

9 Linlithgow Road, Toorak Heritage Citation Report



Figure 1 9 Linlithgow Road, Toorak.

History and Historical Context

Thematic Context

The following is drawn from the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, 2006).

The End of an Era – Mansion Estates Subdivision in the Early Twentieth Century

Toorak has been described as ‘*the only suburb to acquire and keep a name which was synonymous in the public mind with wealth, extravagance and display*’.¹ The suburb’s climb to fashionable pre-eminence was due to its pleasing topographic features and the presence of the Governor’s residence from 1854 (Toorak House, after which the suburb is named). Toorak and the higher parts of South Yarra were settled by pastoralists, army officers, high-ranking professionals, and ‘self made’ merchants and traders. Their wealth was manifested in the construction of a suitably impressive mansion, usually set within expansive grounds. As Victoria’s land boom progressed into the late 1880s, the mansions became more elaborate, one of the best surviving examples being *Illawarra* (1 Illawarra Crescent), built by land-boomer Charles Henry James in 1891.

After the collapse of the land boom, many mansions were put to other uses, subdivided or demolished. The subdivision of the old estates of Toorak began to increase after World War I when the cost of maintaining these large properties became prohibitive. This process of subdivision created a unique pattern of development which can still be understood and interpreted today. Although new subdivisions imposed new road patterns within the original

¹ Paul de Serville, *Pounds and Pedigrees: The Upper Class in Victoria 1850-1880*, p.147.

grids, in many cases new estates and streets bore the name of the old properties, while the original houses were sometimes retained within a reduced garden. Toorak nonetheless retained its appeal as a wealthy enclave.

Creating Australia's most designed suburb

Toorak is notable for the strong culture of patronage between architects and their wealthy clients, which existed from the earliest times of settlement. This has resulted in a much higher than average ratio of architect designed houses. In Albany Road alone, 47 of the 61 houses built since 1872 have been attributed to architects. The consequence of this is one of the strongest concentrations of high quality residential architecture in Australia, which provides an important record of all major architectural styles and movements since the earliest days of settlement.

Architects were particularly busy in Toorak in the boom years of the 1880s when ever more prosperous merchants, businessmen and land speculators sought to create houses that would stand as testament to their wealth, status and fashionable taste. A great many examples of nineteenth century domestic architecture in the Municipality were lost through demolition, however many of these demolitions created opportunities for twentieth century architects.

After the turn of the century, architects continued to have a major influence on the wealthy suburbs within present day Stonnington. Walter Butler, Robert Hamilton, Marcus Martin and Rodney Alsop were among the notable architects whose work is well represented in Toorak. These architects built predominately in the fashionable architecture styles of the 1920s and 1930s, particularly the Georgian revival and Old English modes.

Place History

The property at 9 Linlithgow Road originally formed part of Crown Allotment 26. First purchased at the Crown land sale in 1849 by merchant James Jackson, lot 26 comprised 76 acres of land bordered by present day Kooyong, Malvern and Toorak Roads and the line of Denham Place. Jackson also purchased 108 acres of land west of Kooyong Road, where he built his mansion 'Toorak House'. East of Kooyong Road, most of 'Jackson's Paddock' remained undivided for more than twenty years. The land was fenced and leased to a succession of dairymen.

With the subdivision of Jackson's Paddock in 1872, Albany Rd was created. Western District pastoralist Albert Austin acquired six acres of land in Albany Road and in 1886 built a mansion named 'Eilyer' after his country property. By 1894, Austin owned a total of twenty nine acres of elevated land fronting Albany Road.²

In 1919, Edward Herbert Shackell, purchased 'Eilyer'. The mansion was demolished, the extensive formal gardens and surrounding estate sub-divided, and in 1922 Linlithgow Road was extended to meet Albany Road.³ The elevated allotments in Linlithgow Road attracted purchasers who could well afford architects of note, and a range of architect designed homes were erected in the new street. They included the house at 9 Linlithgow Road, which was built in 1927 for Mrs W L Fanning to designs by architects Arthur & Hugh Peck.⁴ The 1927 Sands and McDougall directory lists 'house being built' on this site (initially un-numbered). The directory for the following year lists William E Fanning as occupant.

²Stonnington Local History Catalogue Reg. No. MP 13568.

³Stonnington Local History Catalogue Reg. No. MP 13568.

⁴ Stonnington History Centre Malvern Building Plan No. 8321.

Arthur & Hugh Peck

Arthur Peck (1855-45) was a successful residential architect of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries operating a practice from Queen Street in Melbourne. He was President of the RVIA during WWI. His son, Hugh L Peck was born in 1888. He had been involved with the practice before the outbreak of war but enlisted with the 5th Battalion and departed for overseas service in 1914. He was wounded at Gallipoli in the following year. While abroad, he used the opportunity to study European Architectural traditions. On his return to Australia in 1918, he rejoined his father's practice, which became A & H L Peck.

Arthur Peck ran a successful practice prior to son's involvement. His works include the South African War Memorial, Alfred Square, St Kilda, (1905) and the *Majella* flats, 473-475 St Kilda Road, Melbourne, (1913). Through the interwar period Hugh Peck became an important residential architect in his own right working alone and in association with his father.

Both Arthur and Hugh Peck were competent if understated designers and were generally regarded as valued members of the profession. The practice endured for over half century producing a large body of work. From the late 1910s to the 1930s, A & H L Peck promoted two different visions of the English Revival. Arthur Peck was motivated by the English Domestic Revival as evinced by British architect Charles Voysey and popularised locally by the work of Rodney Alsop. Hugh Peck, by contrast, tended towards the academic approach preferred by the next generation of designers such as Robert Hamilton and others who had served in Europe and experienced European medievalism first hand.

Through the late 1930s, Arthur Peck ignored his advanced years and attended his office every day. He died in 1945. The firm of Hugh Peck and Associates continued through the 1950s concentrating on industrial works. Hugh Peck died in 1965.

Description

The site at 9 Linlithgow Road, Toorak is occupied by a large double-storey Arts and Crafts style house with a distinctive butterfly plan form. The house responds to its corner site by having two side wings facing each street frontage and meeting at a central entry porch orientated to face the Linlithgow Road corner. The junction of the side wings and porch is well handled through changes in wall angles. Above the entry porch are paired half timbered gable ends. The principal roof is hipped with terracotta shingle cladding and simply detailed rendered chimneys. Walls have a roughcast rendered finish with a clinker brick plinth and sills. Windows have timber double-hung frames with multi-pane upper sashes and louvred timber shutters.

The house remains substantially intact externally. The only apparent change in its street elevations has been the demolition of the original hipped roof garage. It was rebuilt c1975-76 as a wider garage with a roof deck concealed by a parapet. The original garage was not integral to the design and its loss has not had any major adverse impact on the integrity of the building. A change was made to the rear c1959 when a curved colonnaded loggia was enclosed to form a sunroom.⁵

Comparative Analysis

The Arts and Crafts movement had its origins in the mid-1800s in England, with writer and designer William Morris as its figurehead. Morris strove to address the lowering of standards of design and the loss of craftsmanship resulting from industrialisation and the ascendancy of cheap mass produced goods. The Arts and Crafts movement was concerned with the integration of art into everyday life through the medium of craftsmanship, and had a strong

⁵Stonnington Local History Catalogue. Malvern Building Plan 10040,01000

moral tone with a stress on the truthfulness of expression. In Australia, the Arts and Crafts movement emerged in the eastern states in the late 1890s.⁶

The Arts and Crafts movement was defined more by a set of ideals and principles than an adherence to uniform style, but its buildings have many common characteristics. Buildings in this idiom are typically domestic in scale and make free use of traditional vernacular motifs to create something that was homely but at the same time distinctive and 'modern'. Artful informality and picturesqueness are strong characteristics, with symmetrical formality occurring less frequently. Buildings were typically conceived as objects 'in the round' rather than concentrating all architectural effect on a single street facade. The roof is a dominant element and could be either gabled or hipped or a combination of the two. Roughcast rendered walls, bay windows, timber shingles, battered piers and tall tapering chimneys are common. Art Nouveau inspired details are also common, both externally and internally.⁷ A characteristic of Melbourne Arts and Crafts architecture was the diversity of approach and the high quality of design and craftsmanship.⁸ Major figures in the Melbourne Arts and Crafts scene include architects Harold Desbrowe Annear, Walter Butler, Rodney Alsop and Robert Haddon.

Although Arthur and Hugh Peck's output ebbed and flowed with prevailing local fashion, their designs rarely strayed from the precepts laid out by in the late nineteenth century by English Arts and Crafts architects Charles Voysey, and Edward Prior, and the local work of Alsop. The house at 9 Linlithgow Road strongly echoes the butterfly plan of Prior's The Barn, Exmouth (1896-1897) and Voysey's Annesley Lodge, Hampstead (1896). The butterfly plan describes a house where the central portion was flanked by wings set at an angle to it, typically so all windows were provided with views and access to fresh air and sun – reflecting a late Victorian preoccupation with health and hygiene that influenced house design well into the 1920s.⁹ There are few comparable angled plan forms in Stonnington other than Walter Butler's Warrawee (1906, demolished) and Thanet, 13A Monaro Road, Kooyong (1908, formerly Wyalla) [VHR953] although the latter has a more varied, picturesque composition without a centralised entry. Looking at Arts and Crafts style dwellings in the municipality more generally, the house at 9 Linlithgow Road is more impressive than Arthur and Hugh Peck's Player House at 333 Glenferrie Road (HO262), and more imposing and more intact than the Rodney Alsop designs at 6 Stonnington Place (HO285) and 11 Tintern Avenue (HO169).

Thematic Context

The house at 9 Linlithgow Road, Toorak illustrates the following themes, as identified in the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, 2006):

- 8.1.3 The end of an era – mansion estate subdivisions in the twentieth century
- 8.4.1 Houses as a symbol of wealth, status and fashion

Assessment Against Criteria

Assessment of the place was undertaken in accordance with the HERCON criteria and the processes outlined in the Australian ICOMOS (Burra) Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Significance.

⁶ Harriet Edquist, *Pioneers of Modernism – The Arts and Crafts Movement in Australia*, p.xii.

⁷ Apperly et. al., *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*, p.140.

⁸ Harriet Edquist, 'Arts and Crafts' in *Encyclopaedia of Australian Architecture*, p. 45.

⁹ Harriet Edquist, *Pioneers of Modernism: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Australia*, p. 45.

Statement of Significance

Note that the relevant HERCON criteria and themes from the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (TEH) are shown in brackets.

What is Significant?

The house at 9 Linlithgow Road, Toorak is a large double-storey Arts and Crafts style dwelling erected in 1927 to designs by prolific interwar architects Arthur and Hugh Peck. It was built on land subdivided from the 1880s mansion Eilyer.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The original external form, materials and detailing.
- The high level of external intactness.
- The legibility of the original built form in views from the public realm.
- The domestic garden setting (but not the fabric of the garden itself)
- The unobtrusive siting and design of the garage and absence of other modern vehicle accommodation in the front and setbacks.

How is Significant?

The house at 9 Linlithgow Road, Toorak is of local architectural significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is Significant?

The house is architecturally significant as a fine and highly intact example of Arts and Crafts principles as they were applied to interwar domestic architecture (Criterion D). The butterfly plan form created by two wings set an angle to a central axis is highly expressive of the Arts and Crafts mode and has few known equivalents in this municipality (Criterion E).

The house is of some historical interest as evidence of a major phase of development that took place in the 1920s and 1930s when many of Toorak's grand nineteenth century mansion estates were subdivided to create prestigious residential enclaves (TEH 8.1.3 The end of an era – mansion estate subdivisions in the twentieth century, Criterion A). It also illustrates the role of large architect designed houses as symbols of wealth, status and taste for Melbourne's upper classes of the interwar period (TEH 8.4.1 - Houses as a symbol of wealth, status and fashion).

Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme to the extent of the whole property as defined by the title boundaries as shown in figure 2. External paint controls, internal alteration controls and tree controls are not recommended. It is further recommended that an A2 grading be assigned to the house.

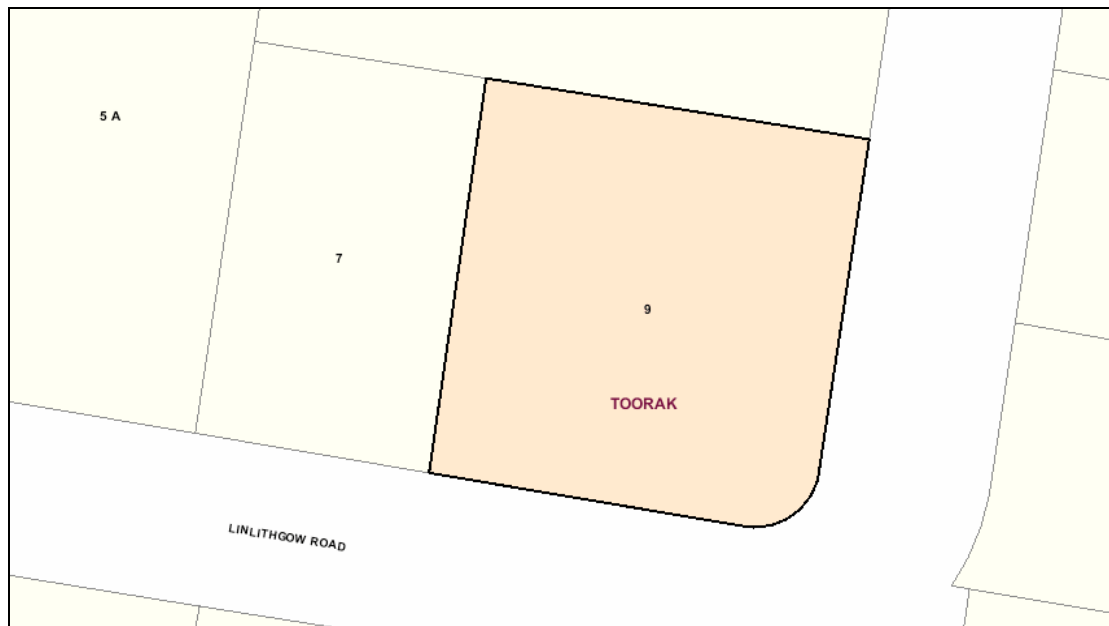


Figure 2 Recommended extent of heritage overlay for 9 Linlithgow Road, Toorak.