

PLACE	HOUSE			Other name/s	Easton Residence (former)		
Address	13 Broome Crescent WONTHAGGI						
Study No	WN002	HO No	-	HPD No	-	Allotment No	7 (Section 23)
LGA	Bass Coast	Ward	Hovell	Parish	Wonthaggi	County	Mornington



Image Date	17 July 2009	Extent of listing	Whole allotment				
Designer/architect	T R McLean?	Architectural style	Federation/Edwardian Period (1901-1918) Queen Anne				
Builder/maker	T R McLean	Commenced	1911	Completed	1911		
Her Act Category	Heritage place	Historic Theme/s	13.2 Building Towns (Larger Centres)				
Her Item Group	Residential buildings (private)	Assessed by	S Reeves	Date	14/08/09		
Her Item Category	House	Reviewed by	-	Date	-		
Usage (2009)	Residence	Condition	Good	Intactness	Good		
Significance	Local	Recommendation	Include in VHR <input type="checkbox"/>	Include in RNE <input type="checkbox"/>	Include in HO <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The house at 13 Broome Crescent, Wonthaggi, is a single-storey double-fronted Edwardian weatherboard villa in the fashionable Queen Anne style. Originally erected in 1911 by Thomas McLean, a local timber merchant and apparent building designer/builder, it was initially used as a temporary residence for the town's Station Masters before being purchased in 1913 by prominent local retailer and city councillor W C Easton, who subsequently lived there for over thirty years.

How is it Significant?

The house is of historic and aesthetic significance to the Shire of Bass Coast.

Why is it Significant?

Historically, the house is significant for associations with some important figures in the town's early development: timber merchant Thomas McLean (who built and probably designed it), two early station masters (who lived there until a purpose-built residence was provided in 1915), and prominent retailer W C Easton, Wonthaggi's first resident baker and a long-time city councillor (*AHC Criterion H.1*). More broadly, the house is one of several fine Edwardian residences that were built in this part of Wonthaggi by prominent citizens, which collectively demonstrate the early emergence of a prestige residential address in the vicinity of the Mine Manager's house at 10 Broome Crescent (*AHC Criterion C.2*).

Aesthetically, the house is significant as a particularly fine example of a large Edwardian villa in Wonthaggi (*AHC Criterion E.1*). Considerably larger and more prepossessing than many of the early private houses in the township, the house is distinguished by its unusual form (with return verandah, splayed corner and rectangular bay window) as well as its particularly assured decorative detailing including verandah posts, friezes and the unusual bracketed rough-cast gablet to the corner (*AHC Criterion F.1*).

Physical Description

The house at 13 Broome Crescent, Wonthaggi, is a single-storey double-fronted Edwardian weatherboard villa. Comprising two attached wings with separate gambrel roofs, the house presents both an asymmetrical facade and an irregular picturesque roofline to the street. The front wing has a splayed corner with a rectangular bay window, which aligns with a projecting gablet to a return verandah along the front and left side of the house. The roofs and rooflets are all clad with corrugated steel sheeting, penetrated by tall brick chimneys with corbelled capping and terracotta chimney pots. The verandah roof (at a slightly gentler slope than the main roof) is supported on turned timber posts, with a curving timber slat frieze. The prominent corner gablet is half-timbered, with roughcast rendered infill, barge-boards with shaped ends, and a row of brackets underneath. With the exception of the corner bay window, which contains casement sashes, window openings have double-hung sashes. Those to the left side of the house are sheltered by hoods in the form of corrugated steel rooflets on timber brackets. The front door is set into the side wall, at the far end of the return verandah, with a distinctive arched window alongside. There is no front fence to the property boundary.

Historical Notes

This house stands on part of Section 23 of the Township of Wonthaggi, a block of eighteen residential allotments bounded by Broome Crescent, Merrin Crescent, Edgar Street and Queens Street. The site, designated as Lot 7, is recorded in the first Borough of Wonthaggi Rate Book, dated June 1911, as the property of Thomas R McLean, timber merchant. At that time, he was also listed as the owner of another property, Lot 16 of Section 3, which was a commercial site fronting Graham Street. The properties were listed with a combined Net Annual Value (NAV) of £80, which infers that both sites had been built on by that time.

According to an early advert in the *Powlett Express*, Thomas McLean was the proprietor of the Wonthaggi Timber & Hardware Company, which had commenced business in July 1910 with temporary premises in Miss Slocombe's boarding house, Murray Street. The same advert noted that McLean's firm offered "plans prepared and estimates given for every description of building". It might then be surmised that the timber house at 13 Broome Crescent was built, and perhaps even designed, by Thomas McLean himself – and not necessarily for his own use. According to the rate book for 1912-13 (dated October 1912), the house was still owned by McLean, but was occupied by Henry Perry, station master. A scribbled amendment to the listing further reveals that, during 1913, Perry was succeeded as McLean's tenant by Thomas Kitson, who had replaced Perry as Station Master.

By 1913, the house had been purchased by W C Easton, a baker, who lived there with his wife, Charlotte, for the next three decades. The couple had married in 1886 and had lived subsequently in Moe, Korrumburra and Warragul before they (along with their seven children) settled in Wonthaggi soon after the opening of the State Coal Mine. A pioneer retailer in the district, William Challis Easton (1864-1944) had commenced business as a 'baker, caterer and confectioner' in November 1910, when he advertised in the *Powlett Express* that he 'desired to intimate to the residents of Wonthaggi and surrounding districts that he is prepared to supply them with first-class bread and small-goods of every description at lowest rates'. His business premises, located at what is now 54 McBride Avenue, combined a bakery with a public dance venue, and was loftily referred to as 'the Crystal Palace' on account of its glazed roof. W C Easton also became a member of the local council six months after its inception in January 1911, and served as a councillor for more than two decades thence. Some of his recollections of early life and development in Wonthaggi (as well as an interior photograph of his bakery and cafe) were published in the souvenir booklet, *Wonthaggi and District: Past & Present* in 1934. He and his wife Charlotte (1862-1942) remained living in Broome Crescent until their respective deaths.

Comparisons

Broadly, the present house is comparable to the other fine and prepossessing Edwardian villas that were built in the vicinity by prominent local businessmen and retailers. With its prominent return verandah, rectangular bay windows, ornamental gablets, rough-cast rendering and ornately carved timberwork, this house is particularly comparable to the respective residences of the local Bailiff of Crown Lands, C S Mummery (21 Broome Crescent, qv) and McBride Avenue draper A B Wilson (3 Dunn Street, qv). Save for the bay windows, it also has many elements in common with the large Edwardian villa at 13 Campbell Street (qv).

Recommended Management

Encourage the retention of the return verandah as a semi-open space, with no solid or glazed infill to be constructed.

References

Author	Title	Year
Borough of Wonthaggi	Rate Books (held by Public Record Office)	Various
T J Gannon (ed)	<i>Wonthaggi and District: Past & Present</i>	1934