

**PLACE NAME**

"Strathcona"

**LEVEL: B****ADDRESS**112 Noble St (east side Ascot St)  
through to Mercer Pde.**AREA**

8

**DATE/PERSON** 26.5/RP**NEG:**5.27, 28 & 29**DATES****Construction:** c1900-1**USE****Present Use:** Residential**Original Use:** House**Alterations?:** Nil**FORM**Detached  
Double storey (?)  
Multi-fronted**STYLE**

Edwardian

**DESCRIPTION**

(I = Intact A = Altered \* = significant)

**ROOF**

I Corr. Iron

**WALLS**

I Timber

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**ROOF FORM**

\* Gable decoration

\* Eaves decoration

**VERANDAH**

\*\* Form

\* Decoration

**FENESTRATION**

I Doors

\* Windows

**FINISHES****INTERIOR****GARDEN & SETTING**

\* Garden form

\* Fences &amp; gates

\* Plants

\* Outbuildings

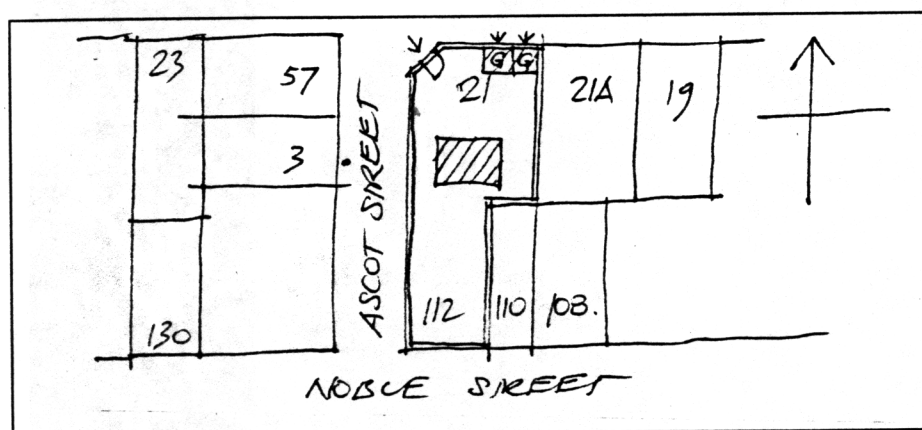
**OTHER COMMENTS**

Much obscured

**CONDITION & INTEGRITY****Condition:** Fair**Integrity:** Intact**THREATS**

## DESCRIPTION

An Edwardian timber house, with very complex roof forms, with bracketted eaves and turned timber finials. There is a 45° splayed corner rectangular bay, with wavy balustrade timbers and conical domed octagonal roof over the bay terminating the verandah. The rest has gables embossed with a rising sun motif and with an arched latticed valence. It has a very dense romantic old garden with several mature trees and old rockeries. There are two timber garages facing (21) Mercer Parade. Much of the fence has been replaced (presumably in replica) but some of the old fence remains, overgrown with mulenbeckia. It has a splayed corner Edwardian gate with turned timber spindle rails.



## HISTORY

This Edwardian villa is typical of the substantial timber houses built on elevated sites in Newtown between 1900 and 1910 for Geelong's more affluent citizens<sup>240</sup>. "Strathcona", as it was known from circa 1909, has historical interest for its associations with William Purnell and Sons, a notable Geelong firm of builders and architects. William Purnell and his family were notable, also, as purchasers of numerous blocks of land in the Geelong district, on which they built houses - for themselves, to sell or to rent<sup>241</sup>. "Strathcona" was built in 1900 as an investment and rented from the start. It stood on a very large allotment stretching back along Ascot Street from Noble Street to Mercer Parade<sup>242</sup>. The timber villa "Warranamurra" at 32 Laurel Bank Parade, Newtown, constructed in 1894, was another substantial timber house built by W. Purnell and Sons as an investment.

William Purnell and Sons were listed for the first time in 1900-1901 as the owners of a wooden house in Noble Street, of eleven rooms with pantries etc., on land 126 x 265 feet, NAV seventy pounds. The occupier was Jane Fairbairn<sup>243</sup>, who called the house "Cannick" and was there until 1906<sup>244</sup>.

William Purnell (1831-1904) was the ninth child of Joseph and Mary Purnell, the youngest of three sons. Born in London, William trained as a carpenter. In 1851, he arrived in Melbourne, later travelling to Geelong where his elder brother, Joseph, had settled. At first, William Purnell formed a building firm in partnership

240. R. Aitken, "Edwardian Geelong: An Architectural Introduction", unpublished thesis, Deakin University, 1979, p.31.

241. Les Angus Purnell, The Purnell Family, pp.80-82.

242. Newtown rate book 1900-1901 North Ward No 336.

243. Ibid.

244. Ibid 1906-7 No 351. Purnell and Sons were owners still.

with A. C. S. Clutterbuck. In 1876 this partnership was dissolved and the building firm of Purnell and Sons established<sup>245</sup>.

From 1860 to 1890 William and his family were aided by the growth of the city of Newtown and Chilwell, and built a reputation for good solid workmanship and "the purchase of land during a period of gloom and depression..."<sup>246</sup> According to Seaton, "the name of Messrs Purnell and Sons as builders was sufficient guarantee to Geelong residents. The commodious villas and their Federation or Queen Anne successors were popular"<sup>247</sup>. A 1908 advertisement for Purnell and Sons, Timber Merchants and Contractors, Architects & Builders, spoke of the members of the firm as "men more artistic in their architectural ideas". The firm promised to build a "Gem for less money than a common looking structure". These architectural ideas were full of complexities with numerous hips, gables, bay windows, balconies and geometric forms<sup>248</sup>. William Purnell died of pneumonia in May 1904<sup>249</sup>. Another example is "Warranamurra", 32 Laurel Bank Parade (q.v.).

From 1908 until 1924 "Strathcona" was owned and occupied by Arthur Baird, a dentist, the description of the property remaining the same. The name "Strathcona" was listed for the first time in 1909<sup>250</sup>. After 1920 the NAV of "Strathcona" increased to 85 pounds in 1921 and 100 pounds in 1923<sup>251</sup>.

From 1925, when "Strathcona" was purchased for 2562 pounds, the property was owned and occupied by Leslie N. Hurst, woolbroker<sup>252</sup>. Richard Stanley, a broker, purchased it from the L. N. Hurst Estate in 1938 for 2100 pounds<sup>253</sup>.

## SIGNIFICANCE

This 1900 villa has regional historical significance as an example of the substantial timber Edwardian residences built on elevated sites for Geelong's more affluent citizens, and for its associations with William Purnell and Sons, a notable Geelong firm of timber merchants, builders and architects. It is one of a number of such houses built as investments by this firm. "Warranamurra" at 32 Laurel Bank Parade (1894) is another.

"Strathcona" has architectural significance at state level for its unusual and particularly evocative Edwardian appearance and context. Significant elements include the very complex roof forms, the wavy balustrade timbers and rising sun motifs. The dense romantic garden, fence, corner gate and outbuilding garage are also significant in completing the ensemble.

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245. Purnell, pp.79-81.

246. Ibid.

247. Gladys Seaton, Model Borough, City of Newtown, 1983, p.28.

248. Stephen Davis, "Federation Houses. Geelong", unpublished research essay, Deakin University, 1981, p.26.

249. Purnell, p.81.

250. Newtown rate book 1908-9 No 349; 1909-10 No 356; 1924 No 424.

251. Ibid 1921 No 314; 1923 No 405.

252. Ibid 1925 No 436.

253. Ibid 1938 No 459.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Existing Listings      NONE

Recommend'ns      RNE      LPS  
Place  
Area 8

1  
to  
oop  
D





'Strathcona', 112 Noble Street, Newton.

c. early 20th century.

Source: Ms Madden, current owner, 2003.