Klingender sold the property to George Lansell, the Bendigo mining entrepreneur. Lansell subdivided the vast estate into large allotments facing Orrong and Toorak Roads and created the elegantly winding Lansell and St. George's Roads [2].

George Lansell's 1874 subdivision was aimed 'specially for the gentry of Victoria', [3] and whilst retaining Toorak House on a much reduced allotment, was to change the rural appearance of this part of Toorak. The sale attracted wealthy pastoralists, merchants and professionals who chose this prestigious area to build their mansions. The cable tram in Toorak Road and the extension of the railway through Heyington in 1890, added to the attraction of this prestigious district for new property owners [4]. Few houses were built in Lansell Road during the 1880s boom years, [5] but one of the more elaborate mansions facing Lansell Road, was The Towers built for landboomer Sir Matthew Davies. Following Davies' bankruptcy in the 1890s depression however, The Towers proved to be unsaleable, and the mansion remained empty for some time [6]. Most of the estate, including land to the south of the house was subdivided in 1912 and Towers Road was created.

On an allotment facing Lansell Road, on what appears to have been the site of the Tower's tennis court, a two storey brick house was built for Dr. F. Hudson-Eastwood in 1914, to the

Heritage Overlay Review - Amendment C5, C6
Ballara 49 Lansell Road, Toorak heritage assessment

design of architect Christopher Cowper. Around 1922, Hudson-Eastwood sold the property to John Pletzecker. Pletzecker occupied the house known as Ballara for more than twenty years.

The Towers was demolished in 1927 and subdivided into housing allotments. Kingsley Court was created to the north of 49 Lansell Road, under a private street scheme in 1933.

DESCRIPTION

Ballara, 49 Lansell Road, is a substantial two storey residence, located north east of the intersection of Toorak and Orrong Roads in Toorak. Lansell Road is a broad, tree lined street which links Toorak Road and the Yarra River to the north. The unusual arrangement of wide, curving streets, the exclusively residential nature of the area and the natural barrier of the river combine to discourage through traffic and produce a spacious, open and tranquil suburban environment. Lansell Road is paved in bitumen with concrete footpaths and crossovers. Modern concrete gutters are found throughout the area although original bluestone kerbs have been retained. Nature strips are unusually generous and are planted to produce a formal avenue of mature trees.

Ballara is situated near the top of a rise in this gently undulating street. The front boundary is defined by an ornamental fence in face brick with rendered buttressed piers which combines with a heavily planted garden to partially obscure the substantial house beyond. The residence is constructed principally of roughcast brick with a hipped roof of Marseilles tiles. It is a composition of simple rectangular masses and applied architectural elements that recalls English domestic revival antecedents while demonstrating an understanding of the emerging Prairie Style, most notably in its rectilinear bulk and hipped roofs. The front facade is distinguished by a bay window which rises through both stories and verandah spaces on both the ground and first floors which utilise tapered columns - these echo the tapered forms of the piers of the fence and the chimneys, adding to the distinctive overall bungalow character.

Wall surfaces of both the house and fence have been painted white which overwrites to some extent the early character of the residence, possibly unpainted when first built. The residence is in need of minor maintenance but appears to be in substantially original condition.

ARCHITECT

The architect of 49 Lansell Road was Chris A Cowper. Cowper was born in South Africa in 1869. He emigrated to Melbourne in 1883 where he established an architectural practice in 1892. In 1906, Cowper undertook a world trip to study domestic architecture.[9]

Ballara (1914), along with Cowper's own house in Studley Avenue, Kew (1907), Constantia in Hilda Crescent, Hawthorn (1907-12) and an attic storey English vernacular villa at The Broadway, Camberwell (c.1915) is amongst the earliest examples of Cowper's work to draw inspiration from the Old English domestic revival.[10] Cowper's early domestic work is characterised by Queen Anne houses in the middle ring suburbs of Kew, Hawthorn and Camberwell and by 33 houses in the Grace Park Estate in Hawthorn.[11] These typically employed the standard Queen Anne Revival vocabulary of red brick walls and complex terracotta tiled hipped roofs, with houses of single storey or attic storey.

From 1912 onwards, Cowper gravitated towards larger domestic and commercial commissions. These include Summerland Mansions at the intersection of Fitzroy and Acland Streets in St Kilda (1919) and another block of flats in Orrong Road Toorak. From 1921, the practice of Cowper, Murphy and Appleford designed Bryn, a block of flats in Orrong Road, Toorak and other flats in Middle Brighton and East Camberwell, the St Moritz skating rink and cafe on The Esplanade, St Kilda (1939) and the remodelled Dendy Theatre in Church Street, Middle Brighton (1939).[12]

Heritage Overlay Review - Amendment C5, C6
Ballara 49 Lansell Road, Toorak heritage assessment

The partnership of Cowper, Murphy and Appleford ended in 1949 although it is unlikely that Cowper had any involvement with the firm after the outbreak of World War II. Chris Cowper died in 1954 aged 85.

ANALYSIS

Ballara is an important early example of the influence of the Prairie School on Melbourne domestic architecture, in this case with overtones derived from the contemporary Old English domestic revival promoted by CFA Voysey, Baillie Scott and Parker & Unwin.

Johnson has stated that Griffin introduced the Prairie School of architecture to Australia when he began practice in Sydney and Melbourne in 1914,[13] but it is clear that by the time he had commenced domestic work in Melbourne there were Prairie School. influenced houses by local architects. Of these the best known are Philip B Hudson's Anderson House, Cotham Road, Kew (1915), and Beaver & Purnell's Ranmoor, 395 Glenferrie Road, Malvern (c1918; demolished). 14 In each of these houses the influence of the Prairie School was pronouncedly evident in the use of blocky, prismatic forms, flat roofs (or hip roofs behind parapets), strips of up to five or six consecutive double hung sash windows, and the clear articulation of piers at corners. The rendered surface of these buildings (which presumably were constructed of brick) strengthens the visual and stylistic link with landmark Prairie School buildings such as Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple at Oak Park (1906), constructed of poured concrete. As Lewis and Aitken have noted with respect to Ranmoor,[15] these buildings were both relatively unusual and isolated examples of such influence. They might be compared to some extent with Annear's contemporary houses, Broceliande in Toorak and Inglesby in South Yarra, but these appear at least as much indebted to the work of Irving Gill in California as to Chicago based influences, and they have both been demolished.

In the context of such buildings Cowper's design for Ballara seems both early and progressive. While it retains motifs of the English domestic vernacular such as roughcast and tapered chimneys, its blocky prismatic forms and simple, low pitched hipped roofs are a clear indication of American influence. Given that this building predates Hudson's Anderson house by a year or more, and that Ranmoor has been demolished, it must be considered an early example of this mode in Melbourne.

Other Prairie School based domestic work in Melbourne tended to flow from the hands or influence of Waiter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony.[16] Distinctive characteristics of the Griffin's Australian domestic work such as low hipped or flat roofs, outward inclined gables, heavy piers to walls, bold masonry forms apparently inspired in part by Mayan or Cretan monuments or the theme of the crystal, [17] prismatic glazing patterns, and centralised and informal internal planning - most of which are based in the repertoire of the Prairie School at large - were emulated almost exclusively by those architects who had worked in the Griffin offices after 1920.

Several houses designed by Edward Billson, notably the Alfred Arthur Billson house, Toorak (1918), the Margaret Armstrong house, Caulfield (1918) and the George Silcock house, Hawthorn (c 1926), with their dominant gable roofs and heavily buttressed external walls, show the link between Prairie School design, the Craftsman-cum-Californian bungalow aesthetic and Waiter Burley Griffin's own domestic work. Many of Griffin's North American houses, such as the Dr Karl Steeber house, West Pensacola Street, Chicago (c 1910), and Ralph D Griffin house, Edwardsville, Illinois (1909), had evidenced a similar interest in bold gable roofs poised over horizontal building forms, [18] and it must be noted that the gabled houses of Prairie School architects such as Wright and Griffin were commonly identified with the Craftsman movement in America. [19]

Billson's houses also identify in various aspects with the Lippincott house at 21 Glenard Drive, Heidelberg (1917-18). Roy Lippincott, who was Griffin's chief draftsman in the Melbourne office at this time, had followed Griffin to Australia from Chicago, and had previously produced a design for a brick bungalow with projecting subsidiary gable which conformed closely to the Californian bungalow mode. [20] Lippincott and Billson became partners in a number of projects and competitions independent of the Griffin office during the early and mid-1920s,

Heritage Overlay Review - Amendment C5, C6
Ballara 49 Lansell Road, Toorak heritage assessment

after which Billson entered a partnership with Keith Cheetham. Billson's work throughout the 1920s remained under the influence of Griffin and Lippincott~ and American bungalow traditions in general, but he abandoned these interests in the 1930s to become an influential exponent of International modernism.[21]

Nicholls and Ballantyne were more heavily indebted to the blocky, prismatic forms and low hipped or flat roofs of other Griffin designs, particularly the Castlecrag houses, and in this followed what might be seen as a more exclusive and idiosyncratic Griffin mode, although clearly based in the Prairie School. While a small number of their houses used gabled forms evocative of Craftsman or Californian bungalow design, in the main their bold geometric modelling, low roofs and, particularly in Nicholls's work, their decorative details set them apart from the houses of their local contemporaries, although Ballantyne's work tended more and more toward the mainstream as the years progressed.[22]

Non-domestic examples showing similar Prairie School or Frank Lloyd Wright influences, amongst which Haddon's Swinburne College is notable, are less valuable for comparative purposes.

Ballara, along with Philip B Hudson's Cotham Road house and Ranmoor, Beaver & Purnell's Tinsley house, Glenferrie Road, were earlier than the work of Billson, Ballantyne or Nicholls, were less directly influenced by the Griffins in person, and are thus of additional interest as illustrations of the general flow of American ideas into Australian domestic architectural practice in this period.

The name Ballara, meaning a place to rest, is said to be the Aboriginal form of Ballarat, Alfred Deakin's Federal electorate and the source of his first holiday house, transported to Point Lonsdale for Deakin's family to use at the turn of the century. It was subsequently also the name of his still surviving 1907-1908 bungalow at Point Lonsdale. It is not known why this name was chosen for 49 Lansell Road, other than because of the general vogue for indigenous names in the nationalistic period subsequent to Federation.

SIGNIFICANCE

Ballara, 49 Lansell Road, is of high regional and potential state architectural significance as a distinctive, early and largely externally original villa demonstrating the influence of the Prairie School in Victoria. Ballara precedes the advent of Walter Burley Griffin's domestic practice in Australia which is usually seen as the major source of Prairie School influence in Melbourne.

FOOTNOTES

1 Betty Malone, Section 13, North East Toorak, unpublished essay, p.1.

2 Governor's Park Viceregal Estate, Toorak. 1974.

3 Ibid.

4 Malone

5 MMBW plan 1895.

6 Malone, p.8

7 The Towers Estate subdivision and sale notice, 1912. plan 164. Prahran Archives.

8 MMBW drainage plan, 1914

9 Deacon, Christopher A. Comper 1868-1954, unpublished thesis, University of Melbourne.

10 John Clare, The Post Federation House in Melbourne, unpublished B. Arch. thesis, University of Melbourne, p 49.

11 See Pru Sanderson, Kew Conservation Study, A Grade Citation No 44; and George Tibbits, The So-Called Melbourne Domestic Queen Anne, Historic Environment, Vol 2, No 2, 1982, p 38.

12 Terry Sawyer, Residential Flats in Melbourne, unpublished B. Arch thesis, University of Melbourne, 1982, p 104.

13 Johnson, Australian Architecture 1901-51, p 113.

14 See also Clare, 'The post-Federation House in Melbourne', pp 30-35.

15 Malvern Conservation Study, 1992.

Heritage Overlay Review - Amendment C5, C6
Ballara 49 Lansell Road, Toorak heritage assessment

16 The influence of the Griffins is also evident in the use of Knitlock [the concrete block construction technique evolved and patented by Griffin in 1917] by other prominent architects such as Rodney Alsop.

17 See Burns, 'Prophets and the Wilderness', pp 21-30.

18 Johnson, 'The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin', South Melbourne 1977, pp 35-54, provides illustrations and discussion of these and similar gabled houses by Griffin.

19 Vincent Scully, 'The Shingle Style and the Stick Style', Yale 1971 (rev. ed.), pp 155-164, has pointed to the connection between the gabled work of Wright in particular and the Prairie School in general and the east coast Shingle Style, a major progenitor of the Craftsman bungalow mode.

20 See Lippincott's design for a bungalow in Brick Building Association One Hundred Bungalows, Boston c 1912. p 34, reproduced in Johnson Australian Architecture, p 115.

21 See Johnson, Australian Architecture 1901-51, for a discussion of Billson's and Lippincott's work.

22 Ibid for a discussion of Nicholls and Ballantyne.

REFERENCES

John Clare, The Post Federation House in Melbourne, unpublished B. Arch. thesis, University of Melbourne.

Context Pty Ltd, City of Prahran Conservation Review, Vol 4.

Deacon, Christopher A. Cowper 1868-1954, unpublished thesis, University of Melbourne.

D L Johnson, The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin, South Melbourne 1977.

D L Johnson, Australian Architecture 1901-51, Sydney 1980.

Malone, Betty, Section 13, North East Toorak, unpublished essay.

MMBW plan 1895.

MMBW drainage plan, 49 Lansell Road.

Terry Sawyer, Residential Flats in Melbourne, unpublished B. Arch thesis, University of Melbourne, 1982.

Subdivision plan, Governor's Park Viceregal Estate, Toorak, 1974, Prahran Archives.

Subdivision plan and sale notice, The Towers Estate, 1912. plan 164, Prahran Archives.

George Tibbits, The So-Called Melbourne Domestic Queen Anne, Historic Environment, Vol 2, No 2, 1982.