

PLACE	HOUSE			Other name/s	Davies Residence (former)		
Address	26 Watt Street WONTHAGGI						
Study No	WN034	HO No	-	HPD No	-	Allotment No	2 (Section 30)
LGA	Bass Coast	Ward	Hovell	Parish	Wonthaggi	County	Mornington

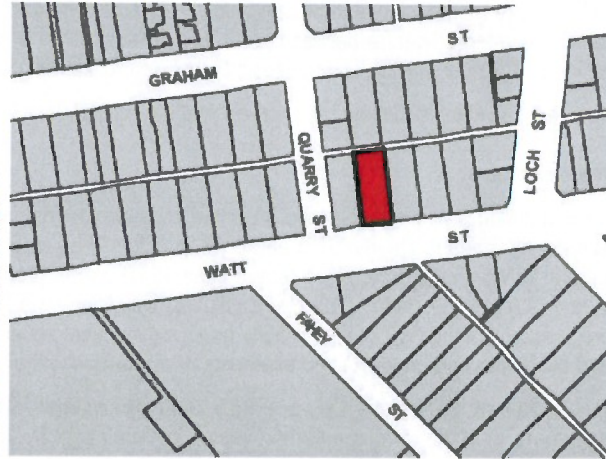


Image Date	17 July 2009	Extent of listing	Whole allotment				
Designer/architect	Unknown	Architectural style	Federation/Edwardian Period (1901-1918) Bungalow				
Builder/maker	Unknown	Commenced	1911	Completed	1911		
Her Act Category	Heritage place		Historic Theme/s	13.2 Building Towns (Larger Centres)			
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	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 26 Watt Street, Wonthaggi, is a single-storey Edwardian weatherboard dwelling with a gambrel roof and unusual asymmetrical flat-fronted facade incorporating half-timbered gablets and a recessed porch. Erected in 1911 for prominent McBride Avenue newsagent C V Davies, the house was occupied by him for over forty 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 as one of several fine residences that were built in this part of Wonthaggi by prominent citizens (mostly local retailers and businessmen) which demonstrate the lofty aspirations of the wealthier residents of the new township (AHC Criterion C.2). The house is of interest for its association with its original owner, pioneer retailer C V Davies, who commenced business as a newsagent/stationer in McBride Avenue in 1910 and remained in business for decades (AHC Criterion H.1).

Aesthetically, the house is significant as a particularly unusual example of an Edwardian house in Wonthaggi (AHC Criterion E.1). In striking contrast to the more ubiquitous double-fronted symmetrical and asymmetrical weatherboard cottages, or even to the grander Queen Anne style villas, the present house stands out for its quirky asymmetrical flat-fronted facade with asymmetrical gablets and off-centre recessed front porch (AHC Criterion F.1).

Physical Description

The house at 26 Watt Street, Wonthaggi, is a single-storey Edwardian weatherboard dwelling of unusual form and appearance. The bulk of the house is expressed with a fairly conventional rectangular plan under a gambrel roof, while the street frontage comprises a flush gabled bay to the right (east) side and a longer gable-roofed wing that projects from the left (east), with a smaller dormer gablet of its own to the street. This creates a distinctive facade that is both asymmetrical and usually elongated. The two gable ends are half-timbered, the larger one also with curvilinear strapwork and slim barge-boards with bellcast ends. Each of the gables also marks a large rectangular window bay below, with timber-framed casement sashes and highlights with leaded glazing. The front entrance, located off-centre between these two window bays, is set within a recessed porch with timber flat frieze and scalloped brackets. The doorway itself comprises a timber door-case with panelled sidelights and leadlight highlights.

The street boundary is marked by a non-original low timber plank fence and hedge-like flowering plants.

Historical Notes

This house stands on part of Section 30 of the Township of Wonthaggi, a wedge-shaped subdivision of thirteen residential allotments bounded by Graham, Quarry, Watt and Loch streets. The present site, Lot 2 with frontage to Watt Street, is recorded in the first Borough of Wonthaggi Rate Book (dated June 1911) as the property of Mrs Mary A Davies, "married woman", with a Net Annual Value (NAV) of £15. From 1913, Mrs Davis was listed as owner, with Cyril V Davies, her son, as the occupant. Subsequent rate books reveal that the NAV of the property gradually increased over the next few years, rising to £20 in 1915, £25 in 1917 and £30 by 1918, which possibly suggests improvements or extensions to the house.

Born in Ballarat, Cyril Victor Davies (1881-1954) had married Elizabeth Heath Ewins, a member of a family of well-known local booksellers, in 1906. The couple had settled in Wonthaggi by 1911, when their first son, also named Cyril, was born. Perhaps following in the footsteps of his in-laws, Cyril Davies became a newsagent and stationer in Wonthaggi. According to an advert published in the *Powlett Express* in August 1911, the premises of C V Davies was located in McBride Avenue, "opposite Smith's Hall", and claimed to be "authorised agents for *The Age*, comic papers and magazines", while also offering "a large assortment of 6d novels to select from" and "choice fruit and confectionery always available". Rate books confirm that Cyril Davies's newsagent and stationer's shop was located at No 66 McBride Avenue. Much later editions reveal that, after the death of Cyril Davies in 1954, the house at 26 Watt Street (and the business premises in McBride Street) remained in the possession of his son, Cyril Alfred Henry Davies, until well into the 1960s.

Comparisons

By its very nature, the unusual form and appearance of the house at 26 Watt Street is such that it has few direct comparators at the local level. It contrasts with most of the private residences that were built or occupied by other early retailers in the town, whether they be traditional symmetrical Victorian-style cottages (eg F J Bird's house at 18 Broome Crescent, qv), asymmetrical villas in a somewhat hybrid Edwardian/Victorian mode (eg Charles Hinneberg's house at 7 Dunn Street, qv) or the grander fully-fledged Queen Anne style houses (eg W C Easton's house at 13 Broome Crescent, qv). The nearest counterpart to the subject dwelling is probably the former residence of Llewelyn Llewelyn at 1 Dunn Street (qv) which, although built a few years later, is otherwise comparable for its similarly non-symmetrical frontage, and its integration of decorative half-timbered gabled and gablets

Recommended Management

Nil.

References

Author	Title	Year
Borough of Wonthaggi	Rate Books (held by Public Record Office)	Various