
Residence "Montana"



Montana 25 Feb 14.JPG



Montana 1919

Location

53 The Esplanade, DRUMCONDRA VIC 3215 - Property No 210927

Municipality

GREATER GEELONG CITY

Level of significance

Incl in HO area indiv sig

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO677

HO1631

Heritage Listing

Greater Geelong City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

B Listed - Regional Significance

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Corrections to the history of this place are informally provided at the end of this citation.

A most distinctive house displaying features of the English Domestic Arts and Crafts rival style as practised by some architects. A substantial contribution to the high status residential area of the Esplanade. It is of regional significance.

Additional Corrected Historical Details

The additional details are the result of an interview by David Rowe, Heritage Advisor, with a former owner (son-in-law of Oswald Hearne) in February 2014 (as well as some additional research). They are provided informally only.

'Montana' was built in 1911 for William Reid, Estate Agent. Reid had been involved with the Lunan Estate subdivision, and with Percy Baxter, they took up some of the prized allotments. 'Montana' was designed by T.D. Slevin (who designed a number of buildings for the Catholic Church). At this time, Slevin worked in partnership with Phillip Kennedy of Melbourne. One of the bricklayers of the dwelling recently claimed that the building was designed by Slevin alone.

With the death of Reid's wife, William felt that he could no longer continue to reside there. In 1919, he sold the property to Oswald Hearne, who named it 'Montana', apparently of Swiss origin. The Hearne family are shown on the balcony of the dwelling about the time of purchase in 1919 (the original pedestrian gate being on the side boundary at this time). A sun room on the west side of the dwelling was added in 1922.

An organist, Oswald Hearne's dream was to own a home with an organ chamber. In 1928, he engaged the Geelong architect, Fred Purnell, to design the organ loft on the south side. This meant the removal of the long vertical window (shown in the early photograph), which was regretted by Mrs Hearne. An electro-pneumatic Wurlitzer pipe organ was purchased from William Crowle, Elizabeth Bay, Sydney, Wurlitzer's Australian agent. At the time, the Geelong Advertiser claimed that the organ was the first to be erected in a private house in Australia (at Crowle's Elizabeth Bay home). The organ is now located at Geelong College.

In 1932, the verandahs and balconies were glazed in to prevent the strong easterly winds buffeting these parts of the dwelling. It was at this time when the Geelong architects, Laird and Buchan, designed a single storey gabled sitting room wing at the rear (for the maid), as well as a first floor bathroom. Further additions were designed by these architects in 1937 for extensions to the scullery and reading room. A new brick fence and gate was designed by Laird and Buchan in 1946-47.

On 3 March 1950, the Geelong Advertiser published an obituary on the late Oswald Hearne. It read in part:

"The death at this home on Western Beach yesterday of Mr. Oswald C. Hearne removed one of the most charitable and widely-known citizens from our midst.

Former City Councillor, Alderman and Mayor, Mr. Hearne was one of the city's most public-spirited citizens, and throughout his life he gave generously of his time and money to many worthy causes.

Born in Geelong and educated at the old Matthew Flinders School, Mr. Hearne spent some years at the University of Melbourne and later at Edinburgh, but he returned to this city to take a share in the responsibility of conducting the business of W.G. Herne and Company which was founded by his father and was carried on by Mr. Hearne, who became managing director of the company his father's death [the company being a chemist/druggist operation].

... Always keenly interested in music, and a practising musician of distinction, Mr. Hearne was at various times organist at Yarra Street Methodist Church, St. Giles Presbyterian Church, and St. Paul's and All Saints' Churches of England. He also was organist at churches in Brisbane, Dunedin and Melbourne. Mr. Hearne was the patron founder of the Geelong Association of Music and Arts ..."

[Other references include: Laird & Buchan Drawings Index, 1932-1948, Geelong Heritage Centre and 'Hearne Residence, Geelong' in Encyclopaedia of Australian Theatre Organs at <http://theatreorgans.com/southerncross/victoria/Geelong.htm>].

Brief Comparative

No other known designs by Thomas Slevin readily compare with 'Montana'. His design of the Ashby Presbytery and Ashby Hall, Malone Street, Geelong, are very different stylistically. However, all three buildings share a common design detail: incised rectangular motifs in the piers and balconies.

POLICY / RECOMMENDATIONS

National Estate Register, G.R.P.S.

REFERENCES

Sands and McDougall Directories, 1920, 1928, 1934, 1941.

Australian Home Builder, Feb. 1923, PP. 37,64.

Geelong West Building Permit Register, 1926-40.

The Morrow Pioneers Index, GHRC. , O. C. Hearne.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Greater Geelong - City of Geelong West Urban Conservation Study, Huddle, Aitken and Honman, 1986;
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	17815
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

DESCRIPTION:

This slate roofed stucco residence has unusual stylistic derivation, having some links with the English Domestic Arts and Crafts revival movement (roof forms, stucco finish and fenestration pattern). The gable end has more conventionally styled vertical timber strapping and the roof has terracotta ridging tiles with small finials. The glazed in areas were once open loggias of generous proportions but were probably glazed in the 1930s alterations. The balustrade and some walls have a squared pattern in the render work whilst pillars are paired at corners as a type of buttress. There is a distinctive Art-Nouveau derived render decoration on the pillars and the straight chimneys. Internal photographs taken in 1923 show a wealth of high quality joinery. The style could be compared with the work of Walter Butler and Harold Desbrowe Annear's later work. The flat roofed loggias upstairs are almost modern in appearance.

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>