

PLACE	GOVERNMENT COTTAGE No 64 (former)						
Address	17 Dunn Street WONTHAGGI						
Study No	WN024	HO No	-	HPD No	-	Allotment No	5 (Section 17)
LGA	Bass Coast	Ward	Hovell	Parish	Wonthaggi	County	Mornington



Image Date	17 July 2009	Extent of listing	Whole allotment			
Designer/architect	Public Works Dept	Architectural style	Federation/Edwardian Period (1901-1918) Bungalow			
Builder/maker	G S Matthews	Commenced	1910	Completed	1910	
Her Act Category	Heritage place	Historic Theme/s	7.2.1 State Coal Mine			
Her Item Group	Residential buildings (private)	Assessed by	S Reeves	Date	21/08/09	
Her Item Category	Cottage	Reviewed by	-	Date	-	
Usage (2009)	Residence	Condition	Good	Intactness	Excellent	
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 17 Dunn Street, Wonthaggi, is a single-storey double-fronted weatherboard cottage with a hipped roof and an long projecting gable-roofed front wing. It is one of the one hundred so-called Government Cottages that were erected in the township by the PWD during 1910 as accommodation for State Coal Mine employees. This house, an example of the Type A cottage, was occupied by Thomas Gannaway, a miner, until the 1920s.

How is it Significant?

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

Why is it Significant?

Historically, the house is significant for associations with the earliest phase of permanent residential settlement in Wonthaggi, being one of 100 so-called Government Cottages that were erected during 1910 for State Coal Mine employees who, up to that point, had been living in a makeshift tent city near the mines (*AH Criterion A.4*). Pre-dating the initial boom of private residential development in the township, these are amongst the oldest surviving buildings in Wonthaggi (*AHC Criterion B.2*).

Architecturally, the house is significant as a substantially intact example of one of the standardised house designs produced by the Public Works Department for the Government Cottages at Wonthaggi (*AHC Criterion F.1*). Although one hundred such cottages were originally built in the township, most of these have since been demolished or considerably altered. The present building, representing the so-called Type A cottage, is a particularly rare survivor of its type (*AHC Criterion B.2*). Although somewhat altered, it is can still by far the most intact remaining example of a Type A cottage.

Physical Description

The house at 17 Dunn Street, Wonthaggi, is an example of the standard Government Cottage design referred to as Type A. It is a single-storey double-fronted Edwardian weatherboard villa with a hipped roof of corrugated galvanised steel. The original chimney has evidently been removed. The asymmetrical street frontage is dominated by a projecting gable-roofed wing, two rooms deep, to the left side. The gable end has distinctive notched weatherboards, and a turned timber finial. Below, there is a large timber-framed window with leadlight glazing and a skillion-roofed window head on timber brackets. A narrow verandah, with a skillion roof on turned timber posts, extends across the recessed portion of the street frontage and returns down the right side of the house. A timber-framed carport, of sympathetic design, has been built to the right side of the house. The timber picket fence along the street boundary is not original, but it appropriate to the style and era of the house.

Historical Notes

When the State Coal Mine opened in November 1909, workers were housed in a tent settlement, the 'Bachelor's Camp', until permanent dwellings could be erected. Three months passed before the Public Works Department called tenders, on 4 February 1910, for "the construction of fifty weatherboard cottages at the Government Township of Wonthaggi". Three different cottage designs, with four, five or six rooms, had been prepared, and it was initially proposed to erect eighteen of Type A and sixteen each of Types B and C. The contract was awarded to builder George Sydney Matthews (1861-1921), who had tendered the sum of £9,315. The demand for cottages was intense, with hundreds of miners making written application during the early months of 1910. In April, as construction continued, the government authorised the erection of a further fifty cottages. It had originally been requested by the Minister that the Government Cottages "be kept together as much as possible, and not mixed up with the miners blocks". To this effect, they were restricted to sites on Sections 9, 10B, 11, 12, 17, 18 and 19 of the township, creating a rectangular precinct bounded nominally by Broome Crescent and Billson, Dickson and King streets, plus a few smaller pockets further west. By early May, Matthews reported that the first nine cottages had been completed, with nine more to become available in each successive week. By mid-October, all one hundred cottages had been completed.

The house at 17 Dunn Street, which is an example of the four-roomed Type B Cottage, occupies Lot 5 of Section 17. According to a typescript list of tenants in the State Coal Mine archives, it was designated as Government Cottage No 64 and was initially occupied by T W Gannaway. The first Borough of Wonthaggi rate book, dated June 1911, confirms his identity as Thomas Gannaway, miner. At that time, the property was rated as "Govt" [ie Government Cottage] with a Net Annual Value of £20. A surviving letter in the State Coal Mine archives ((File 43, VPRS 10028/P0, PRO)) reveals that Gannaway has obtained his cottage after a personal recommendation from John Smith, Bendigo's Postmaster-General, who, on 19 February 1910, wrote to the Secretary of the Department of Mines that

There are two miners at Powlett River, named John A Tinkler and Thomas Gannaway, formerly of Bendigo, in whom I am interested, and I beg to recommend that when the government erects the cottages for the miners, favourable consideration be given to the requests of Tinkler and Gannaway to have cottages assigned to them. They are very respectable men and I would like to see them get a cottage each when the distribution is made.

This glowing endorsement evidently swayed a decision, for Gannaway was eventually allotted the present Type A cottage at 17 Dunn Street, while his fellow Bendigonian, John A Tinkler, was allotted a larger Type B cottage nearby, at 42 Broome Crescent. Gannaway remained living at No 17 for years; by 1932, he was listed solely as owner, with one G Martello as his tenant.

Comparisons

It is not yet been established exactly how many of the original 100 Government Cottages were of Type A design. It might be reasonably concluded that they comprised about one-third of the total, as a surviving memo in the SCM archives at least confirms that the first fifty cottages included 18 of Type B. But even if more than 30 Type A dwellings were built, a windscreen survey of the former Government Cottage area reveals that only about a dozen of those remain in a recognisable state today. Most have since been altered (variously by extension, recladding of roofs and walls or the insertion of new windows), including several in Hagelthorn Street (12, 14, 18 and 35), Dunn Street (15, 19 and 20) Hunter Street (14, 30) and Broome Crescent (32, 34). The present house at 17 Dunn Street, even though it has been somewhat altered, is nevertheless by far the most intact of the Type A cottages that remain.

References

Author	Title	Year
Borough of Wonthaggi	Rate Books (held by Public Record Office)	Various
State Coal Mine	List of Government Cottage tenants (File 43, VPRS 10028/P0, PRO)	1910