

Heritage Citation – Individual Place

Heritage Place: Residence
Address: 23 Douglas Street, Toorak

HO Reference: HO307
Citation status: Final
Date Updated: 17 March 2022

Designer: Unknown
Builder: Unknown

Year of Construction: c.1890-1895



Photograph of 23 Douglas Street (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Location map and extent of HO307.

Heritage Group: Residential buildings
Heritage Type: Residence

Key Theme: Building suburbs
Key Sub-theme: Creating Australia's most 'designed' suburbs – houses as a symbol of wealth, status and fashion

Significance Level: Local

Recommendation: Retain as an individually significant place on the HO

Controls:	<input type="checkbox"/> External paint colours	<input type="checkbox"/> Internal alterations	<input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls
	<input type="checkbox"/> Victorian Heritage Register	<input type="checkbox"/> Incorporated Plans	<input type="checkbox"/> Outbuildings and fences exemptions
	<input type="checkbox"/> Prohibited uses may be permitted	<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal Heritage Place	

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The property at 23 Douglas Street, Toorak, is significant. Specifically, the form, scale and detailing of the Arts and Crafts style residence is locally significant. The front fence, although not original, is of contributory value. The colour scheme, front fence, pool, landscaping and later alterations and additions are not significant.

How is it significant?

The residence is of rarity and aesthetic value to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

The residence at 23 Douglas Street, Toorak, is significant as a rare example of an early Arts and Crafts residence, of which there are limited comparable examples in the municipality. (Criterion B)

The residence is aesthetically significant as a highly intact and well ornamented example of the Arts and Crafts movement in the municipality. Significant features include the timber panelling and barge board to the gable ends, façade fenestration and joinery, leaded windows with stained glass flower motifs, the verandah form, curved brackets and turned posts/balustrade embellished with fluted patterns and patera motif, recessed entrance, roughcast stucco walls, elaborate roughcast stucco corbelled octagonal chimneys and hipped roof with open gable projections clad in slate tiles. The timber picket front fence, whilst not original, adds to the heritage character of the place. (Criterion E)

HERCON Criteria Assessment

A	<i>Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
B	<i>Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history</i>	The residence at 23 Douglas Street, Toorak, is significant as a rare example of an early Arts and Crafts residence, of which there are limited comparable examples in the municipality.
C	<i>Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
D	<i>Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
E	<i>Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics</i>	The residence is aesthetically significant as a highly intact and well ornamented example of the Arts and Crafts movement in the municipality. Significant features include the timber panelling and barge board to the gable ends, façade fenestration and joinery, leaded windows with stained glass flower motifs, the

		verandah form, curved brackets and turned posts/balustrade embellished with fluted patterns and patera motif, recessed entrance, roughcast stucco walls, elaborate roughcast stucco corbelled octagonal chimneys and hipped roof with open gable projections clad in slate tiles. The timber picket front fence, whilst not original, adds to the heritage character of the place.
F	<i>Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
G	<i>Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of the continuing and developing cultural traditions</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
H	<i>Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.

Description

• Physical Analysis

23 Douglas Street is a double storey residence built in an Arts and Crafts style. The main structure is single storey at the front, moving to two storeys at the rear including a contemporary extension. The masonry structure is finished in a roughcast stucco. The black/grey colour of the roughcast is employed throughout the entire building and is not part of the original colour scheme. The structure employs a hipped roof with open gable projections clad in slate tiles. The front façade is almost symmetrical, with a slightly different eave treatment and fall between the two flanking open gable projections. The left gable falls lower than the right gable forming the porch awning.

The main entrance is located in between the two front gables and set under a deep porch. The porch is raised up two steps and laid with Old English tiles in a geometric pattern. The timber verandah elements are highly decorative. The turned timber posts are shaped into three distinct sections that are embellished with fluted patterns and patera motif. The porch is enclosed with a turned timber balustrade echoing similar horizontal fluting. The posts are capped with a heavy-set entablature with curved bracket-like valances. The windows along the porch wall are highly detailed diamond pattern fine leaded glass with stained glass flower motifs. The windows in the porch and along the exterior façades are set within highly detailed carved sash boxes that emulate the forms of the turned porch posts.

The left gable end on the façade forms the porch awning with a decorated carved bargeboard at the porch end. The gable is detailed with black half-timber brackets forming the sash box of the paired

windows. The windows are a timber single hung sash window with leadlight and stained glass top light with an eight point star motif. The sash boxes extend upwards forming four equally space centred square sections each embellishes with nine cast rosette mouldings painted black. The half timbering ends under the double timber louvred vent window at the apex of the gable.

The right gable end on the façade presents a feature bay window with a set of three windows on its front and two side windows. The windows present a same style as the left gable windows. The half timbering detail can be found under the windowsill incorporated into the sash box. The bay window is protected by a lean-to awning supported by four brackets. The half timbering battens continue above the awning incorporating the single timber louvred vent window.

The right gable is met with a distinct bluestone block foundation that continues and runs along the entire east elevation. The three block course follows the slight slope of the site to become over six blocks tall where the garage meets the main structure. The single storey garage addition has a steep pitched gable roof with a three-section half-timber gable and counterweight garage door. The façade features a small dragon gargoyle located halfway up the ground level wall.

A key feature of the structure is its four tall imposing chimneys. Three of the chimneys present a square roughcast form with a wide tapered base and an entablature form corbelled octagonal chimney cap with a terracotta pot. The fourth chimney has a similar form but with a doubled chimney stack forming a wider chimney. The contemporary back extension includes shingle style cladding, a flat corrugated galvanised iron roof and a row of skylights adjoining the original gable roof.

The main structure is set back slightly from the street front. The front boundary is demarcated by a low black timber picket fence and posts with a corbelled and spiked cap. The narrow front yard is heavily planted with a mature deciduous tree and dense underplanting of Lily of the Nile (*agapanthus*) and cycads (*cycadophyta*). There is a narrow side driveway laid in asphalt leading to the garage. The backyard includes an extensive paved area surrounding the swimming pool located at the north east corner of the property. There is a single storey free standing addition located beside the swimming pool.

23 Douglas Street is located close to the main Grange and Toorak Roads. It is in close proximity to the Geelong Grammar School and the commercial precinct along Toorak Road. The property is currently used as a private residence. The second storey rear extension and alterations to the backyard remain obscured from street view. The original structure retains its high level of detailing. However, the overall paint scheme has been altered to be completely black/grey and does not reflect the original colours. The property is considered in good condition. Until the existing colour scheme can be reverted to be more historically accurate, 23 Douglas Street is considered to be of moderate integrity.

- [Alterations and Additions](#)

- Entire façade painted black.
- Side garage added.
- Second storey extension added.
- Skylights added to the main roof.
- Swimming pool added.
- Pool house added.
- Backyard landscape altered.

History

• Historical Context

For thousands of years preceding European colonialism, the area now known as Stonnington was the traditional home of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung people of the Eastern Kulin Nation. This environment would have provided Traditional Owners with access to pre-contact plains, grassy woodland, and floodplains on the banks of the Yarra River (Birrarung), Gardiners Creek (Kooyong Koot), and Hawksburn Creek (now channelised), in a rolling landscape on the northern shore of Port Phillip Bay. It is important to note that the rich cultural heritage of Traditional Owners in Stonnington did not end with colonialism—it has a rich presence to this day.

Following the establishment of Melbourne in 1835, squatter John Gardiner and many others like him sought out land in what would become present day Toorak and surrounds on account of its densely timbered landscape, undulating terrain and proximity to water. By 1840, crown land sales marked the area's transition to pastoral settlement, and later in 1851, with the purchase of land in Hawthorn by Thomas Herbert Power, the surrounding environments gradually became a place where the early merchant and squatter elite of Melbourne built their homesteads. In Toorak, this is best represented by the purchase of lot 26 by James Jackson, associate in Jackson, Rae & Co. soap and candle merchants. Jackson was described by politician William Westgarth as 'Melbourne's greatest merchant of this early time' (Forster 1999, 10). It is only fitting that his house, called Toorak House, would be the namesake of what would become arguably the most affluent suburb in Melbourne. Following the discovery of gold in the 1850s and the wealth this produced for ancillary trades, the Toorak area drew in Melbourne's newly wealthy. Today, over a century later, Toorak still has connotations of wealth and prestige as best represented in its history and built environment (Forster 1999, 5–26).

• Place History

The land on which 23 Douglas Street stands was formerly part of the Crown Portions 13 & 14. These portions were subdivided in 1869, and the newly created residential blocks fronting Bruce Street, Washington Street, Douglas Street (then known as Andrew Street) were subsequently put on sale (Woodward 1869).

Although the existing citation indicates that the dwelling at 23 Douglas Street was not constructed until c.1905, further research reveals otherwise. A 1900 MMBW map shows a property standing at 23 Douglas Street with the same front façade as the current dwelling (MMBW 1900), and it is first recorded in directories in 1895 (Sands and McDougall 1895). Given that it is not mentioned in the 1890 directory, it can be ascertained that the residence was erected at some point between 1890 and 1895. Given its construction date, the dwelling is thus a early example of the Arts and Craft architectural style that was only beginning to flourish in the area.

While a search of historical records have not revealed an architect, directories indicate that the initial occupant and owner as M. G. Robertson. By 1905, Miss M.G. Robertson is listed alongside a relative named Arthur Robertson. M. G. Robertson appears to have occupied the dwelling until around 1955, marking an impressive six decade occupancy (Sands and McDougall 1955). By 1960, Mrs E. Calanchini is listed as the official owner of the residence (Sands and McDougall 1960). The dwelling appears to have been passed onto her son Dr William Michael Calanchini upon her death, and he is listed as the owner by 1974 (Sands and McDougall 1974; The Bulletin 1949, 19). Given the lack of available historical

material, it is not known as to precisely how long William Calanchini occupied the dwelling for. More recent property records indicate that it was sold twice in the late twentieth century, once in 1986, and then again in 1998.

Comparative Analysis

As the architect for the residence at 23 Douglas Street, Toorak, cannot be verified at this point, the comparative analysis instead focuses on the style of the dwelling. However, there is little representation of early single storey Arts and Crafts residences in the City of Stonnington. Comparable examples are therefore limited, reflecting the significance of the dwelling at 23 Douglas Street, Toorak in terms of its style and era. However, there are other dwellings in the City of Stonnington with comparable features, which contextualise the significance of the site.

Comparable examples include:

- **Thurla (HO4) (1 Avalon Road, Armadale).** Both 23 Douglas Street, Toorak, and Thurla at 1 Avalon Road, Armadale, are notable as early examples of Arts and Crafts domestic design in the municipality. Whilst the residence at Douglas Street was constructed almost ten years before Thurla, both buildings abide by the single storey form with gabled rooves, projecting gable ends, and decorative timberwork befitting the Arts and Crafts aesthetic.
- **Moorah House (13 Tintern Avenue, Toorak) (HO170).** Moorah House was designed by A.S. Eggleston following Walter Butler's subdivision of the Tintern Estate in 1902. Moorah House, is comparable to the residence at 23 Douglas Street, as single storey Arts and Crafts house. The house does have some differing characteristics, however clear similarities include the use of a projecting gable and the original use of brick and render (though it now appears to have been completely rendered) and decorative timberwork. That being said however, Douglas Street is a far more elaborate example of the Arts and Crafts movement, and can be recognised as a far better example of the design from aesthetic perspective.

References

Foster, D. 1999. 'Melbourne's Most Fashionable Suburb: A History of Toorak, East of Kooyong Road 1840–1998.' Unpublished Masters diss., Monash University.

John Curtis and Associates with Graeme Butler. 1991. 'Pahran Character and Conservation Study.' Unpublished report prepared for City of Prahran. PDF file.

State Library of Victoria, Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works, detail plan No. 938, dated 1900.

State Library of Victoria, Sands & McDougall Street Directories of Victoria, 1890-1974 ed.

Stonnington City Council. 2007. Heritage Citation Report: Moorah House, 13 Tintern Avenue, Toorak, Hermes ID 2007. Unpublished report. PDF file.

Stonnington City Council. 2007. Heritage Citation Report: Thurla, 1 Avalon Road, Armadale, Hermes ID 30471. Unpublished report. PDF file.

Woodward, G. 1869. Land subdivision – Washington Street area. Subdivision plan. Prahan Collections, ref no. PH11020. Stonnington History Centre.

From Melbourne. (1949, February 9). *The Bulletin*, 19.

Limitations

1. Access to all heritage places was limited to a visual inspection from the public domain. The interiors of buildings and inaccessible areas such as rear gardens were not accessed as part of this heritage study.
2. Condition and site modification assessment was limited to a visual inspection undertaken from the public domain.
3. The historical notes provided for this citation are not considered to be an exhaustive history of the site.

Further Images



Oblique view of façade and eastern elevation (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Façade details on the eastern projecting bay (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Verandah details on façade (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Façade details on the western projecting bay (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Chimney details on eastern elevation and the contemporary rear extension (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Flying party wall detailing on southwestern corner (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Chimney details (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of the eastern projecting bay (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Bluestone foundation, eastern elevation (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Oblique view of the rear extension, looking south east (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).

Authors

Former citation prepared by: John Curtis Pty Ltd & Graeme Butler & Associates, 1991.

Updated citation prepared by: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2022.