

PLACE	GOVERNMENT COTTAGE No 80 (former)						
Address	15 Hunter Street WONTHAGGI						
Study No	WN029	HO No	-	HPD No	-	Allotment No	4 (Section 18)
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	Excellent	Intactness	Excellent		
Significance	Local	Recommendation	Include in VHR <input type="checkbox"/>	Include in RNE <input type="checkbox"/>	Include in HO <input type="checkbox"/>	X <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The house at 15 Hunter Street, Wonthaggi, is a single-storey double-fronted weatherboard cottage with a hipped roof and an unusual integrated verandah. 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 B cottage, was occupied by Albert Radcliffe, a miner, until his death in 1920 and thence by his widow until 1923.

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 B cottage, is a rare survivor of that type, being one of only five examples that still remain in a substantially intact state (*AHC Criterion B.2*).

Physical Description

The house at 15 Hunter Street, Wonthaggi, is an example of the standard Government Cottage design referred to as Type B. It is a single-storey double-fronted Edwardian weatherboard villa with a hipped roof of corrugated galvanised steel. The asymmetrical street frontage comprises a projecting hip-roofed bay to the right side, and a verandah to the left. The steeply sloped verandah roof, which extends continuously from the main roof hip, is supported in plain timber posts. The street facade has two tall rectangular windows, with timber-framed double-hung sashes (and glazing bars to the upper sashes) and moulded architraves. The window to the projecting bay retains its original sun-hood, in the form of a steep corrugated steel rooflet supported on timber brackets.

The street boundary is marked by a modern fence of galvanised steel mesh.

Historical Notes

When the State Coal Mine opened in November 1909, workers were housed in a sprawling tent settlement, known as 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 12 Hunter Street, which is an example of the five-roomed Type B Cottage, occupies Lot 4 of Section 18. According to a typescript list of tenants in the State Coal Mine archives, it was designated as Government Cottage No 80 and was initially occupied by A Radcliffe. The first Borough of Wonthaggi rate book, dated June 1911, confirms his identity as Vivian Albert Radcliffe, a miner. At that time, the property was rated as "Govt" [ie Government Cottage] with a Net Annual Value of £22. Subsequent rate books reveal that Radcliffe lived there until his death in c.1920, while his widow, Mrs Fanny Radcliffe, remained in residence until her own death in 1923. Her will stated that the house in Hunter Street was to be sold and the proceeds shared between her son, Albert Edward Radcliffe, and her daughter, Mrs Florence Evelyn Dempsey. The latter appears to have briefly taken up residence there, as the 1923-24 rate book (dated October 1923) lists its occupant as George Dempsey, miner, and the owner as "The Estate of the Late Mrs Radcliffe". However, a scribbled amendment to that listing indicates that the house had been purchased by George Joseph Lawrence, a railway employee, who remained living there until 1938.

Comparisons

It is not yet been established exactly how many of the original 100 Government Cottages were of Type B 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 sixteen of Type B. But even if more than 30 Type B dwellings were built in total, a windscreen survey of the former Government Cottage area reveals that only about half of those still remain today. Most of these, moreover, have been altered in various ways, including surviving examples in Broome Crescent (Nos 26, 28), Dunn Street (Nos 11, 13, 14, 18), Hagelthorn Street (Nos 11, 27) and Court Street (No 6). Only five Type B cottages currently remain in what could be described as a substantially intact, located at 40 and 42 Broome Crescent, 16 Dunn Street, and 12 and 15 Hunter Street.

Recommended Management

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

References

<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Year</i>
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
Supreme Court of Victoria	Will & probate papers of Mrs Fanny Radcliffe (held by Public Record Office)	1923