

PLACE	HOUSE	Other name/s		Matthews Residence; Falloon Residence			
Address	15 Broome Crescent WONTHAGGI						
Study No	WN003	HO No	-	HPD No	-	Allotment No	6 (Section 23)
LGA	Bass Coast	Ward	Hovell	Parish	Wonthaggi	County	Mornington

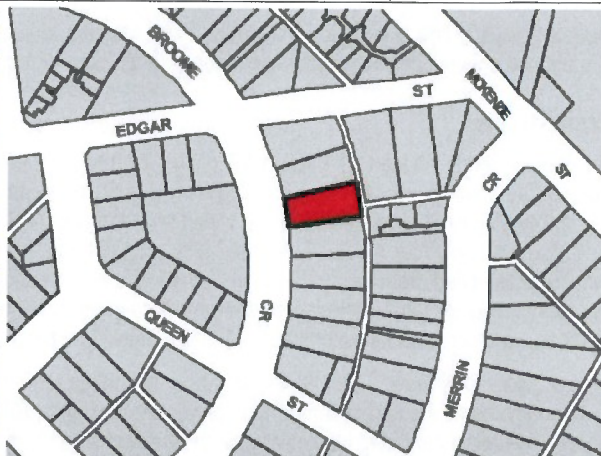


Image Date	17 July 2009	Extent of listing	Whole allotment			
Designer/architect	Unknown	Architectural style	Federation/Edwardian Period (1901-1918) Bungalow			
Builder/maker	G S Matthews	Commenced	1911	Completed	1911	
Her Act Category	Heritage place	Historic Theme/s	13.2 Building Towns (Larger Centres)			
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 15 Broome Crescent, Wonthaggi, is a single-storey double-fronted Edwardian weatherboard cottage with integrated verandah and projecting gabled bay with canted bay window. It was erected in 1911 by and for building contractor George Sydney Matthews (who had built the 100 Government Cottages in the township in 1910) and, following Matthews' somewhat premature departure from Wonthaggi, occupied by the State Coal Mine Accountant, George Falloon, for several decades more.

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 two very important figures in the town's early development: building contractor G S Matthews (who erected the 100 Government Cottages as well as this house for himself) and George Falloon, the State Coal Mine Accountant (*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, if slightly altered, 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 and rectangular bay windows) (*AHC Criterion F.1*). One of a number of high-class residences in this block of Broome Crescent, it forms a significant element in the streetscape (*AHC Criteria E.1*).

Physical Description

The house at 15 Broome Crescent, Wonthaggi, is a single-storey double-fronted Edwardian weatherboard villa with a gabled roof clad in corrugated steel sheeting and penetrated by a short (and possibly truncated) red brick chimney. The asymmetrical street frontage has a projecting gable-roofed bay to the left side, with a canted bay window and gable end infilled by vertical boarding. The right side of the facade has a verandah with a steep skillion roof (integrated into the slope of the main pitched roof), supported on turned timber with a matching timber balustrade and handrail. A second canted bay window opens onto the verandah.

The front property line is marked by a timber fence with shaped pickets, posts with orbs, and a hand-gate set into a splayed recess. Although not original, this is sympathetic to the style and era of the house.

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 6, is recorded in the first Borough of Wonthaggi Rate Book, dated June 1911, as the property of G S Matthews, with a Net Annual Value (NAV) of £15. In the next rate book, compiled only four months later, the same property was rated as a "house" with the substantially increased NAV of £40. The owner was identified more fully as George Sydney Matthews, builder. A significant figure in the early history of Wonthaggi, Matthews was responsible for what represented the first permanent dwellings in the township – one hundred of the so-called Government Cottages, which erected for employees of the the State Coal Mine in the first half of 1910.

George Sydney Matthews (1861-1921) was born in Rutherglen but, after marrying in 1885, set up business as a building contractor in Melbourne and subsequently undertook projects in Sorrento, Bright, Sunbury and elsewhere. After the collapse of the Land Boom in 1891, Matthews moved to Healesville, where he worked as a retailer and estate agent until the opening of the State Coal Mine, in late 1909, lured him back to the building profession. Early the following year, he won the contract to build the first fifty Government Cottages, followed by a second contract for an additional fifty dwellings. He established his building yard in McBride Avenue, and erected a house for himself in Broome Crescent. In a biographical profile of included in the 1910 publication *The Powlett Coal Field and Coal History of Victoria*, Matthews was quoted as saying that he intended to reside in the township permanently. However, he returned to Healesville before the end of the First World War, and died there in 1921.

G S Matthews is last listed as the owner/occupant of 15 Broome Crescent in the rate book for 1914-15 (dated October 1914), which includes a pencilled amendment (presumably made during the following year) that indicates that the property had been taken over by "Falloon". The reference is to George Murray Falloon (1886-1961), an accountant, who, like G S Matthews, was an important figure in the early history of Wonthaggi. Like Matthews, he was profiled in the 1910 publication *The Powlett Coal Field*, which described him as one of the 'Professional Pioneers' of the town. An employee of the Accounts Branch of the Mines Department, he was transferred to the newly-opened State Coal Mine in November 1909, where he initially worked as a timekeeper and ganger before becoming full-time accountant to the State Coal Mine in 1910. Falloon and his wife, Lenore, remained living at 15 Broome Crescent until at least the later 1930s. He was still a highly regarded citizen at that time, with a biographical profile published in the 1934 booklet *Wonthaggi and District: Past & Present*.

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 and rectangular bay windows, this house is particularly comparable to (if somewhat less intact, and less ornately embellished than) the respective residences of the local Bailiff of Crown Lands, C S Mummery (21 Broome Crescent, qv), and McBride Avenue retailers W C Easton (13 Broome Crescent, qv) and A B Wilson (at 3 Dunn 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.

Encourage the removal of the board cladding to the gable end of the projecting bay, and the reinstatement of its original finish.

References

Author	Title	Year
Borough of Wonthaggi	Rate Books (held by Public Record Office)	Various
	<i>The Powlett Coal field and Coal History of Victoria, 1825-1910</i>	1911
T J Gannon (ed)	<i>Wonthaggi and District: Past & Present</i>	1934