

### 3 Presentation of officer reports

#### 3.1 61 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell - Heritage Regrading Assessment

##### Abstract

This report seeks a resolution from the Urban Planning Special Committee (UPSC) to update the *Schedule of Gradings Map* to regrade the property at 61 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell from non-contributory to contributory to HO159 - Prospect Hill Road Heritage Precinct. The regrading will have the effect of changing the approach to assessment of any future planning permit application which could be lodged for the property. In particular, in the event a planning application for full demolition of the property was lodged the proposal would not be supported.

The regrading assessment was initiated following a nomination by community members in the local area, in response to a change of property ownership in May 2018. The Strategic Planning Department requested Council's heritage consultant, Context, to review the grading of the property following receipt of the community nomination.

Consultation has been undertaken with the affected property owner, adjoining property owners and interested parties in relation to the regrading assessment prepared by Context. At the date of this report being prepared, 192 submissions had been received in support of the proposed regrading, and one submission from the property owner objecting to the proposed regrading.

The feedback received reinforced the architectural significance of the property as a striking Victorian era dwelling built in 1886. The property is recognised by the National Trust in their Victorian Heritage database as a locally significant mansion. Submitters also note the contribution of the property to the heritage precinct as a large property with prominent architectural features in a prominent hilltop position.

Officers are recommending the property be regraded from non-contributory to contributory to the HO159 - Prospect Hill Road Heritage Precinct, with a consequential update made to Council's *Schedule of Gradings Map*. Officers also recommend a request for authorisation to prepare and exhibit a planning scheme amendment be made to the Minister for Planning to reflect the regrading of the property in the Boroondara Planning Scheme.

##### Officers' recommendation

That the Urban Planning Special Committee resolve to:

1. Receive and note the feedback received from submitters in relation to the proposed heritage regrading assessment for 61 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell.
2. Adopt the heritage regrading assessment of the property at 61 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell prepared by Context Pty Ltd.

3. Update the *Boroondara Schedule of Gradings Map* to show the property at 61 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell as contributory to the Prospect Hill Road Heritage Precinct.
4. Write to the Minister for Planning to request authorisation to prepare an amendment to the Boroondara Planning Scheme in accordance with Section 4B and 8A(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* to incorporate the contributory grading for 61 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell into the Boroondara Planning Scheme.
5. Following receipt of Authorisation from the Minister for Planning, exhibit the amendment in accordance with Section 19 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.
6. Authorise the Director City Planning to undertake administrative changes to the amendment that do not change the intent of the amendment or any changes required under the Minister for Planning's Authorisation prior to the commencement of exhibition.

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**Responsible director: Shiran Wickramasinghe  
City Planning**

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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide a summary of the outcomes of the consultation process in relation to the proposed regrading of 61 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell and key issues raised in the feedback.
- Recommend that the property be regraded from non-contributory to contributory to the Prospect Hill Road Heritage Precinct.
- Seek a resolution from the Urban Planning Special Committee (UPSC) to request the preparation and exhibition of a planning scheme amendment to incorporate the contributory grading for 61 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell into the Boroondara Planning Scheme.

## 2. Policy implications and relevance to community plan and council plan

### **Boroondara Community Plan 2017-27**

The Boroondara Community Plan 2017-27 sets out the 10 year vision for Boroondara's future based on values, aspirations and priorities important to the community.

The regrading implements Strategic Objective 4 of the Plan: *Protect the heritage and respect the character of the City to maintain amenity and liveability while recognising the need for appropriate, well-designed development for future generations.*

Specifically, the regrading implements the following strategy:

- **Strategy 4.6** - Engage with owners and developers to achieve a balance between development and protection of neighbourhood character, heritage and amenity.

### **Heritage Action Plan 2016**

The Heritage Action Plan was adopted by Council on 2 May 2016 and establishes the framework to guide Council's heritage work program as it relates to the identification, protection, management and promotion of Boroondara's heritage assets.

The assessment of, and updates to, the grading of identified heritage places are identified as ongoing actions in the Heritage Action Plan 2016.

### **Boroondara Planning Scheme**

The regrading is consistent with the objectives of the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) and Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF). In particular it addresses the following Clauses:

- Clause 15.03-1 *Heritage Conservation* which seeks to 'ensure the conservation of places of heritage significance' by identifying, retaining and protecting places with identified heritage significance;

- Clause 21.04-5 - *Built Environment and Heritage* of the Municipal Strategic Statement which includes the objective *'to identify and protect all individual places, objects and precincts of cultural, aboriginal, urban and landscape significance'*; and
- Clause 22.03-2 Heritage Policy which seeks to *'preserve 'significant' heritage places, protecting all significant heritage fabric including elements that cannot be seen from the public realm'*.

Both the SPPF and LPPF seek to ensure the Heritage Overlay is applied to protect places of heritage significance in the City of Boroondara.

### **Plan Melbourne 2017-2050**

The identification, assessment and protection of places of local heritage significance are supported by Outcome 4 of *Plan Melbourne* which seeks to ensure *'Melbourne is a distinctive and liveable city with quality design and amenity'*. Direction 4.4 recognises the contribution heritage makes to Melbourne's distinctiveness and liveability and advocates for the protection of Melbourne's heritage places.

In particular, Policy 4.4.1 recognises the need for *'continuous identification and review of currently unprotected heritage sites and targeted assessments of heritage sites in areas identified as likely to be subject to substantial change'*.

The regrading is consistent with these *Plan Melbourne* directions and initiatives.

### **Planning and Environment Act 1987**

The proposal is consistent with the objectives of planning in Victoria, in particular the objective detailed in Section 4(1)(d) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act), being:

*To conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value.*

This means Council has a statutory obligation to continuously identify and protect places of heritage significance through the Heritage Overlay.

## **3. Background**

### **Nomination of the property**

The property at 61 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell, known as 'Beulah', is graded as a non-contributory property in the HO159 - Prospect Hill Road Heritage Precinct and first included in the precinct Heritage Overlay in 1992. The property was sold at auction on 18 May 2019.

Council's heritage consultant, Context, reviewed the grading of the property in response to a detailed nomination for regrading prepared by community members submitted on 24 May 2019. This nomination contained both historical research, speculation on matters such as the designing architect, and conclusions in regard to the heritage values of the property.

## **The regrading assessment**

Context's Heritage Regrading Assessment provided at **Attachment 1** involved investigation into the history and significance of 'Beulah'. All of the key historical facts included in the community nomination have been verified by Context and included into the regrading assessment.

Context has recommended the property be regraded from non-contributory to contributory within the Prospect Hill Road Heritage Precinct. In the view of the consultant, the property is one of a group of the earliest houses developed during the 1880s in the Prospect Hill Estate and is sufficiently intact to be legible as a Victorian-era dwelling. Council's Heritage Consultant also concluded the property contributes to the Victorian character of the precinct.

## **Consultation process**

Council's Strategic Planning Department undertook a consultation process from 21 October 2019 to 15 November 2019. This consultation process involved:

- Sending letters to the affected property owner at 61 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell.
- Sending letters to all adjoining property owners and occupiers to the subject property.
- Sending letters to interested parties associated with requesting the proposed regrading.
- A webpage on Council's website providing a link to an online submission form for all parties to lodge feedback.

## **4. Outline of key issues/options**

### **Consultation outcomes**

At the time of preparing this report, Council had received 192 submissions in support of the proposed regrading and one submission from the property owner objecting to the regrading.

No changes have been made to the regrading assessment following consultation.

The key issues raised in the feedback are summarised below:

### **Architectural significance of the house**

Many submitters note the property is a large, striking example of Victorian architecture in an area that is well known for its Victorian and Edwardian houses. The property was built circa 1886, and is one of the oldest houses in the area. The property also includes rare architectural features especially in its large tower and its Gothic design. Many submitters noted the property was only superficially altered and could be restored overtime, preserving its Victorian character.

The property is recognised by the National Trust in their Victorian Heritage database as a locally significant mansion. The property is recognised by the National Trust as being of local significance.

In the view of Council's heritage consultant, the property is clearly discernible as a substantial Victorian era dwelling with a large garden setting which enhances its landmark character.

### **Contribution to the heritage precinct**

Many submitters believe the property to be a landmark building in the Prospect Hill Road Heritage Precinct. It is a large property with prominent architectural features in a prominent hilltop position.

The property has been home to at least two previous owners who are associated with significant historical and cultural development of early Melbourne and of 20th century scientific innovation. In this regard the property is seen by the community as having a degree of social significance.

In the view of Council's heritage consultant, the property plays an integral role in demonstrating the cultural heritage significance of the precinct which includes the former Prospect Hill Estate which has a prevailing character of Victorian and Federation era development.

### **Historical ownership of the property**

One submitter believes there is an error in identifying the original owner of the home based on the dates recorded in relation to the ownership of the property by Mrs Caroline McArthur. Council's heritage assessment identifies Mrs McArthur as the owner of the property from August 1888 and had moved in shortly after based on the 1890 Sands and McDougall street directory. The heritage assessment identifies Mr George Watts as the first owner of the home and this was likely to have occurred in May 1887.

Council's heritage consultant notes that Mr George Watts is recorded as the first resident of the subject property. This is recorded as records Nos. 782 and 783 in the 1889 City of Camberwell Ratebook. The initial record was recorded in September 1888, however the rates surveyor most likely gathered this information shortly beforehand, prior to the August 1888 transfer to Mrs Caroline McArthur.

The property was transferred to Mrs Caroline McArthur in August 1888 (certificate of title Vol. 2053 Fol. 514, attached). At that date, Mrs McArthur still resided at her home in Heidelberg (as recorded on the title certificate).

While Mr Watts may have been a builder/developer, there is no listing or indication of him as such in street directories or newspapers between 1885 and 1895. While it is possible that Mr Watts was a developer who built 'Beulah' to sell, and perhaps specifically for Mrs McArthur, no firm evidence has been identified to support the theory.

It was noted that an error existed on Page 5 of the heritage assessment where the date read as 13 August 1889. Officers have corrected the date on Page 5 to read as 13 August 1888, consistent with the historical research.

### **Concern about loss of heritage properties in the area**

Residents and submitters were concerned the non-contributory grading of the property meant it was at risk of demolition despite being in a heritage overlay.

This is mostly because Council's Heritage Policy allows for the full demolition of non-contributory buildings in precincts. In this regard, submitters expressed the concern the building could be lost and replaced with a residence that was inconsistent with the heritage character of the precinct.

The regrading of the property to contributory would result in any future planning application for demolition not being supported by Council.

### **Feedback from the property owner**

A submission was received on behalf of the property owner. The submitter notes the local interest in the property and expresses concern the process of regrading the property was initiated by community members in response to the transfer of ownership. A follow-up submission was received on behalf of the property owner objecting to the proposed regrading.

The submission notes the following matters:

1. The property was left ungraded as part of the *Camberwell Conservation Study* 1991 which was ultimately translated in 2006 to a non-contributory grading.
2. The proposed regrading does not satisfy the *Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines* (rev. 2019) in respect of associational significance with D.C McArthur, Elizabeth Robinson, and Anthony George Maldon Mitchell.

Officers referred the submission to Council's heritage consultant for review and response:

1. When larger areas are assessed for their heritage value, such as the previous assessment of the HO159 Prospect Hill Road Precinct in 1991, by necessity consideration of each property is brief. A precinct is typically discerned by the consistency in form overall with other properties in the area.

In determining the existing grading of the property, Council's heritage consultant is confident the original assessor in 1991 would have identified the property as an altered Victorian-era villa. The assessor would not have understood the original composition of the building, nor the extent of alterations. On this basis, it appears a conservative approach was taken in leaving the property ungraded. This was ultimately translated into a non-contributory grading.

The recent nomination to regrade the property has provided an opportunity to review the history of the property in detail. Of particular importance is the consideration of its original appearance (as evidenced in State Library of Australia photographs) and its changes over time. Photographs provide a pathway for accurate reinstatement of altered and removed external features of the house (such as the crenellated parapets and verandah detail), which could be reinstated should the current or a future owner desire. They also make it clear the house is of an overall level of intactness commensurate with other contributory graded buildings in Boroondara's HO precincts. These photos were not available when the original assessment was undertaken by Graeme Butler in 1991.

2. The submitter objects to the regrading assessment on the basis it has not met Criterion H - Associational Significance. Officers note this criterion was a key consideration of the regrading assessment given the community nomination emphasised the significance of the property based on historical land ownership. The submitter did not object on the basis of any other criteria.

The Context regrading assessment necessarily examined all potential heritage values of 61 Prospect Hill Road, as set out in the community nomination and those considered pertinent by Council's heritage consultant. The assessment concluded the property clearly contributes to the historical and architectural character of the existing heritage precinct as one of a group of the earliest houses developed during the 1880s in the Prospect Hill Estate and as a substantial Victorian-era development (this would correspond to Criterion A and D).

The conclusion of this assessment was that the property was not of significance on the basis of its association with early owners (i.e. under Criterion H).

On this basis, Context has recommended that the property be regraded to Contributory. It is noted that the threshold for a Contributory grading is lower than a Significant grading, but both are protected within heritage precincts. Further, there is no requirement that all criteria be satisfied to be graded contributory.

## **Planning Scheme Amendment**

The property is currently graded as non-contributory in the HO159 - Prospect Hill Road Heritage Precinct in the Boroondara Heritage Overlay. The gradings of all properties in the Boroondara Heritage Overlay are mapped in the *Boroondara Schedule of Gradings Map*. This document is a reference document in the Boroondara Planning Scheme.

Amendment VC148 was gazetted by the Minister for Planning on 31 July 2018. This amendment introduced a requirement for a statement of significance for each heritage place to be formally incorporated into the planning scheme by way of an incorporated document. This amendment has the effect of changing the status of heritage gradings from a reference (background) documents into incorporated documents and in effect gives greater weight to the gradings in decision making. A planning scheme amendment is required to change an incorporated document.

Officers have been in discussions with the Department of Environment, Land and Planning to advocate for the translation of the existing *Boroondara Schedule of Gradings Map* reference document into an incorporated document by way of a fast track planning scheme amendment under Section 20(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. This request has been made in context of Amendment VC148. A decision has not been made by DELWP on Council's request for a policy neutral translation of the *Boroondara Schedule of Gradings Map*.

Officers are recommending a request for authorisation be lodged with the Minister for Planning to commence the planning scheme amendment process to give effect to the grading change for the property through the introduction of an incorporated document. Whilst a resolution can be made to regrade the property by the UPSC's adoption of a change to the *Schedule of Gradings Map*, a further opportunity could be provided to the property owner and other interested parties for an independent review of evidence and submissions through an independent Planning Panel hearing of a planning scheme amendment process.

To give effect to the planning scheme amendment process, an application must be made to the Minister for Planning requesting that he authorise Council to prepare and exhibit a planning scheme amendment related to the subject property. The amendment would introduce an incorporated document to give effect to the regrading and would be publically exhibited, with a Panel Hearing convened to consider all unresolved submissions.

The Minister for Planning may not authorise Council's request to prepare and exhibit a planning scheme amendment. If this were to be the case, the regrading of the property would be given effect if the UPSC resolve to update the *Boroondara Schedule of Gradings Map* reference document as recommended in this report.

## **5. Consultation/communication**

The affected and adjoining property owners and occupiers to 61 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell were notified in writing of the heritage regrading assessment and were invited to provide feedback within a four week period. The regrading assessment was also available on Council's website.

All residents who provided written feedback as well as owners and occupiers of the affected and adjoining properties were notified of this UPSC meeting.

Further opportunities to make verbal or written submissions to Council will be made available to the property owner and other interested parties through the planning scheme amendment process including UPSC meetings.

## **6. Financial and resource implications**

Resources to progress the regrading assessment will be sourced from the Strategic Planning Department 2019/20 operating budget.

## **7. Governance issues**

The officers responsible for this report have no direct or indirect interests requiring disclosure.

The implications of this report have been assessed and are not considered likely to breach or infringe upon, the human rights contained in the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

## 8. Social and environmental issues

The regrading of the property from non-contributory to contributory to the precinct would have positive social and environmental effects by contributing to the continual protection and management of the City's heritage.

**Acting  
Manager:** Shiranthi Widan, Strategic Planning

**Report officer:** Robert Costello, Senior Project Planner



## PROSPECT HILL HERITAGE PRECINCT (HO159)

Prepared by: Context

**Grading Assessment Date:** 10 October 2019

**Address:** 61 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell

**Name:** 'Beulah'

**Place Type:** Residential

**Existing Grading:** Non-contributory

**Recommended Grading:** Contributory

**Extent of Recommended Grading:** To title boundaries



### Reasons for Recommended Grading

#### *Methodology*

Before discussing the history and significance of the house 'Beulah' at 61 Prospect Hill Road, a few words should be said about the methodology used in preparing this Heritage Grading Assessment.

Context heritage consultants were asked to review the grading of this property by the Boroondara Strategic Planning Department in response to a detailed nomination for regrading prepared by community members dated 24 May 2019 (which has been



expanded with new information several times since that date). This nomination contained both historical research, speculation on matters such as the designing architect, and conclusions in regard to the heritage values of 'Beulah'.

Context's Heritage Grading Assessment (this report) analysed the conclusions in regard to heritage value, checked the accuracy of the historical research, and also carried out further investigations into the history and significance of 'Beulah' as deemed necessary. All of the *key* historical facts contained in this report have been verified by Context. In some cases, additional historical information from the community nomination has been cited as such. This information is considered by Context to be generally reliable, as the other historical research in the community nomination has been confirmed.

#### *Background*

The property known as 'Beulah' at 61 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell, is located in the HO159 Prospect Hill Road Precinct. When the precinct was first assessed, as part of the Camberwell Conservation Study (G Butler, 1991), the property was left ungraded. This was translated in 2006 into the current Non-contributory grade.

The correctness of this grade has been disputed by community members who state that the property has definite heritage value and should be graded Contributory (at minimum). They raise the following arguments for its heritage significance:

- It is one of the earliest Victorian houses in the HO159 precinct (c1886), and despite some alterations is still legible as a Victorian-era dwelling, thus contributing to the precinct's significance as 'the foremost precinct of late Victorian and federation buildings stock'. It also serves as a visual landmark in the precinct, and helps demonstrate the history of this part of Camberwell which begins with rural houses to the west, through Boom-era mansions such as 'Beulah', to smaller, post-1890s depression houses further east.
- The place is of significance for its association with David Charteris McArthur, who founded the first bank in Victoria, and also for its association with his wife, Caroline McArthur, and later owners Elizabeth Robinson and Anthony George Malden Michell.
- The house is also significant as a representative of the architecture of its era, representing key styles of the era (Gothic Revival and Italianate), and is a high-quality design presumably the work of 'an architect of some note'. It was a substantial home for its time, both in size and value.
- The house sits on a large block of land and has a 'large established garden'.
- The house has rarity value due to its large tower on the front façade, as well as for the (now removed) crenelation to the tower and house parapet.
- The place was added to the National Trust Register as a locally significant place in 1959. This grading was maintained following its review in 1998 despite alterations that had been carried out c1960.
- The external alterations carried out c1960 are largely superficial and the altered/removed features could be easily and accurately reinstated.
- The current campaign to regrade 'Beulah' demonstrates community attachment to this place and potential social significance.

*Is 'Beulah' one of the earliest Victorian houses in the HO159 precinct?*  
The current house at 61 Prospect Hill Road was constructed for Mr George Watts (sometimes listed as Watt). It is likely that this took place prior to 25 May 1887, when George Watts took possession of the property, as his address was already given as



Prospect Hill Road at that time (CT V1916 F066). In such a case, the house was constructed for Watts while under the formal ownership of the Fourth Victoria Permanent Property Building and Investment Society (from 19 November 1885; CT V1767 F326). This was a common way of financing the construction of homes in the nineteenth century, and accords with the c1886 built-date put forward by the nominators.

As noted in the nomination, the nearby 'Fairholme' at 35 Prospect Hill Road (HO215 and Significant in Ho159) illustrates the pre-suburban development of Camberwell. It was built in 1873 to a design by architects Crouch and Wilson. It is considered historically significant for illustrating Camberwell's pre-railway development, and architecturally significant as an early Victorian house with cement colonnades which retains large grounds.

The precinct citation for this part of HO159, known as 27.4 Prospect Hill Estate (part), notes that this estate was declared in 1882, and development along its north-south streets (Kingsley and Moorhouse streets) began in 1887 (G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study, 1991). This does support the claim by nominators that 'Beulah' was one of the earlier houses to be built (in this part) of the HO precinct. While amongst the earliest group of dwellings constructed in the Prospect Hill Estate, an examination of tender notices indicates that its construction was part of a large wave of mid-1880s development in Prospect Hill Road and this part of Camberwell. This followed the rural-era development illustrated by 'Fairholm'.

From this it is clear that 'Beulah' is not the earliest surviving house in the precinct. Instead, it is one of a number that illustrates the early suburban development in this area.

*Is 'Beulah' significant for associations with David Charteris McArthur?* Regardless of the precise built-date, it is clear that 'Beulah' was constructed prior to the ownership of Mrs Caroline McArthur. The 1889 City of Camberwell Rate Book (with records dated from September 1888), recorded George Watt [sic] as the owner and occupier of the house and land on Prospect Hill Road. His name was crossed out and "Mrs D.C. McArthur" was pencilled in sometime during that financial year (1889 RB records Nos. 782 & 783). At the time of property transfer, on 13 August 1888, Caroline McArthur was still a resident of Heidelberg (CT V2053 F514). She moved to the Prospect Hill Road house shortly after, and was listed there in the 1890 street directory (Sands & McDougall, which would have been compiled in 1889).

The nominators place weight on the association with Caroline McArthur's husband, David Charles [aka Charteris] McArthur. However, by the time Mrs McArthur purchased 'Beulah', her husband had been dead some nine months (*The Age* 16 Nov. 1887:9). There is no evidence that Mr McArthur had any direct links to this property. The Heritage Council of Victoria document *The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines* (rev. 2019) provides a series of basic test to determine if a place is of some level of heritage significance for a 'special association with the life or works of a person, or group of person, of importance' (HERCON Criterion H). These three tests are provided (in italics) below, and their applicability to 'Beulah' discussed:

*The place/object has a DIRECT ASSOCIATION with a person or group of persons who have made a strong or influential CONTRIBUTION to the course of Victoria's [or Boroondara's] history.*

As summarised by the community nomination, DC McArthur was 'key in the development of Banking in the Colony, opening the first bank in Melbourne, and in the setting up of and directing of many of the most well-known civic institutions including The Botanic Gardens, The State Library, The Mechanics Institute and The Austin Hospital. He was also a very early member of and the President of the Melbourne



Cricket Club (1858-67) and of The Melbourne Club.' His high historical status is reflected by an entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Blainey, 1974).

There is strong evidence to indicate that D.C. McArthur made a strong contribution to Victoria's history, but as noted above, only his widow had a direct association with 'Beulah'.

*The ASSOCIATION of the place/object to the person(s) IS EVIDENT in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources and/or oral history.*

While altered, 'Beulah' is still recognisable as a Victorian-era house, so this association can be said to be evident in the physical fabric.

*The ASSOCIATION: • directly relates to ACHIEVEMENTS of the person(s) at, or relating to, the place/object; or • relates to an ENDURING and/or CLOSE INTERACTION between the person(s) and the place/object.*

The association between 'Beulah' and D.C. McArthur is solely through his widow, after he died, so it is not related to his achievements. Nor did he have an enduring or close interaction with this place.

The Heritage Council document states that all three of these tests must be met to demonstrate associational significance, but 'Beulah' meets only one at best. This discounts the idea that 'Beulah' is of heritage significance for its association with D.C. McArthur.

*Is 'Beulah' significant for associations with Caroline McArthur or later owners?*

As noted in the community nomination, 'it is not easy to find references to women of that [Victorian] era in published records'. The nomination has gathered information about her: she emigrated to Victoria with her husband in 1838, and was described as 'The venerable mother of Melbourne society' and hosted in the couples' Heidelberg home Australian and overseas luminaries.

Applying the three VHR tests in relation to Caroline McArthur:

*The place/object has a DIRECT ASSOCIATION with a person or group of persons who have made a strong or influential CONTRIBUTION to the course of Victoria's [or Boroondara's] history.*

Caroline McArthur was undoubtedly an important figure in early Melbourne society, but here is little indication that her importance has carried through to the present day as it has for other early women settlers such as artist and diarist Georgiana McCrae.

History is, of course, always being "revised", so it is possible that future scholarly work will re-establish Caroline McArthur's importance in current understanding of early Melbourne.

*The ASSOCIATION of the place/object to the person(s) IS EVIDENT in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources and/or oral history.*

While altered, 'Beulah' is still recognisable as a Victorian-era house, so this association can be said to be evident in the physical fabric.

*The ASSOCIATION: • directly relates to ACHIEVEMENTS of the person(s) at, or relating to, the place/object; or • relates to an ENDURING and/or CLOSE INTERACTION between the person(s) and the place/object.*



As noted above, it clear from the documentary evidence that 'Beulah' was complete before Caroline McArthur purchased it and moved in, so she did not "shape" its form (by choosing the architect, making design input).

In addition, 'Beulah' was her retirement home, so was *not* linked to her documented 'achievements' as a doyen of early Melbourne society.

Finally, the transfer of 'Beulah' to Caroline McArthur took place on 13 August 1888 and she died on 27 January 1890 (CT V2053 F514), just five months later. This does not constitute an 'enduring' interaction with the place.

As the three tests were not met for Caroline McArthur, it appears that her association with 'Beulah' is not of heritage significance.

The same can be said for the next owner the place: While Elizabeth Robinson, widow of a founder of the important shopfitters and stained glass manufacturers Books, Robinson & Co., owned the house for a substantial amount of time (1890-1931), there is no evidence that she was an important figure in this company nor that she shaped the house in an important way.

Inventor and engineer Anthony George Maldon Michell is already recognised in the historical cannon as a significant figure, with an entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Walker, 1986). Born in 1870, he was described as "arguably Australia's most versatile engineer" (Walker, 1986). While he was already about 69 years old when he purchased 'Beulah' in 1939, with most of his important inventions behind him, he was still productive and published the 'massive' book *Principles of lubrication* in 1950 at aged 80. This was a year after he sold 'Beulah', but clearly would have worked on it during the previous decade of residence. Walker (1986) also notes that Michell tended 'his remarkable "exotic" garden at Camberwell' in his leisure time.

Applying the three VHR tests to Michell's association with 'Beulah':

*The place/object has a DIRECT ASSOCIATION with a person or group of persons who have made a strong or influential CONTRIBUTION to the course of Victoria's [or Boroondara's] history.*

There is strong evidence that Anthony George Maldon Michell did make a strong contribution to Victoria as an engineer and inventor, as well as through his publications.

*The ASSOCIATION of the place/object to the person(s) IS EVIDENT in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources and/or oral history.*

It appears that Michell did not alter the house 'Beulah' during his ownership, as photos from c1957 – near the end of his occupancy – show the house intact.

The "exotic garden" described in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* may still be evident in the plantings and hard landscaping of 'Beulah's grounds. Further research would be required to establish this. If substantial remains of his garden do survive, the next question would be how important this remanent garden is, and how (much) it adds to the heritage significance of 'Beulah'.

*The ASSOCIATION: • directly relates to ACHIEVEMENTS of the person(s) at, or relating to, the place/object; or • relates to an ENDURING and/or CLOSE INTERACTION between the person(s) and the place/object.*



As noted above, though past retirement age during his residence at 'Beulah', he was still professionally active and published his tome *Principles of lubrication* just after selling the house.

In conclusion, the association with Anthony George Maldon Michell *may* be of heritage significance through the remanent garden at 'Beulah'.

*Was 'Beulah' designed by an architect of note?*

Further research is required to determine the designer of 'Beulah', as there were a large number of tenders called between 1885 and 1887 for brick houses/villas in Camberwell. Tenders that could correspond to this house were called by Jas. P Kennison (in 1885); Walter Scott Law, Tappin, Gilbert & Dennehy, and Bruford & Braim (in 1886); and Ellerker & Kilburn, JF Gibbins, and Frederick Williams (in 1887).

The community nomination poses additional possibilities of architects working in Camberwell in the 1880s: Architect John Beswicke, based on his use of crenelated Tudor Revival design around this time (discussed here further in the comparative analysis section); James Gall, based on his use of Italianate towers; Frederick De Garis, based on his use of crenelations at 878 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, Crouch and Wilson, or Walter Scott Law.

It is agreed that such a substantial dwelling was most likely designed by an architect, but it may not be possible to prove this one way or another as the pertinent tender notices do not provide enough detail to definitely identify them (e.g. client's name, more precise location than "Camberwell" or "Prospect Hill Road"). It is also possible that none of the tender notices apply to 'Beulah', and the construction contract was let under another mechanism.

It should be noted, however, that association with an architect is not required for the architectural design of a building to be recognised as significant.

*Is 'Beulah' still intact enough to be legible as a Victorian-era dwelling?*  
 When first constructed, 'Beulah' and its outbuildings sat on three subdivisional allotments (comprising 61 Prospect Hill Road and garden, as well as 26 Kingsley Street). This layout is shown in the MMBW Detail Plan of 1904.

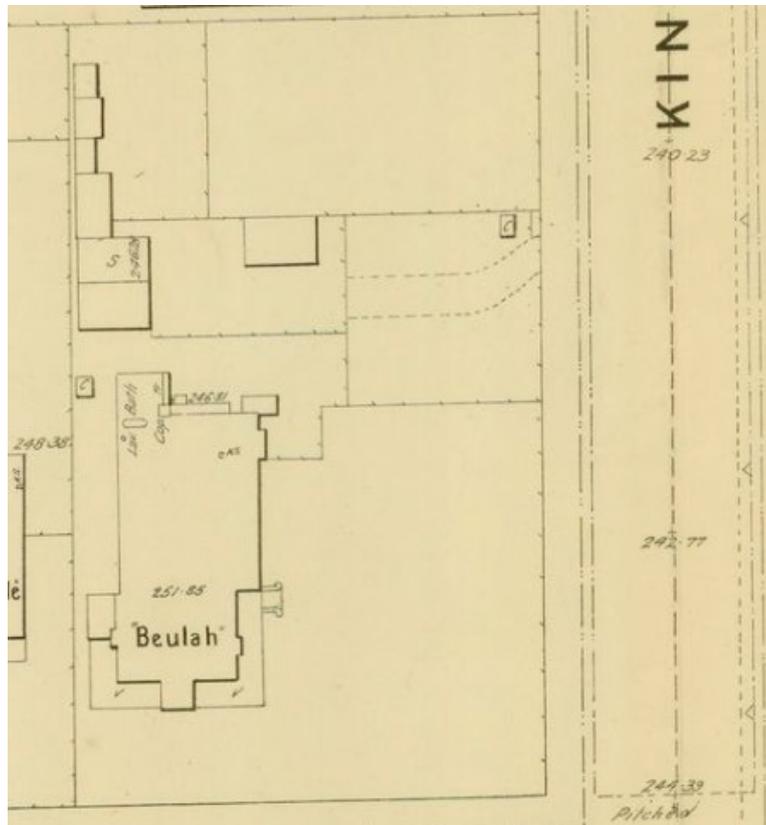


Figure 1. 'Beulah' in 1904. (Source: MMBW Detail Plan No. 1858)

Apart from the house, the plan shows a number of outbuildings to the rear, including a stable. None of them appear to have survived. In addition, 26 Kingsley Street has been subdivided off and a c1920s house built on it. A rear extension encompassing a garage has been constructed behind the north-west corner of the house, and the west side of the return verandah has been infilled.

The front third of 'Beulah' is the most architecturally expressed, with two (original) hipped roof sections behind it. This front wing is single-storey with a high parapet, and a two-storey square tower projects from the centre of the front façade in a dramatic fashion. Extending from the tower on either side is a return verandah with skillion roof. The front entrance is located on the east side elevation, and retains its original door with raised octagonal panels.



Figure 2. Front wing of 'Beulah', looking north-west, 2019 (Source: Context)

The front wing of the house is embellished with cement render elements including quoins to the corners of the house and tower, recessed panels below the tower windows, and unusual curvilinear cast ornament above all tower windows. Tower windows have simple triangular heads referencing medieval forms. The verandah floor retains tessellated tiles with bluestone edging.

Photos held at the State Library of Victoria, dated c1957, illustrate the original appearance of 'Beulah'. Further photos, dated 1963, show that alterations had been made to the front section between these dates.

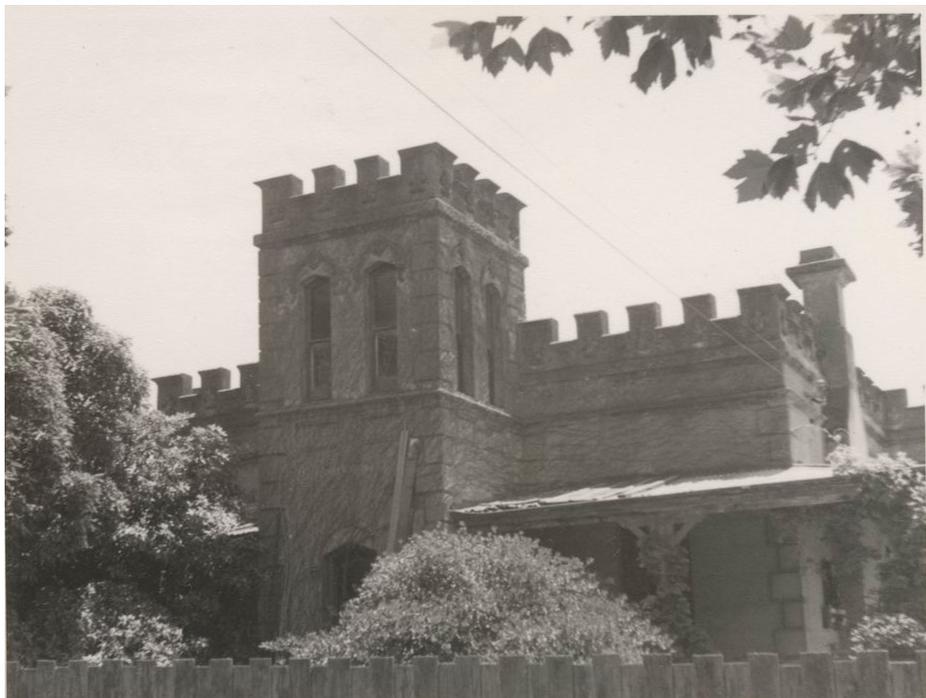


Figure 3. Front façade of 'Beulah' in its original state, c1957. (Source: Colin Caldwell, State Library of Victoria)



The c1957 photos show that the parapets of the front wing and associated tower were crenelated, with bas-relief fleurs-de-lys set below the crenelation, all of which has been removed. The truncated parapet was topped with Cordoba tiles.

The pitch of the verandah was increased and its roof cladding changed from corrugated iron to Cordoba tiles, and the timber posts and brackets replaced with mild-steel supports. A small verandah gablet marking the east side front door was removed.

The original front windows on either side of the tower were single double-hung sash windows. These have been replaced by banks of French doors.

Despite these changes, it is agreed that 'Beulah' is still clearly recognisable by passers-by as a Victorian-era house, and its towered form still gives it a landmark quality within the precinct.

What is not clear when viewing the house today is how it has changed over time and what its original appearance was. This information, however, is provided by the c1957 photos of the house in the State Library of Victoria's collection. Should the current or a future owner wish, the exterior of the house could be accurately restored to its original appearance.

*Does 'Beulah' retain its large block of land and established garden?*

As noted in the history above, 'Beulah' retains its original double-block width to Prospect Hill Road, but has been somewhat diminished by the loss of the third block at the rear (north).

The trees in the extensive garden on the east side of the house are all modest in size, and no evidence of nineteenth-century hard landscaping could be seen when viewing from the surrounding streets.

As discussed above, in relation to Michell, the c1939-49 plantings and layout from the "exotic garden" may survive in part and could contribute to the significance of 'Beulah' overall.

So the current double size of the block gives 'Beulah' a setting that stands out in its context, but the heritage significance of plantings and other elements within this garden remains to be assessed.

*Is 'Beulah' rare due to its front tower and/or crenelation?*

The tower is a characteristic feature of more elaborate Victorian villas, particularly those in the Italianate style, and are seen on a number of houses in Boroondara. Typically the tower is placed on a side elevation to create a pleasingly picturesque asymmetric composition.

Dwellings with a side or corner tower considered to be Significant in the Boroondara Heritage Overlay range from the very grand to standard sized houses. In the former City of Camberwell area, the grandest mansions include 'Parlington' (46 Parlington Street, Canterbury, VHR H731), 137 Mont Albert Road, Canterbury (HO396), and 'Eyre Court' (2 Molesworth Street, Canterbury, VHR H817). There are also many two-storey towered Italianate villas in Hawthorn and Kew, suburbs which were developed more extensively than Camberwell during the Victorian era (e.g. 1 Shakespeare Grove, 174 Power Street, 4 Coppin Grove, and 7 Yarra Street, Hawthorn; 3 Molesworth Street, 5 Doona Avenue, 894 Glenferrie Road, 21 Belmont Avenue, 94 Studley Park Road (VHR), and 44 Walmer Street (VHR), Kew).



Several single-storey towered dwellings have been graded Significant (whether in a precinct or site-specific Heritage Overlay). In some cases this is largely on the basis of a tower. 2 Bayview Street, Hawthorn (HO151), is described as a 'basically simple house [that] seeks to catch the eye by the inclusion of a tower', and 23 View Street, Hawthorn (HO478) had a mini tower/portico added to its façade which is considered significant as an effort by the early owners 'to draw attention to the entry'. Other single-storey examples are distinguished beyond their tower. The house at 'Evangeline' at 15 Hawthorn Grove (HO207) is another single-storey example, but a substantial 'mansion house'. 23 Swinton Avenue (HO129), Kew, is one of the earliest uses of the Italianate in Australia, with a very elegant tower.

Apart from 23 View Street, Hawthorn, there are several other Significant Victorian houses that have a tower placed at the centre of the front façade. In some cases the tower is flush with the front façade, so only reads as a tower above the roofline (e.g., 512 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn (HO149), which has extensive alterations to its verandah; 896 Glenferrie Road, Kew (HO203)). In others, the tower is juxtaposed against a projecting front gable, with a verandah recessed to the other side (e.g. 106 Church Street, Hawthorn (HO31); 649-651 Burke Road, Camberwell (HO144)).

The composition seen at 'Beulah' with a tower projecting from the centre of the front façade is less common. Amongst the Significant Victorian houses in Boroondara it is seen on the mansion 'Frogall' of 1888 (54 Mont Albert Road, Canterbury, VHR H707), a more standard two-storey house of 1888 at 11 Redmond Street, Kew (HO336, another example where the tower is the principal distinguishing feature of the house), and a single-storey polychrome brick villa of 1892 at 11 Luena Road, Balwyn North (HO390). (Note that this final example has a non-original verandah that was reconstructed on the basis of early photos.)

In conclusion, there are many Significant Victorian houses with towers in Boroondara, usually to the side elevation. In some cases the presence of a tower gives an otherwise typical house landmark quality, and elevates it to Significant.

Houses with crenelation are far more rare. Only five examples have been identified by Context and the community nomination in the City of Boroondara. The earliest of these is 'Tudor Lodge', 13 Harcourt Street, Hawthorn (HO151), designed by architect John Beswicke for his father in 1873 (or 1881). It is a late example of the picturesque "Gothick" style (a free use of Tudor and Gothic ornament) with a two-storey rectangular volume, without a verandah, with a crenelated parapet and lancet hood mouldings above the windows. (Interestingly, Beswicke designed the nearly identical 'Tudor House' in 1884 at 52 Pasco Street, Williamstown, VHR H1857.) Next is 'Ivy Grange', 3 Malmsbury Street, Kew (HO92). The original bluestone house was constructed in 1864, with a crenelated tower added in 1877 (architects Crouch & Wilson). In this case the crenelations are stepped along the tower gable, and it should properly be called a crow-stepped gable, which is characteristic of the Scottish Baronial style. The next one is a two-storey semi-detached pair at 99 Princess Street and 1 Fellows Street, Kew (HO195), designed by architects Oakden, Addison & Kemp in 1889. It is constructed of polychrome brickwork and its multiple gables foreshadow the Federation Queen Anne style. Again, the only crenelated element is a two-storey tower which sits above the Fellows Street entrance. The two final examples are more modest in size – single-storey villas – and stand across from each other on Glenferrie Road. 'Melrose', 878 Glenferrie Road, Kew, was built in 1889 to a design by Frederick de Garis and Son. It is a late Victorian Gothic Revival house executed in polychrome brickwork, with rendered crenelations to the canted bay windows. Its neighbour, 'Bohara' at 853 Glenferrie Road, is a transitional Victorian-Federation villa with cement-rendered walls, a witch's-hat corner tower and a canted bay window with a step-crenelated parapet.



The Heritage Victoria citation for 'Tudor House' notes that houses with a Tudor castle influence are rare in Victoria, citing the earlier 'Tudor Lodge', 'Banyule' of 1846 (VHR H926), and 'The Towers', Lilydale (VHR H612) which as an 1876 cottage with 1886 Tudor Revival additions with crenelations and towers.

While 'Beulah' does not (and did not) have Tudor detail of the same sophistication as Beswicke's 'Tudor Lodge' it was still a rare example of a Victorian-era house with crenelation, and not only to its tower but also the entire front wing. In its intact condition, it would have certainly been of individual significance for this reason alone.

In its altered state, however, 'Beulah' no longer possesses the rare crenelation. The simple pointed windows to the tower are the only remaining hint of the medieval influence on its design.

#### *Is 'Beulah' on the National Trust Register?*

The nominators are correct in stating that 'Beulah' is on the National Trust Register. It is listed as having 'Local' significance (i.e. individually significant in the City of Camberwell). While first inscribed on the register in 1958, this registration was "revised" in 1998. This revision may have been a downgrading of its significance from Regional or State significance, due to the post-1958 alterations. There is no further information available on-line, though the photo included post-dates the alterations.

#### *Does 'Beulah' have social significance?*

As stated by the community nomination, nearly 1000 people have signed a paper or internet petition to regrade 'Beulah'. The nomination states: 'It should not be underestimated just how strongly many residents of this historic part of Camberwell identify with the heritage buildings in our area.' There is also discussion of how 'Beulah' is particularly important in the HO159 precinct due to its visually prominent corner location and "landmark" tower.

A detailed assessment of the social significance of 'Beulah' and/or the HO159 precinct as a whole has not been carried out as part of this Heritage Grading Assessment. It is worth noting, however, that revisions were made to the Heritage Council's *The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines* were revised in April 2019 to include an evolving understanding of how social significance can be demonstrated. It is now explicitly recognised that: 'People are sometimes unaware of their attachment to a place/object until it is under threat' (p. 18). This may be the case for 'Beulah'.

#### *Conclusions*

Running through the potential reasons for 'Beulah's' significance and/or contribution to the HO159 Prospect Hill Road Precinct:

- 'Beulah' is one of a group of the earliest houses developed during the 1880s in the Prospect Hill Estate, but is one of a number of houses built in the early suburbanisation of Camberwell, post-dating earlier rural retreats. Under this measure it certainly contributes to the historic significance of the HO159 precinct, but it is not so distinguished by its built-date to be individually significance.
- The association between 'Beulah' and David Charteris McArthur, Caroline McArthur and Elizabeth Robinson do not appear to lend any measure of heritage significance to this property.
- While 'Beulah' may have been designed by an architect, this has not been confirmed.
- 'Beulah' is intact enough to be clearly legible as a Victorian-era dwelling and in this way contributes to the Victorian character of HO159 Prospect Hill Road



- Precinct. Moreover, there is documentary evidence (photos) that could be used to inform an accurate restoration of its original appearance, as has been done with other dwellings protected in the Boroondara Heritage Overlay.
- The large garden setting of 'Beulah' enhances its landmark character in the HO159 precinct. While it does not appear to retain any nineteenth-century plantings or landscaping elements, the "exotic garden" planted by Anthony GM Michell may survive to an extent that would lend associative significance.
  - There is a large number of towered Victorian houses that are Significant in the Boroondara Heritage Overlay, most with side towers though some with front towers as at 'Beulah'. In several cases the statement of significance for these places indicates that an otherwise Contributory house was elevated to Significant due to the presence of the tower, as the towers both differentiate these houses from their "peers" and give them landmark quality.
  - Houses with crenelations are rare in Boroondara and Victoria more widely. In its unaltered state, 'Beulah' would have been at least of local significance for this reason. In its altered state, however, its former rarity cannot be relied on.
  - 'Beulah' is still recognised as having local significance (to Camberwell at least) by the National Trust, despite its alterations.
  - There is evidence of some community attachment to the HO159 precinct and the historic houses within it.

On balance, it is clear that 'Beulah' would have been at least Significant in its unaltered form. Gradings within precincts have often recognised that a building that would otherwise be individually significant can be more altered than the "typical" house and still contribute to a precinct. This is expressed in past definitions of gradings found in reports such as:

- 'Hawthorn Heritage Study' (1993): *'C' places make an architectural, historic, scientific or social contribution that is important within the local area. This includes well preserved examples of particular themes of development, as well as some individually significant places that have been altered or defaced.* (Note that C-grade places in Hawthorn became Contributory in 2006.)
- 'Kew Urban Conservation Study' (1988): *Grade C places: Places that contribute to the architectural or historical character and cohesiveness of the City of Kew. Grade C structures are, in the main, severely altered examples of typical building types.* (Note that C-grade places in Kew became Contributory in 2006.)
- 'Camberwell Conservation Study' (1991): *Value E: as for D but altered with potential for restoration but currently non for streetscape contribution. (Value D: considered valuable on a good examples of common site types within the municipality...).*

The Boroondara C66 Panel Report (2008, p.43) cites the Heritage Policy at that time (Cl. 22.05): *'Contributory' heritage places - C, D and E graded places in the Camberwell Study and the Hawthorn Study and C graded places in the Kew study.*

In the 'Camberwell Conservation Study' D and E grades are for 'typical' buildings that have been altered, and not otherwise individually significant buildings that have been altered. In this instance, the definition provided by the 'Hawthorn Heritage Study' is most applicable to 'Beulah'.



More importantly, it is still legible as a substantial Victorian dwelling, so it meets the current definition of 'Contributory' (in Clause 22.03, 2018): *they play an integral role in demonstrating the cultural heritage significant of a precinct.* Which, in the case of HO159, includes: *the former Prospect Hill Estate ... Building stock in this area is generally consistent with the late Victorian and Federation theme of the place as a whole.*

In addition, the association with Anthony George Maldon Michell *may* be of heritage significance through the remnant garden at 'Beulah'.

*Recommendation*

'Beulah' at 61 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell, should be regraded from Non-contributory to Contributory to HO159 Prospect Hill Road Precinct. This regrading should be applied to the extent of its current cadastral boundaries.

**Study which introduced the existing overlay**

G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study, 1991.

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