

**TAWARRI
HOUSE
68 NAPOLEON CRESCENT, WHITE HILLS**

**SURVEY DATE: 1991-2
STUDY GRADING: B***

**CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1947-
FIRST OWNER : GANT, AUSTIN**



CITATION:

History

In 1947, when building materials were in short supply, Austin A Gant had a two-storied brick veneer residence built on Crown Allotment Part 1, Section 6.¹ Gant, a dentist, occupied the property until after 1950.² The Gant

¹ RB1947-48, 8476; DRP239
² D1950

**BENDIGO & EAGLEHAWK HERITAGE STUDY-SIGNIFICANT SITES
GRAEME BUTLER & ASSOCIATES**

family appear to have been based in Fitzroy, where Stan Austin Gant was born in 1882, possibly a relation given the unusual name.

The builders were Midgley & Thirlwell and the design reputedly copied from a magazine still held by the Gant family². The name, Tawarri, means evening breeze which underscores the design's plentiful upstairs terrace area.

Modernist houses like this one were often illustrated in the *Australian Home Beautiful* during the war years as an illustration of things to come after the war ended. The Melbourne architect, Best Overend was the author of many of these designs.

By 1962, C G Taylor had become the owner-occupier and had the dwelling extended at the rear and side with the addition of a billiard room, a bedroom and a carport in 1977.³

Description

Distinctive in Bendigo because of its corner steel-frame windows, angled siting, shallow-hip roof (replacing the original flat one) and cuboid massing, the house is two-storey, clad with painted brick and equipped with an upper-level terrace, a portholed porch and single-level garage. The house was reputedly inspired by an architect's design and differs markedly from contemporary Bendigo houses because of the Modernistic stylism chosen.

Distributed about a central stair hall, the rooms were arranged for maximum external three-dimensional effect: the upper level bedrooms were set well back, allowing use of the lower level's roof as generous twin terraces, while the upper-level floor slab cantilevered out, acting as a porch for the entry. Unlike the static massing of Bendigo Moderne-style houses, such as Banyan in 17 Eaglehawk Road (q.v.), this house achieves its distinction by skillful placement of what appears as independent rectangular forms to achieve a dynamic composition.

External Integrity

A bedroom and carport (single-level) were added to the south end during 1977 in a visually related manner to the original and a billiard room was placed behind the garage. The flat concrete roof was augmented with the present shallow hipped profile, again in a manner which was related to the original concept⁴. Another room was added at the rear in the 1980s⁵

Context

Unrelated, except by its detached siting, but mature landscaping (cypress, weeping elm, liquid amber) appears to relate to the construction date.

Landscape

Mature garden much of it original including a particularly good weeping elm next to the garage and a cypress hedge.

Significance

Although altered, this is one of the few truly Modernist houses in Bendigo, and being built prior to 1950, it is earlier than most other Modernist examples in Victorian. The garden setting also complements the house period and is of local importance.

1 BDM index
2 Butcher & Gregson, p.73
3 DRP239; D1962
4 M Butcher pers.comm.
5 Butcher & Gregson, p.74f.