

Yarraby, 66 Heyington Place, Toorak
Heritage Citation Report



Figure 2 66 Heyington Place, Toorak.

History and Historical Context

Thematic Context

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

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 tastes. 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. Not surprisingly, a number of these successful 'society' architects designed and built their own houses among those of their wealthy clients.

Place History

Heyington Place was named after Heyington House, a double storey Victorian residence which stood above the banks of the Yarra, at the northern end of Heyington Place. Heyington House was built c1870-75 for artist James Alfred Turner.¹ It was initially named 'Sussex House' but soon rechristened 'Heyington'.² In 1881, the house was sold to Sir William Zeal, railway engineer, surveyor and politician. Zeal made extensive alterations and additions to the residence and added 'House' to its name.³

The 1880s saw a spate of railway building in Victoria, much of it involving expansion to the suburban network. In 1884 plans were announced for a number of new suburban railway lines, including a Glen Iris line running from Burnley to a junction with the outer circle line at Oakleigh.⁴ The line crossed over the Yarra River close to Heyington House, and around 1888 the property was resumed for use as a railway station.⁵ The first section of the Glen Iris line eventually opened for traffic on 24 March 1890, providing stations at Heyington, Kooyong, Tooronga, Gardiner, Glen Iris, Darling and Waverley Road.⁶ A 1905 MMBW Detail Plan shows Heyington House with the railway close to its east side, and fenced off land to its south (presumably a railway reserve) remaining undeveloped.⁷

Surplus railway land alongside Heyington station was subdivided into three lots in 1923.⁸ The lots were offered for sale under the instructions of the Victorian Railways Commissioners in June 1923.⁹ Heyington House was retained on Lot 1, and described in contemporary advertisements as 'that fine old brick residence'.¹⁰ Lot 2 of the subdivision formed present day 66 Heyington Place. A house was built on this site in 1924.¹¹ Named Yarraby, the house was designed by architect Frederick Hawkins of the firm Barlow & Hawkins as his own residence.¹²

Yarraby was praised in the November 1924 edition of *Australian Home Builder* for its 'dignified simplicity':

With the studied purpose of developing a distinctive Australian type of house design, Mr F. G. B. Hawkins, F.R.V.I.A., of the firm of Barlow and Hawkins, Melbourne, has erected this home for his own family use, overlooking the Yarra at Heyington, one of the most picturesque spots to be found around Melbourne. The block is a shallow one above the Heyington station, and the site called for special treatment in that respect. Taking his front on the "long" side of the allotment, and building right on the street line, Mr Hawkins has continued to compact into relatively small space all the requirements of a family home, at the same time giving the design a touch of dignified simplicity that strikes a rather unusual note in contemporary construction.

¹ *Argus*, 8 March 1924, p. 16.

² J B Cooper, *History of Prahran, 1836-1924*, p.103

³ J B Cooper, *History of Prahran, 1836-1924*, p.103

⁴ *Argus*, 11 October, 1884, p. 5.

⁵ *Argus*, 8 October, 1888, p. 10.

⁶ *Australasian*, 29 March 1890, p.48.

⁷ MMBW Detail Plan No. 928. State Library of Victoria.

⁸ Stonnington Local History Catalogue Reg. No. PH11314.

⁹ *The Argus*, 2 June 1932, p.2.

¹⁰ *The Argus*, 2 June 1932, p.2.

¹¹ Sand and McDougall Directories 1923-1925.

¹² *Australian Home Builder*, 15 November 1924, p.44.

*The Georgian pillared portico and green shuttered windows on an embankment of rough brown masonry, surmounted by flagstones and grass plots, make a gem of design in true relation to environment.*¹³

The March 1927 edition of *Australian Home Beautiful* described the house with its 'porch of classic simplicity' as being in the 'modified Colonial style'.¹⁴

Hawkins resided at Yarraby until 1928 when he relocated to Perth.¹⁵

Frederick Hawkins

*The following is drawn from an architectural biography compiled by the Heritage Committee of the Australian Institute of Architects (WA)*¹⁶

Frederick George Brudenell-Bruce Hawkins (1885-1956) was born in South Africa and educated at the Durban Art School and Technical College whilst articulated to Glasgow-born architect Arthur Fyfe. In 1905 Hawkins left for England where he attended University College London and the Trades Training School. This was followed by a period in the Hampstead office of influential engineer, architect and town planner Sir Raymond Unwin (1863-1940).

Hawkins was admitted as an Associate of the Royal British Institute of Architects in February 1910 and became an assistant to Sir Aston Webb (1849-1930), before being appointed Chief Architect to the Improvement Trust of Bombay. During the First World War, Hawkins served with the Indian Defence Force.

In 1923 Hawkins relocated to Melbourne, and with Marcus Ronald Barlow (1890–1954) he formed the highly successful firm of Grainger Little Barlow and Hawkins. John Henry Grainger and John Little had both died in 1917 and by 1926 the practice was simply known as Barlow & Hawkins. Notable buildings by Barlow & Hawkins include Temple Court (1924) at 422–428 Collins Street, Melbourne, the Public Benefit Bootery (1925) at 323–325 Bourke Street, Melbourne and the Old English style residence 'Colinton', 92 Mont Albert Road, Canterbury (1926). Hawkins residential work of the 1920s was otherwise heavily influenced by Georgian architecture. He believed that the Georgian mode could form the basis for an Australian house style:

*Australia can have Style in its domestic architecture – if Australians will but seize on the simpler old world forms, and built up from that taste, talent, climate and native spirit suggest ... what we really need is a simple basis. Let us say, the Georgian. This is selected because it is simple and solid, and yet preserves some of the matchless dignity of the original orders of architecture ... the general adoption of this style would give a touch of beauty to every residential district. And yet it need not lead to monotony, because from the Georgian basis we can evolve many variations, and in these variations the genius of Australian architecture can evolve a striking Australian style.*¹⁷

In 1927 Hawkins was president of the T-Square Club, whose influential membership included artists and other erstwhile architects such as club-founder Harold Desbrowe-Anneer. Hawkins relocated to Perth in 1928 to supervise the construction of the Victoria Insurance Company Building in St George's Terrace. He subsequently decided to set up his own practice in Western Australia and by 1929 the partnership with Barlow had been dissolved.

¹³*Australian Home Builder*, 15 November 1924, p.44.

¹⁴*Australian Home Beautiful*, 1 March, 1927, p. 19.

¹⁵www.architecture.com.au/architecture/state-territory/wa-architecture

¹⁶www.architecture.com.au/architecture/state-territory/wa-architecture

¹⁷*Australian Home Builder*, February 1924, p.61.

In the 1930s Hawkins completed a number of major office buildings in central Perth as well as carrying out a considerable amount of domestic works in the suburbs. In 1951 Hawkins entered into partnership Desmond Sands (1911-1999), creating one of the most important and innovative architectural offices in post-war Perth. Hawkins died on 27 January 1956 aged 71 years.

Description

Yarraby is a single-storey Georgian revival style house sited close to the street boundary. It has a hipped terracotta shingle clad roof and rendered chimneys with arched capping. Its windows are twelve paned double hung sashes with shutters in the Georgian fashion. The wide front façade is symmetrically composed with a central gabled entry porch supported on Tuscan columns. The porch gable end is clad in weatherboard and decorated with an oval louvred vent. Curved wing walls flanking either end of the façade also have oval penetrations. The original garage survives on the south side of the house. The Heyington Place façade is virtually unchanged aside from the loss of the urn finials from the curved wing walls.

Comparative Analysis

The interwar Georgian revival style is closely related to the Colonial revival and Mediterranean styles. It was particularly fashionable during the interwar period in the wealthy middle ring suburbs of Toorak, South Yarra and Armadale when it became synonymous with upper middle class concepts of good taste.

The interest in the Colonial Georgian resulted in part from a continued desire for the creation of a national idiom through a search for a local vernacular, which in Australia was equated with Colonial buildings of the early nineteenth century. Melbourne architects Rodney Alsop and W A M Blackett were early advocates of climatically appropriate design based on a synthesis of the Georgian and Mediterranean modes.

Colonial and Georgian revival buildings began to appear in Melbourne from about the end of the First World War, and in the 1920s are exemplified by the work of a few prominent architects – Harold Desbrowe-Anneer, Frederick Hawkins, Percy Meldrum and Marcus Martin. The idiom gained more widespread use in the 1930s. Architects drew eclectically from American Colonial, British Georgian, French and even Spanish architecture for motifs which to aggrandise the basic Georgian box. Almost invariably the idiom was represented by a two storey rectilinear form of brick or stucco with a simple hip or single ridge gable roofs and symmetry or near symmetry in the arrangement of doors, windows and balconies. House in this idiom typically featured restrained classical or Adamesque detailing, quoins at corners and around entries, and a porte cochere, often with balconies above. Other common characteristics include gabled porticos and simple wrought ironwork.

Melbourne practitioners in the Colonial and Georgian revival idioms were strongly influenced by American precedents, in part because American examples were prominent in contemporary journals and large format books, and also because there were few surviving examples of true Colonial era buildings in Victoria from which they could draw inspiration.

American Colonial influences are readily apparent in Mulberry Hill, Baxter (1925), originally a four room cottage with additions reputedly designed by Anneer in conjunction with its owner Daryl Lindsay. Another Anneer house, Cruden Farm, Langwarrin (c1929) also displays a clear lineage to American Colonial precedents, with a giant order portico reminiscent of the plantation mansions of the American south.

Barlow and Hawkins produced a number of houses in an American influenced Colonial mode in the 1920s, which can be attributed to Hawkins on the basis that Barlow's contemporary domestic work tended to a bungalowoid Arts and Crafts style. Yarraby has clearer precedent in

the American Colonial Revival examples, and the American clapboard tradition in particular, than in local Colonial survivors.¹⁸ Barlow and Hawkins' Arnold House, 15 Deepdene Road, Balwyn has many of the same characteristics as Yarraby, being a simply detailed building with an elongated hipped roof form and central gabled porch supported on Tuscan columns. The Arnold House has recently been recommended for an individual heritage overlay control.¹⁹ Yarraby is of equivalent architectural standard. In a local context, Yarraby is not an especially large house by Toorak standards but it is noteworthy as an individually distinctive and relatively early iteration of the Georgian revival mode. American influences are more strongly expressed in the design of Yarraby than many contemporaneous examples. Yarraby is also unusual in that it is single-storey rather than adopting the typical double-storey Georgian format.

Thematic Context

Yarraby at 66 Heyington Place, Toorak illustrates the following themes, as identified in the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, 2006):

8.4.3 - Architects and their houses

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.

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?

Yarraby at 66 Heyington Place is a single-storey interwar Georgian revival house designed in 1923 by noted architect Frederick Hawkins as his own residence.

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

- The original external form, materials and detailing.
- The virtually intact state of the exterior.
- The legibility of the original form in views from the public realm.
- The domestic garden setting (but not the fabric of the garden).
- The absence of modern vehicle accommodation in views from Heyington Place.

How is it significant?

Yarraby, 66 Heyington Place, Toorak is of local architectural significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

The house is architecturally significant as distinctive and virtually intact example of an interwar Georgian Revival house with American Colonial overtones (Criterion E). It is also notable as a relatively early example of the idiom, predating the widespread adoption of the Georgian modes in the 1930s.

¹⁸Bryce Raworth, *A Question of Style: Inter-War Domestic Architecture in Melbourne*, Master of Architecture Thesis, University Melbourne (1993), p. 58.

¹⁹Built Heritage Pty Ltd, *Balwyn&Balwyn North Heritage Study* (June 2013), p.57.

The house is of additional historical interest for having been designed by noted architect Frederick Hawkins as his own residence (TEH 8.4.3 - Architects and their houses, Criterion H). It is an important work in Hawkins' oeuvre, demonstrating his concern for developing an Australian architectural style derived from Georgian precedents.

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 below. External paint controls, internal alteration controls and tree controls are not recommended. The place should retain its current A2 grading.

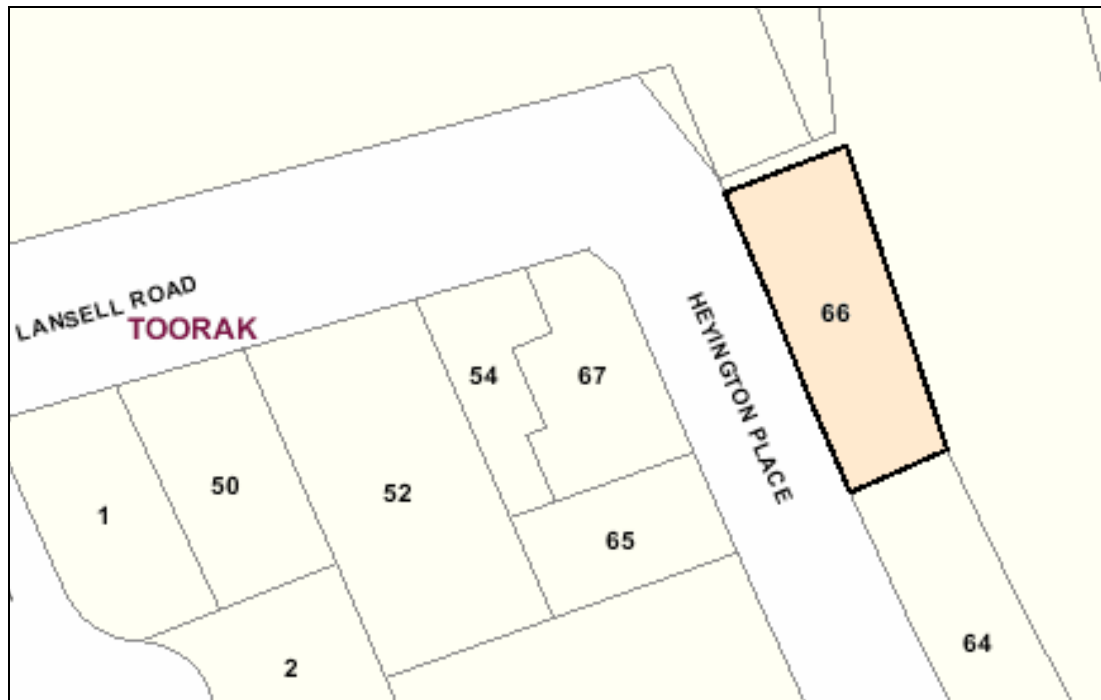


Figure 2 Recommended extent of heritage overlay for 66 Heyington Place, Toorak.