

INDIVIDUAL HERITAGE PLACE – CITATION

HO169

NAME OF PLACE: House

OTHER NAMES OF PLACE: Watson house.

ADDRESS / LOCATION: 11 Tintern Avenue, Toorak

PROPERTY INFORMATION: lot 8, LP4429

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local.

ASSESSED BY: Graeme Butler, Francine Gilfedder.

ASSESSMENT DATE: March 2002

REVISED ASSESSMENT October 2003

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

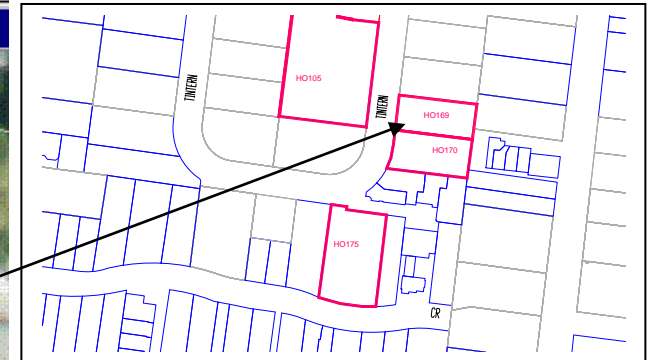
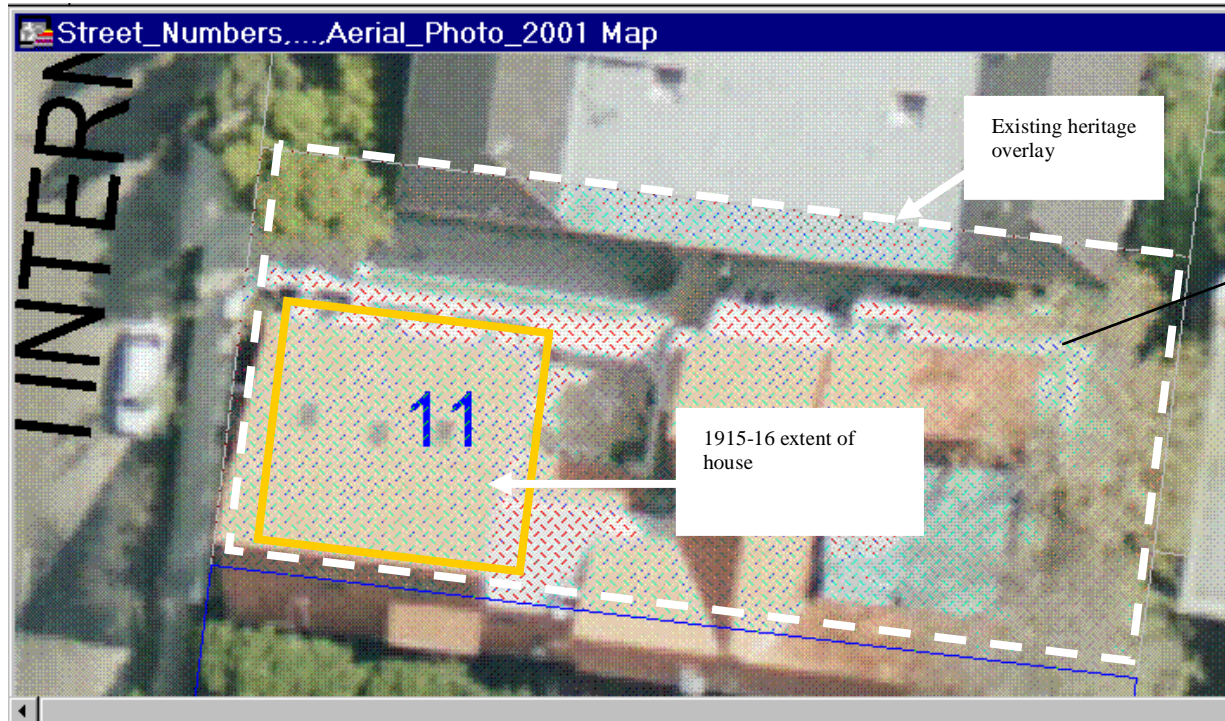
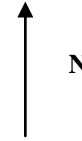
(as visible from the street)

The former Watson house at 11 Tintern Avenue Toorak is locally significant architecturally:

- for its innovative design for its construction date, with the main distinctive elements being the balcony hood and balustrade, fenestration, and steeply gabled roof form (Criterion E1);
- as an evocative example of Arts & Crafts architecture executed by one of the nation's foremost practitioners in that style, Rodney Alsop (Criterion H1).

PLAN

NAME: House
OTHER NAMES: Watson house
ADDRESS / LOCATION: 11 Tintern Avenue, Toorak
Not to Scale¹
11 TINTERN AVE, 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)

The house attic-form gabled roof house has rendered brick walls, new Marseilles pattern roof tiles, new roof windows along the side of the roof, extended chimneys and is set close to the street. A distinctive element in the front elevation is the prism-shaped, shingle-clad hood over the balcony, supported on timber struts, and associated flared shingled balustrade to the balcony below. Windows, with double hung sashes and their multi-pane glazing, are symmetrically arranged at both levels about the recessed entry.

A visually related new wing has been erected at the rear, being the 2 extra units on the site built 2000-2001; a ramp to underground car parking is on the north side of the house and the former grounds paved. The house now is one element (unit 1) in an apartment or flat block.

Because of the simple gabled attic form and the use of shingles, the style of the house has been linked with the Australian work of J Horbury-Hunt, deriving from the North American East Coast Stick or Shingle Style.

Interior

Not inspected.

Development plans (2000) show that the interior has been significantly changed by the conversion to unit 1.

Condition & integrity

(as assessed from the street)

The house is in good condition but appears to have been substantially renewed.

Raworth (1998) noted that a garage was constructed on the north side of the frontage c.1980, and it is understood that minor alterations were also made to the house at that time, including addition of a dormer window on the south, changes to ground floor windows to the south, and a sympathetically detailed extension to the rear.

The conversion to units in 2000 included: major publicly visible rear additions (units 2, 3), renewed/refurbished shingles, new roof tiles, refinished render, likely renewal of the windows and joinery to match existing, new fence, and the near total removal of the original interior)

A new visually related front fence has been erected.

Context

Tintern Avenue is located in the residential heart of Toorak. The narrow street takes the form of a crescent, beginning and ending at Toorak Road. The absence of through traffic and exclusively residential nature of the area combine to produce a tranquil streetscape that denies its proximity to Toorak Village. Number 11 Tintern Avenue occupies a narrow block at the eastern side of the crescent (Raworth, 1998). The house is located next to 13 Tintern Avenue, another notable Arts & Crafts design.

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)

1847

Crown land sale, allotments 31 and 32, bounded by the present Toorak, Williams, Malvern and Canterbury Roads, an area of about 105 acres were purchased by Thomas Colclough. Colclough subdivided the allotment into large estates, erected a comfortable home and named the property Tintern, after Tintern Abbey, Ireland.

1855

A prefabricated iron house manufactured in Glasgow, replaced Colclough's house. The ten roomed dwelling was erected on twelve acres of land in Toorak Road, for William Westgarth, eminent pioneer colonist, author, merchant and radical politician. Westgarth and his English bride lived there for only a few years, returning to Britain in 1857.

1902

Tintern's grounds were subdivided into building allotments and Tintern Avenue was created, with Tintern located on lot 12, opposite this site.

1915

Rate books 1915-16 list vacant land (62'x150') here with owner-occupier Grace H Watson. MMBW Plan of Drainage shows connection to the sewer of a two storey brick house, erected for G.H. Watson of Woodside Crescent, Toorak, to the design of architects Klingender & Alsop on one of the allotments on the east side of Tintern Avenue.

1916-17

Rate books list Grace Watson as owner-occupier of a 7 room brick house.

1917-18

Rate books show Miss Rita J Watson taking the place of Grace Watson as owner-occupier. Miss I. Watson occupied the house in into the 1940s.

1939

MMBW Plan of Drainage shows extra work carried out.

1957

Catherine Bowie of May Rd, Toorak, new owner

c1984

Owned by the Stiebel family.

1984

The house was identified in the Prahran Conservation Study Building Identification Form (N Lewis & Assoc) as of State significance (A1) in a level 2 streetscape, noting the gabled form and shingling as distinctive elements, along with the rough cast stuccoed used on the walls. The relationship with 13 Tintern was also noted, speculating that it was the same designer. The house was identified as of the Arts & Crafts style.

1998

Building Appeals Board hearing on refusal to grant a demolition permit for house after the executive director of Heritage Victoria refused to consent to the proposed demolition (29 October).

Private sale.

1999

Planning application for multi-unit development including a 3 storey structure over a basement garage for 8 cars, incorporating the existing house to total 4 flats or units. .

VCAT hearing before Jane Osborn: permit issued 2000 for part demolition of rear of existing house, and construction of 2 two storey units at the rear, with basement car parking

.

2000

Building Application to add to the existing house and construct 2 new dwellings to the rear of the existing house, to the value of \$910,000: forming 3 units. Architect Michael Factor.

Building Application for works (excavations) to unit 1, valued at \$450,000.

2001

Planning application to divide property into 3 for the new units: permit issued.

Klingender & Alsop

1912-

Involvement in the Majestic Theatre, later Chelsea Cinema, Flinders St, Melbourne

1920

Klingender & Alsop dissolved their partnership as a result of Alsop's ill health, and Klingender formed a new partnership with R B Hamilton.

c1920-4

Alsop subsequently worked in other partnerships with Marcus Martin and A & K Henderson, . In the latter he was responsible for the design of the T & G Building, Collins Street, Melbourne.

1925

Alsop travelled abroad and returned to specialise in domestic design with a Mediterranean character as seen in his own house, Winster, in Tintern, Avenue, Toorak (1925).

1920s

Heritage Overlay Review - Amendment C5, C6
House 11 Tintern Avenue, Toorak heritage assessment

Alsop and Conrad Sayce win the international competition for Winthrop Hall in the Hackett Buildings at the University of Western Australia, in a Mediterranean style.



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

This house, in its original state, was a distinctive and innovative design by one of the foremost Arts & Crafts architects in Australia. It contrasts with the contemporary, far more ornate products of architects and builders, with their red brick walls, French pattern roof tiles, terra-cotta grotesques and ornament. The subsequent changes to the house (including major publicly visible rear additions, renewed/refurbished shingles, new roof tiles, refinished render, new fence, and the near total removal of the original interior) have to be fully evaluated in terms of their effect on this expression of the style and the designer. The main distinctive elements (balcony hood and balustrade, gabled form) identified by Lewis and Raworth remain.

Klingender & Alsop's work

The design partner of Klingender & Alsop, Rodney Alsop designed many notable houses with examples such as Edrington, Berwick (1908) and Glyn, Malvern (1908) being evocative of the Arts & Crafts English domestic revival designs of architects such as Voysey and Lethaby. The interiors fittings were typically designed or made by Alsop, in the Arts and Crafts tradition that eschewed machine made detailing or ornament. Glyn is on the Victorian Heritage Register and has been selected as a national exemplar of Arts & Crafts design by Apperley, 1989.

Later Alsop designs followed the emerging Bungalow style themes with examples such as 12 Uvadale Grove, Kew (1915) (demolished) and Leighwood at 222 Mountjoy Parade, Lorne (1916). The Croft, 4 Stonnington Place, Malvern (1913). Raworth (1998) regarded this house (11 Tintern Avenue) as one of the earliest, best and more intact examples of the Craftsman idiom in the metropolitan area. Another Alsop house, Jura at Lorne (1917), has been recently added to the Victorian Heritage Register.

Houses in the City associated with Alsop, identified as potentially significant

Glyn, house, at 224 Kooyong Rd, Toorak built 1908

House, at 6 Stonnington Place, Toorak built 1912-16

House, at 6a Stonnington Place, Toorak built 1912-16c (demolished)

House, in Lansell Road, Toorak built 1913

House, at 8 Stonnington Place, Toorak built 1914 (demolished)

House, at 3 Mernda Road, Kooyong built 1915

House, at 1088 Malvern Road, Armadale built 1916

House, at 2 Stonnington Place, Toorak built 1918

House, at 13 Whernside Ave, Toorak built 1926 (demolished)

House, at 6 Church Street, Toorak built 1927

House, at 20 Yarradale Road, Toorak built 1937

Arts & Crafts

Apperley et al (1989) define Arts & Crafts architecture under the heading 'Federation Arts & Crafts': 'As its name implies, the style was concerned with the integration of art into everyday life through the medium of craftsmanship. There is a strong flavour of morality, with stress on the truthful use of materials and the honest expression of function. Arts and Crafts buildings are unpretentious and informal, evoking an atmosphere of comfortable familiarity.'

'In nineteenth century England, the moral attitudes to architecture and design preached by A. W. N. Pugin and John Ruskin were put into practice by William Morris, father of the Arts and Crafts movement. Dismayed by the effects of the Industrial Revolution and inspired by Ruskin's writings on 'The Nature of Gothic', Morris tried to put art into a broadly based social context through the reestablishment of handicraft methods reminiscent of a rural, pre industrial age. C. F. A. Voysey and Philip Webb were important Arts and Crafts architects in England. In the United States, Gustav Stickley promoted the 'Craftsman' image in architecture, interior design and furniture.'

'In Australia, Federation Arts and Crafts architecture exhibits qualities similar to those of the overseas models from which it drew inspiration. Buildings in this style are domestic in scale and make free use of traditional (usually English) vernacular motifs to achieve an unassuming, homely, well established character. Designers aimed for informality in planning, massing, fenestration and landscaping. The roof is a dominant element, featuring gables (with barges or parapets) and/or hips of medium to steep pitch and prominent eaves. Tall, tapering chimneys, battered wall buttresses and bay windows are characteristic elements of the style. Pebbledash stucco (roughcast) was commonly used as an exterior wall finish, together with other materials having earthy, 'natural' colours and textures. Interiors frequently display timber panelling and sturdy ceiling beams. Touches of Art Nouveau detail are common, both externally and internally.'

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
B.2	Rarity or distinction among a comparable group		Innovative design, showing emphasis on simple form and finish as contrasted with the more ornate and decorative Queen Anne revival styles of the era
E.1	Aesthetic importance to the community or a cultural group	Evocative example of Arts & Crafts architecture	located beside another notable example of the style at 13 Tintern Avenue
H.1	Association with important person or group	Executed by one of the nation's foremost practitioners in the Arts & Crafts style, Rodney Alsop.	

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The c1915 building and associated land (reduce existing mapped land) should remain in the heritage overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme.

Proposed extent of heritage place for the heritage overlay

The house and land, specifically external fabric from the construction date c1915

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:

Context Pty Ltd, City of Prahran Conservation Review, 1993
John Clare, The post-Federation house in Melbourne, Unpublished research report, University of Melbourne, 1984.
Bryce Raworth, A Question of Style, Unpublished Master of Architecture Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1993.

Foster 1998 cites:

City of Prahran rate book, South Yarra ward, 1934-5??.
MMBW Plan of Drainage 101200, 11 Tintern Avenue: applied 1915, carried out by 1916.
National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 'Tintern', Toorak.
Power family history file, Malvern Archives.
'Sands & McDougall Directories', 1911-1960.
Tintern Estate subdivision plan, 1902, Prahran Archives (LP4429).

Further references:

Planning application drawings 0150/99 City of Stonnington
LP4429 (copy held) 1902
Title: V8162, F 645
City of Prahran rate book (VPRS 007244/D2), South Yarra ward, 1914-15, 2050; 1915-16, 2051; 1916-17, 1917-18, 2052; 1919-20, 2062.

Further work

None

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. It investigates the significance of the property at 11 Tintern Avenue, Toorak, in order to determine the appropriateness of its inclusion within the schedule to the Heritage Overlay within the planning scheme.

The building was graded A2 in Prahran Conservation Study. It is not presently listed on the Victorian Heritage Register or the Register of the National Estate or classified by the National Trust.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This report finds that 11 Tintern Avenue is of regional and potential state 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.

HISTORY

At the crown land sale of June 1847, allotments 31 and 32, bounded by the present Toorak Williams, Malvern and Canterbury Roads, an area of about 105 acres were purchased by Thomas Colclough. Colclough subdivided the allotment into large estates, erected a comfortable home and named the property Tintern, after Tintern Abbey, Ireland. In 1855 a prefabricated iron house manufactured in Glasgow, replaced Colclough's house. The ten roomed dwelling was erected on twelve acres of land in Toorak Road, for William Westgarth, eminent pioneer colonist, author, merchant and radical politician.[1] Westgarth and his English bride lived there for only a few years, returning to Britain in 1857. In 1902 Tintern's grounds were subdivided into building allotments and Tintern Avenue was created.[2] Tintern was retained on the west side of Tintern Avenue.

In 1915, on one of the allotments on the east side of Tintern Avenue, a two storey brick house was erected for G.H. Watson to the design of architects Klingender & Alsop.[3] Miss Rita, then Miss I. Watson occupied 11 Tintern Avenue from 1916 until the 1940s.

DESCRIPTION

Tintern Avenue is located in the residential heart of Toorak. The narrow street takes the form of a crescent, beginning and ending at Toorak Road. The absence of through traffic and exclusively residential nature of the area combine to produce a tranquil streetscape that denies its proximity to Toorak Village.

Number 11 Tintern Avenue occupies a narrow block at the eastern side of the crescent. The house is built close to the front boundary with only a small bluestone wall and a narrow strip of informal planting between the footpath and the dwelling. It is built of rendered brick and comprises a ground floor and attic storey and is built in a manner that recalls American antecedents, most notably the Craftsman bungalow. A steeply pitched roof of Marseilles tiles envelopes the upper floor and extends almost to the ground to produce a striking, triangular elevation. The roof is penetrated by dormer windows along its flanks and by extended

chimneys at various points along its length. The focus of the front facade is the balcony, projecting from the attic storey and sheltered by the overhanging eaves and partially enclosed by a hood which is supported on decorative timber brackets. The balustrade and hood to the balcony are clad in hung shingles. This decorative approach is reiterated on the ground floor in decorative awnings to windows symmetrically disposed about the recessed entry.

The house is in excellent condition although the exterior has been painted an unsympathetic monochrome. A garage was constructed on the north side of the frontage c. 1980, and it is understood that minor alterations were also made to the house at that time, including addition of a dormer window on the south, changes to ground floor windows to the south, and a sympathetically detailed extension to the rear.[4]

ARCHITECT

The architect of 11 Tintern Avenue would appear to have been the notable firm of Klingender & Alsop. Rodney Alsop, the designing partner of Klingender & Alsop, rose to prominence in the first decade of the century through major houses such as Edrington, Berwick (1908) and Glyn, Malvern (1908). His work in this period showed a clear debt to the domestic design of English architects such as Voysey and Lethaby, while the interiors were often furnished with articles designed or made by Alsop, himself an Arts and Crafts enthusiast.

A number of Alsop's houses from the following decade were, however, more directly aligned with the Craftsman bungalow type. These include 12 Uvadale Grove, Kew (1915) (demolished), 11 Tintern Avenue (1915), and Leighwood, 222 Mountjoy Parade, Lorne (1916). The Croft, 4 Stonnington Place, Malvern (1913) featured a cross ridged roof form and also incorporated elements drawing on the English vernacular revival. Eclectic blends of this kind were to become a hallmark of bungalow design in Australia over the following decade.

11 Tintern Avenue follows a more conventional, single ridged, attic storey form, and is very simple in plan and concept. It nonetheless stands out as one of the earliest, best and more intact examples of the Craftsman idiom in the metropolitan area.

Klingender & Alsop dissolved their partnership in 1920 as a result of Alsop's ill health, and Klingender formed a new partnership with R B Hamilton. Alsop subsequently worked in other partnerships, including Alsop & Martin (c. 1920-21), and A & K Henderson, Alsop & Martin (1921-24). In the latter he was responsible for the design of the T & G Building, Collins Street- Melbourne. After a time abroad he returned to specialise in domestic design with a clear Mediterranean influence, as seen in his own house, Winster, Tintern, Avenue, Toorak (1925). The design Alsop produced with Conrad Sayce in winning the international competition for the Winthrop Hall in the Hackett Buildings at the University of Western Australia showed a similar influence.

ANALYSIS

The Australian bungalow of the early twentieth century is the product of a range of international influences. The work of architects of the English Domestic Revival, the Shingle Style of the American East Coast, and Californian bungalow architecture along with Swiss, Oriental and Indian influences were all instrumental in the creation of the local bungalow variant. American ideas arrived in Australia through a variety of means but two of the most influential conduits between America and Australia were, the work of Sydney based Canadian architect John Horbury Hunt and from 1901, *The Craftsman*, an Arts and Crafts magazine published by American furniture manufacturer, Gustav Stickley.[5]

Hunt practiced in Australia from 1871-1893 during which time he developed a cross ridged attic villa based on American Shingle Style architecture of the previous decades but without the formal complexity and picturesque attitude of most Shingle Style houses.[6] Hunt's houses were distinguished by enormous gables which allowed space for a generous attic storey while dominating each of the four building facades. In 1888,

Hunt transplanted some aspects of his Sydney work into a local building. The Spurling House in Brighton was a single ridged attic storey villa with hung shingles in the gable end that would anticipate some aspects of the designs published in *The Craftsman* throughout the early years of the twentieth century.

Craftsman houses, as the designs promoted by *Stickley's* magazine became known, varied in size and expense but frequently returned to the attic storey house of rectangular plan with dormer windows set in a steeply pitched gable roof and a long verandah under the fall of the eaves. This form of Craftsman bungalow first appeared in Melbourne in 1908. Skelbo by Oakden & Ballantyne for Ballantyne and Illabarook by the same firm in the following year, set the precedent for a large number of similarly designed and detailed architect-designed houses throughout the 1910s and into the 1920s. Very few examples of the style survive from the period before the end of the First World War. Examples from 1920 onward are more common, as a number of architects began to use the style in the post war period, but relatively few are as intact as 11 Tintern Avenue.

A number of houses designed by Rodney Alsop during this period exhibit a clear debt to the Craftsman type. Klingender & Alsop's house in Uvadale Grove, Kew (1915) was until its demolition, perhaps the earliest and most intact surviving example of the type, and the key comparative example in relation to 11 Tintern Avenue, which was built the same year.^[7] As stated above, 11 Tintern Avenue must also be compared with Alsop's Leighwood, 222 Mountjoy Parade, Lorne (c. 1916), which is of the same Craftsman influenced, single ridged bungalow type and which survives largely intact. Leighwood has been registered as an historic building.

A number of cottages built in Stonnington Place in the following years were strongly indebted to American and British bungalow themes. Alsop's own house, Crumford, 2 Stonnington Place, Malvern (1916) shows in the latter a greater influence from English Arts and Crafts than American Craftsman sources, with a far steeper roof, clinker brick walls and corbelled chimneys. This house has been significantly altered.

Other known Alsop houses from this period are either demolished or in a significantly altered condition, with the exception of Jura, Lorne (1917), which has recently been registered as an historic building. Jura is quite different in style and materials, however, having been built using the Knitlock concrete system patented by Walter Burley Griffin.

The residence at 11 Tintern Ave is an early, striking and substantially intact example of Craftsman design. The simple, sculptured treatment of the facade, with its triangular section hood over the projecting balcony, and the monolithic form of the roof, make it one of the outstanding examples of the genre in Melbourne. The association with Rodney Alsop, a key figure in the introduction and development of the bungalow idioms in Melbourne, enhances the significance of the site.

An investigation of the interior shows it to be of low integrity only.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The house at 11 Tintern Avenue is of regional and possibly state significance as a fine example of innovative bungalow design from the second decade of this century. It is perhaps the earliest surviving and most intact example of a Craftsman bungalow in Melbourne. The close association with prominent domestic architect Rodney Alsop adds to this significance.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 'Tintern', Toorak.
- 2 Tintern Estate subdivision plan, 1902, Prahran Archives.
- 3 MMBW drainage plan. 11 Tintern Avenue.
- 4 Prahran building approval 14709, dated 14.7.98.
- 5 Bryce Raworth. *A Question of Style*, p. 23.
- 6 John Clare, *The post-Federation house in Melbourne*, p. 46.

Heritage Overlay Review - Amendment C5, C6
House 11 Tintern Avenue, Toorak heritage assessment


7 Raworth, A Question of Style, p 25.

REFERENCES

Context Pty Ltd, City of Prahran Conservation Review, 1993

John Clare, The post-Federation house in Melbourne, Unpublished research report, University of Melbourne, 1984.

Bryce Raworth, A Question of Style, Unpublished Master of Architecture Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1993.



Appendix 2

(ADB for Windows © Melbourne University Press)

ALSOP, RODNEY HOWARD (1881-1932). architect, was born on 22 December 1881 at Kew, Melbourne, eighth and youngest child of John Alsop, actuary and trustee-manager to the State Savings Bank of Victoria, and his wife Anne, née Howard. He early showed great gifts in both drawing and model-making, skills encouraged by his poor health which kept him in passive convalescence; when he was 15 his realistic panorama of the siege of Delhi was put on public display. While still a pupil at Cumloden, St Kilda, he worked on Saturday mornings for the architects Hyndman and Bates.

After an operation in 1899 to ease his asthma, he went with his family on a tour of Europe which embraced English church and domestic architecture, the Paris Exposition (1900) and Italian art centres. On his return to Melbourne in 1901 he was articulated with Hyndman and Bates and in 1906, after admission to the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, he entered partnership with F. L. Klingender; Alsop was reputedly the designer, and Klingender the practical partner.

In 1921 he joined Kingsley Henderson [q.v.] and Marcus Martin in a practice that created the distinctive Temperance and General Mutual Life offices in several State capitals. Alsop is credited with the notion that these buildings should have a tower of similar character and all be the same colour. From September 1924 until 1931, when he joined A. Bramwell Smith, he practised alone.

In all the partnerships, Alsop is acknowledged as a design architect and a sensitive specialist in domestic work. His crowning achievement was the Winthrop Hall in the Hackett [q.v.] buildings at the University of Western Australia; his designs for them had won first place in the 1926 world-wide competition which he had entered with C. H. Sayce. The commission led to a legal dispute between Sayce and Alsop, from which the former withdrew.

Before World War I Alsop's distinctive house designs were dominated by gables in the English domestic manner, but afterwards he turned towards an arcaded Italian Renaissance mode. Like his friend Professor Leslie Wilkinson [q.v.] he endeavoured to develop an appropriate Australian style by expressing the planning requirements of a building in terms of the architecture of southern Europe. Alsop was also a respected designer of furniture and shared a skill in landscape design with his wife Dorothy Hope, daughter of Sir Nicholas Lockyer [q.v.], whom he had married in June 1912 at Toorak; their only child died in 1915. Tall and slight, of ready wit and fine features, Alsop was described as 'a true Edwardian gentleman, a man of impeccable manners, and thoroughly good company'. He was admired for his use of simple and unusual materials to create interesting and delightful effects, and his designs often drew together various artists and craftsmen as contributors to the architecture, which to Alsop was always an art. In his mature years, he was a fellow of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects and a councillor. He was an active member of its board of architectural education and the first director of the University of Melbourne's architectural atelier. On one of his five trips to Europe he represented the institute at the 1925 International Congress of Architects at Budapest. A number of his papers, including one on the importance of travel to the development of an architect, are published in the institute's Journal. Alsop died suddenly of bronchitis and asthma on 26 October 1932; he had just been awarded the 1932 bronze medal by the Royal Institute of British Architects for his Winthrop Hall — a singular honour. Survived by his wife, he was buried in Brighton cemetery.

F. Alexander, *Campus at Crawley* (Melb, 1963); *Roy Vic Inst of Architects*, J, May 1933; *Aust Home Builder*, Nov 1932; *Building and Construction* (Melb), 5 Nov 1932, 23 July 1935; D. H. Alsop, *Rodney Howard Alsop, architect* (B.Arch. report, Univ Melb, 1970); P. Navaretti, *Index of architects and their work: 1900-1940* (B.Arch. report, Univ Melb, 1971).

George Tibbits

Heritage Overlay Review - Amendment C5, C6
House 11 Tintern Avenue, Toorak heritage assessment