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| IDENTIFER | HOUSES (PAIR) | | |
| Other/s | <i>Lujave (No 17) and Rahneton (No 19)</i> | | |
| Address | 17-19 King Street BALWYN | Date/s | c.1893 |
| Designer/s | - | Builder/s | - |
| Theme/s | 2.7.3 Speculating in land: boom and bust | Heritage Group | Residential Building (Private) |
| | 3.3.1 Expanding the Victorian rail network | Heritage Category | House |
| | 6.7.2 Making homes for the middle classes | Heritage status | - |
| Intactness | Good (sympathetic rear additions) | Significance | Local |
| Condition | Excellent (restored in recent times) | Recommendation | Include in HO as individual place |



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| Extent | To title boundaries | Survey date | 10/01/12 |
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History

This pair of detached weatherboard houses was erected in c.1893. The land on which they stand formed part of a large residential estate on the north-east corner of Burke Road and Gordon Street, gazetted in April 1890, which comprised a grid of north-south streets (Wills, Grey and King streets) intersecting with an east-west street (Eyes Street), providing 123 quarter-acre allotments with 66-foot (20 metre) frontages. The houses now known as 17 and 19 King Street each occupy half of what was Lot 86, on the north-western corner of King and Eyre streets. According to their respective Certificates of Title, the two properties were acquired in February 1891 by two members of the same family: Thomas Hillier, a bootmaker, acquired the southern half of Lot 86, while Fred Hillier, a linotype compositor, acquired the northern half. Research confirms that the two men were father and son, with Fred Hillier (1868-1939) being the eldest of three children (and only son) of Thomas Hiller (1825-1915). At the time of the land purchase, the younger Hillier had recently (1890) married the former Sarah Jane Stapleton (1864-1943).

The two houses on Lot 86 were probably erected during 1893, as both were recorded for the first time in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* for 1895, when Thomas Hillier and Fred Hillier were identified as their occupants. Thomas remained listed in King Street until 1899; he appears to have retained ownership for a few more years, during which time the house was briefly occupied by tenants Thomas Johnson (1900) and Benjamin Gillett (1901-02). In January 1901, the title to the property transferred to John Maling of Rochester Road, who was a carpenter. A member of a prominent local family, Maling (1870-1963) was one of several sons of the like-named John Butler Maling (1840-1931), who migrated to Australia in 1857 and, after a brief stint in Sydney, travelled to Melbourne and settled in what is now Balwyn. A builder by trade, the elder Maling was involved in the erection of some of the first public buildings in the area, including the Athenaeum Hall and St Barnabas' Anglican Church. After retiring in 1890, he turned to property development and local politics and, in 1905, became the first Mayor to the City of Camberwell. At least two of his sons, John junior and William, followed in his footsteps and became carpenters. John junior retained ownership of the house in King Street until his own death at the age of 93 years, although the mortgage had been transferred to his own son, another John Butler Maling, back in 1920. John Maling and his wife Lucy, who married in 1893, had nine children born between 1894 and 1910, of which the last five were all born in Balwyn: John Butler (1901), Edgar (1903), William (1906), Gwineth [*sic*] (1908) and Edna (1910). The family resided at 17 King Street until around 1925, when they moved to a new and larger bungalow-style house that had been built on the opposite corner of Eyre Street (now 15 King Street).

The adjacent house at No 19, meanwhile, remained occupied by its original owner, Fred Hillier, until 1903. In December of that year, the property title was transferred to Francis Reid, late of East Kew, who was a florist. Directories indicate that the house was occupied by Reid himself until 1906, and thence by tenants Egan (1907-08), Jenkins (1910-12) and Leo Stanton (from 1913). The latter acquired the title to the property in 1915; he retained ownership, and remained in residence, for the next two years. Subsequent owner/occupiers were Frederick and Florence Goodber (1917-23) and Caroline Peterson (1923-27). The latter died whilst in residence, and ownership passed to her unmarried sister, Olive.

During the early twentieth century, both houses had names, which were recorded for the first time in the *Sands & McDougall* directory for 1907. The house at No 17 (then still occupied by John Maling junior) was identified as "Lujave", and its neighbour at No 19 (then occupied by Jenkins) as "Rahneton".

Description and Integrity

The houses at 17-19 King Street comprise a detached pair of single-storey double-fronted late Victorian timber villas with hipped roofs clad in corrugated steel. Following a very familiar pattern, the two houses are virtually identical in their expression and detailing: each has a symmetrical block-fronted street facade with a central doorway flanked by windows, opening onto a full-width hip-roofed verandah with cast iron columns and decorative wrought iron lacework friezes and brackets. The front entrances have timber door-cases with narrow sidelights, highlights and moulded architraves, while the windows contain timber-framed double-hung sashes (a large central window, flanked by narrower sidelights), also with moulded architraves. The roofs have narrow eaves, supported along the street frontages by timber brackets alternating with fielded panels, and are penetrated by rendered chimneys with moulded caps. Side walls are conventional weatherboard construction. Each house has a front fence made up of capped timber posts with shaped timber pickets of timber pickets and matching front gates. While these are evidently not originally, they are otherwise considered to be highly sympathetic to the style and era of the houses themselves.

Both houses appear to have been restored in relatively recent times, and appear to be in excellent condition when seen from the street. They retain much original fabric, including matching cast iron lacework friezes. The house at No 19 is evidently missing one of its original chimneys, while No 17 retains both. The latter house has otherwise been extended at the rear, with a hip-roofed weatherboard addition that considered to be sympathetic in both scale and materials. Although of two storeys, the rear addition is not considered to unduly detract from the original cottage when viewed from its principal frontage on King Street.

Historical Context

In the Melbourne of the 1880s, it was commonplace for new residential subdivisions to be laid out along the proposed extensions of railway lines – invariably, these estates were marketed and sold some time (even several years) before the line itself actually became operational. In the study area, there were two particularly unusual cases where such speculation backfired: one, when a proposed railway line through Balwyn North failed to materialise at all, and another when a new branch line from Camberwell – the Outer Circle Railway Line – was discontinued only three years later, in 1893. Although the line subsequently reopened in 1900, the intervening period was sufficient to stagnate residential development in the area for some time to come.

The estate on which the two cottages at 17 and 19 King Street was clearly conceived to take advantage of the proximity of the Outer Circle Railway Line. The subdivision was gazetted in April 1890, less than a year before the Riversdale-to-Fairfield portion of the line commenced operation in March 1891. The nearest station, moreover, was only a few hundred metres south of the estate, between Abercrombie Street and Whitehorse Road. First listed in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* for 1895, the two cottages appear to have been the first houses erected in King Street. Subsequent editions of the directory listed another house in the street in 1896, followed by two more in 1897 (all three, apparently, on the eastern side of the street). Interestingly, these five dwellings continued to be listed as the only properties in King Street until the early 1910s. Settlement boomed after that, and this estate (along with several other underdeveloped Victorian subdivisions in the area) gradually filled out during the later 1910s and '20s.

Comparative analysis

Today, virtually no evidence remains of Boom-period residential development in the Deepdene locality. While this particular estate contains a number of Edwardian houses (eg 19 Eyre Street), it is otherwise dominated by inter-war development (and, to some extent, by twenty-first century redevelopment). The pair of cottages at 17-19 King Street provide the only physical evidence that the estate actually dates from the early 1890s. The other three early houses in King Street, which were recorded in the directory listings prior to 1900, cannot be located and have presumably been demolished. This is indicative of a familiar pattern across much of Deepdene. While some evidence of late Victorian residential settlement still remains in the portion between Mont Albert Road and Whitehorse Road – notably the mansion at 936 Burke Road and the large villa at 16 Campbell Road – virtually nothing of comparable date survives in north of Whitehorse Road. Even looking further afield, there are relatively few comparable examples of ordinary Victorian timber cottages or villas in the entire study area, with only a handful of examples that survive (in various conditions and states of intactness), including those at 12 Power Street, 28 Leonard Street and 2 Yarrbat Avenue.

Assessment against Criteria

The house is associated with a phase of residential subdivision and settlement spurred by the proposed Outer Circle Railway Line, which languished after the premature closure of the line after only two years (*Criterion A, Criterion C*)

The house provides extremely rare evidence of Boom-era residential development in this part of Balwyn (*Criterion B*)

Grading and Recommendations

The houses at 17 and 19 King Street, Balwyn, are significant heritage places in the City of Boroondara. Given their virtually identical form and their overlapping and complementary histories, it is considered more appropriate for both dwelling to be covered by a single heritage overlay, rather than to apply an individual overlay to each one.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The houses at 17 and 19 King Street, Balwyn, once known respectively as *Lujave* and *Rahneton*, comprise a detached pair of double-fronted hip-roofed Victorian weatherboard villas with symmetrical block-fronted facades and full-width verandahs with cast iron columns and decorative wrought iron lacework friezes. Dating from c.1893, the two houses were built on a single allotment that formed part of a large subdivision laid out in 1890. Originally occupied by Thomas and Fred Hillier, father and son, the properties were later owned and occupied by members of the Maling family.

How is it significant?

The houses are of historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

Historically, the houses are significant for their ability to demonstrate the limited extent of residential settlement in Deepdene during the Boom period of the late 1880s and early '90s. They were built on an estate that was laid out in 1890 to take advantage of the proximity of the proposed Outer Circle Railway Line, but which, following the line's premature closure in 1893, subsequently stagnated for over a decade. Only a handful of houses were erected on the estate before the turn of the century, and these two villas now represent the sole survivors in an area otherwise strongly characterised by inter-war development (and more recent twenty-first century redevelopment). The houses thus provide rare and valuable evidence of the failure of Boom-era estates after the closure of the Outer Circle railway line.

Aesthetically, the houses are significant as representative and substantially intact examples of Victorian timber villas of a form that, while ubiquitous in the inner metropolitan area, is highly unusual in the part of Balwyn known as Deepdene. With their characteristic block-fronted symmetrical facades and wide verandahs with fluted iron columns and decorative wrought iron lacework, the houses remain as distinctive and eye-catching elements in an area otherwise dominated by twentieth century development. The houses also stand out in the streetscape due to their narrower-than-average frontages (ie both houses sharing a single standard-width block) and the fact that, as a pair, they are virtually identical in their form, finishes and detailing.

Identified by

Built Heritage Pty Ltd

References

Information provided by Balwyn Historical Society.