

IDENTIFER HOUSE			
Other/s			
Address	22 Riverview Road BALWYN NORTH	Date/s	1949 1952-53 (second storey/garage)
Designer/s	F J Sanders	Builder/s	F J Sanders
Theme/s	6.7.2 Making homes for the middle classes	Heritage Group	Residential Building (Private)
		Heritage Category	House
		Heritage status	
Intactness	Excellent	Significance	Local
Condition	Excellent	Recommendation	Include in HO as individual place



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

Erected in 1949 and subsequently enlarged in 1952-53, this house was the work of F J Sanders, a designer/builder who was notably active in Balwyn North during the 1940s and '50s. The son of a metal spinner, Francis John Sanders (1914-2001) was born in Wunghnu in northern Victoria but grew up in East Brunswick, where, by the late 1930s, he had begun his career as a boot repairer. During the Second World War, Sanders served both with the Citizen Military Force (CMF) and the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) for a 3½ years. Mentioned in despatches, Sanders was discharged in February 1945 with the rank of Lieutenant, along with the War Medal, the Australian Service Medal and the Pacific Star. Sanders returned to East Brunswick where, in October 1947, he married English-born Ettie Hunter Newton (1919-2003), whose family had migrated to Australia when she was five years old.

By this time, Sanders had radically altered the direction of his career by opting for a future in building construction rather than boot repair. In December 1946, almost a year before his wedding, he was granted a building permit to erect a modest brick house at the corner of Burroughs and Clayton Roads in Balwyn North, which was designed in an idiosyncratic Tudor Revival style. Sanders and his wife resided there for several years, during which time they undertook additions for which a second building permit was issued in May 1948. That same year, Sanders prepared plans for a second brick residence for himself in the same area, on Kalonga Road. He began the project by erecting a combined garage/store in 1949-50, which he reportedly occupied until the main house was completed in 1951. He and his wife remained living in Kalonga Road until 1962, when they moved to Leongatha to take up farming. Sanders was still there at the time of his death in 2001.

Although the drawings for the house at 22 Riverview Road are entitled "Proposed Brick Residence for F J Sanders, Esq", it would appear that Sanders conceived the project as a speculative venture, rather than a house for his own occupation. The drawings, submitted for council approval in 1949, depict a flat-roofed single-storey brick dwelling in the fashionable Moderne mode, with the living room boldly expressed in the form of a projecting semi-circular bay. Provision was made for a future second storey, following the same general plan but incorporating an open terrace above the living room. Although a building permit was issued by the City of Camberwell on 15 August 1949, the house did not appear in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* until 1952, when it was listed as a "house being built" on the south side of Riverview Road, between an existing dwelling at No 24 and the intersection of Panoramic Road. The house continued to be listed as such in 1953 and again in 1954. This prolonged status evidently related to the addition of the second storey, for which a separate permit had been issued on 20 November 1952. Rather than complete the second floor to match the Moderne stylings of the existing house, as had been proposed in the 1949 drawings, Sanders prepared entirely new plans that re-conceived the addition as a cluster of steeply gabled roofs in the Tudor Revival mode. A separate permit, for a garage, was issued in September 1953.

The completed house was listed for the first time in the 1955 directory, now officially designated as No 22, with one R J Taylor listed as its occupant. Electoral rolls confirm that this was Robert John F Taylor, an engineer, who had previously resided in Corhampton Road. Taylor and his wife, Alice, continued living at 22 Riverview Road until the late 1960s.

Description and Integrity

The house at 22 Riverview Road is a substantial attic-storeyed cream brick house, asymmetrical in both plan form and elevational treatment, with a very steep gabled roof clad in glazed terracotta shingles. Erected in two stages, the lower and upper levels reflect two very different styles – respectively, Moderne and Tudor Revival – that are very seldom combined in a single building. At the lower level, Moderne influence is most strongly reflected in a large semi-circular flat-roofed bay, with wide and curving picture windows separated by piers of manganese Roman brick. The remainder of the frontage to Panoramic Road is triple-fronted, with large steel-framed corner windows to two of the projecting bays and an entry porch to the innermost one. This porch is partly enclosed by a projecting wing wall of manganese Roman brick with an archway that opens onto a concrete slab terrace that follows the curve of the adjacent semi-circular living room bay. It has a simple but very elegant metal balustrade that incorporates a narrow central rail of three narrow horizontal rods, scrolled brackets and the occasional cluster of volutes. A curved flight of steps, with matching balustrade, leads down from the front door to the driveway level. Clad with crazy stonework, these steps are integrated with a matching retaining wall/planter box that defines the driveway, leading up to a garage at the half-basement level. The garage retains its original hinged timber doors with small glazed panels.

At the first floor level, the attic storey is articulated as a series of interlocking gables and dormers, creating an irregular and picturesque roof-line. The gable ends, variously infilled with painted weatherboard, half-timbering or face brickwork, have scalloped timber bargeboards and, in some cases, corbelling at the eaves line and narrow louvred vents. The largest gable, facing north, incorporates a central chimney (set into the wall at a 45° angle) with a corbelled base and a blind archway of manganese Roman brick that defines a feature panel of glazed red brick in a basket-weave bond. The chimney is flanked by two ornate metal lanterns and by a pair of doorways, with glazed doors, that open onto the terrace formed by the flat roof of the curved living room wing below. This terrace is enclosed by a metal balustrade, identical to those at the lower level.

Occupying a corner site, the property has cream brick walls along both street boundaries, with manganese brick capping and curved bays of timber palings between tall piers with steep gabled tops clad in terracotta tiles. Each frontage also has a vehicle entrance gateway: the one on Panoramic Road provides access to the sub-floor garage, and the one on Riverview Road to a rear driveway.

Historical Context

Although it was not designed until in 1949 (and construction not completed for a few more years thence), this house is best considered as a belated manifestation of the initial burst of residential settlement in this area, which was spurred by the extension of the electric tram route to Doncaster Road in 1938.

Comparative analysis

There are a number of contemporaneous (or slightly earliest) large houses in the immediate area that are broadly similar in their scale, materials, expression and architectural pretensions. A nearby examples at 44 Panoramic Road has a comparably irregular roof-line formed by very steep tile-clad gabled roofs, face brick walls that introduce contrasting texture (eg Roman bricks or basket-weave brickwork) and metal balustrades. This house, however, was conceived in a fairly conventional Tudor Revival mode, and lacks both the hybrid stylism and quirky detailing evident at 22 Riverview Road. Another large three-level house at 61 Longview Road similarly combines cream brickwork, a hipped tile-clad roof, balustrades sun-decks, a projecting half-round bay in the Moderne style and a sub-floor garage set into a stone-clad wall, but in a rather more cumbersome fashion.

Ultimately, Frank Sanders is the type of designer/builder whose style is so peculiarly idiosyncratic that examples of his work can only really be pertinently compared amongst themselves. While Sanders was likely to have been prolific in the Balwyn North area from the late 1940s to the early 1960s, only four examples of his work have yet been identified. The first of these was his original house at 26 Burroughs Road, which in many ways can be considered the progenitor to 22 Riverview Road. Although a smaller building, it similarly uses cream brick with corbels corners, splayed sills and manganese Roman brick trim, and prominent irregular roof clad in terracotta shingles with a weatherboard clad dormer and one half-timbered gable end. The chimney is rotated at a 45° angle, as at 22 Riverview Road, and the front fence somewhat similarly expressed. Despite its quirky detailing (which includes a highly unusual bellcast roofline), the house is essentially in the Tudor Revival mode, with the only Moderne influence being the large rectangular windows (including a corner window) with multi-paned steel-framed sashes. The Moderne influence, however, was more pronounced in *Rangoon*, small cream brick dwelling that Sanders later designed at 13 Porter Street. This flat-roofed single-storey house has a eye-catching triple-fronted facade where each successive bay is boldly rounded, with a large curved window and a continuous projecting concrete sun-hood. The house at 22 Riverview, combining Tudor Revival and Moderne influences in a surprisingly cohesive fashion, ultimately represents an amalgam of these two earlier efforts. Sander's only other known work in the study area is the larger house that he designed for himself at 1-3 Kalonga Road, completed in 1951. This building, which is currently already included on the heritage overlay schedule, is another quirky and idiosyncratic composition, albeit primarily in the Moderne mode. Yet again of cream brick construction, it has a canted plan form with a central curved bay, flat concrete slab roofs and a prominent slate-clad chimney.

Assessment against Criteria

A highly unusual, but not unsuccessful, integration of the Tudor Revival and Moderne styles (*Criterion F*)

One of the best examples of the work of idiosyncratic local designer/builder Frank Sanders (*Criterion H*)

Grading and Recommendations

The house at 22 Riverview Road, Balwyn North, is a significant heritage place in the City of Boroondara.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The house at 22 Riverview Road, Balwyn North, is a large attic-storeyed cream brick house in a hybrid Tudor Revival/Moderne style, incorporating an irregular roof-line with steep terracotta-shingled gables, half-timbered and weatherboard gable ends and dormers, a projecting flat-roofed half-round bay with curved windows and a garage at the lowest level, set into a stone-clad retaining wall. Conceived in 1949 as a single-storey flat-roofed Moderne house, it was completed in 1952-53 with the second storey in the Tudor Revival mode. Designed by local designer/builder Francis Sanders apparently as a speculative project, the house was initially occupied by Robert Taylor, an engineer.

How is it significant?

The house is of architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

Architecturally and aesthetically, the house is significant as a large residence in a highly idiosyncratic mode that freely combined two of the most popular housing styles of the late 1930s: Tudor Revival and Moderne. While these two idioms are, to some extent, at opposite ends of the spectrum, they have been confidently merged here in a way that is striking yet cohesive, and individualistic without being cumbersome or awkward. The large house – spread over three levels – expresses a lively asymmetry in both plan and elevation, with an irregular and picturesque roof-line of intersecting gables, a half-round projecting bay at ground level, curved terraces and front staircase. It displays a highly unusual juxtaposition of materials and finishes: cream brickwork enlivened with manganese and clinker brickwork as Roman bricks or basket-weave bond, weatherboarding and half-timbering to gable ends, terracotta shingles to the roof and crazy stone cladding to the retaining walls and integrated garage. Much of the exterior detailing, such as the rotated chimney with blind archway and corbelled base, the bulbous coach-lamps and the elegant but very minimalist steel railings, is also highly atypical. Prominently sited on an elevated corner allotment, this extremely unusual house remains a striking element in the streetscape.

Architecturally, it is significant as one of the largest and most striking examples of the work of Frank Sanders, a local designer/builder who was responsible for a number of houses in the area during the 1940s and '50s. His work is characterised by a highly individualistic approach that freely adapted, or even combined, the fashionable architectural styles of the later 1930s, incorporating unusual juxtapositions of forms and materials, and often quirky detailing.

Identified by

Built Heritage Pty Ltd

References

City of Camberwell Building Permit No 3,465, dated 15 August 1949. Held by City of Boroondara.

Graeme Butler, *Camberwell Conservation Study* (1991).