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# White House



White House, Hobsons Bay  
Heritage Study 2006



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## Location

5 The Strand WILLIAMSTOWN, Hobsons Bay City

## Municipality

HOBSONS BAY CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO282

## Heritage Listing

Hobsons Bay City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is Significant?

The 'White House', designed and constructed by John Garnsworthy in 1907, at 5 The Strand, Williamstown.

How is it Significant?

The 'White House' at 5 The Strand, Williamstown is of local historic, aesthetic and technical significance to the City of Hobsons Bay.

Why is it Significant?

Historically, it is significant as the final home of the locally important constructor, John Garnsworthy, who had occupied or built other architecturally distinguished structures in the city. (AHC criteria A4 and H1)

Aesthetically, it is significant as an original and successful example of an unusual house design, utilizing a material (albeit unexpressed), which was uncommon for the period and a type of neoclassicism rarely seen in Edwardian residences and more commonly in commercial designs. It contributes to the historic character of The Strand. (AHC criteria B2, E1 and F1)

Technically, it is significant as one of the earliest examples of the use of reinforced concrete for a private home in Victoria. (AHC criteria B2 and F1)

Heritage Study/Consultant Hobsons Bay - Hobsons Bay Heritage Study, Hobsons Bay City Council, 2006;

Hermes Number 22265

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

The 'White House' is a single storey, parapeted and stuccoed concrete transitional villa with an unusual (for the period) elevated, stuccoed concrete verandah which is supported by Egyptian papyrus capital, round columns. A bracketed cornice with panelled parapet entablature and piers above, is underscored by its own swagged entablature with further swags (or garlands), placed between rosettes, below it. Architraved and arched openings are used in the facade, connected by a foliated impost mould: all deriving from the common Italian Renaissance ornament used in the later half of the 19th century but with an 'austerity' which reflected the times.

The parapet is decorated with laurel wreaths and classical urns, but the total effect is essentially simple as are the identical arches of the two front windows and the front door. A loose box and carriage shed near the rear gate is still in fair condition.

An iron palisade and stuccoed fence, with an arched portal topped by an acroterion and two balls, is punctuated by stuccoed piers, with tapering caps supporting balls (derived from Freemasonry), to provide an unusual and ornate frontage. This form of neo-classicism may be also seen at 376-78 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne (1909).

The construction of the house is noteworthy; Evidently a reflection of the difficult soil conditions of the area, this single storey house is constructed of concrete walls a foot thick, reinforced with tramway rails braced with steel bolts, the joints being 450mm (18in) apart. Contemporary accounts claimed that each bolt was capable of bearing a weight of ten tons. The house originally contained nine rooms, each 3.96m high and around 4.87m x 4.57m in size, with metal ceilings. The footings are evidently 0.9m wide and 1.2m deep.

## Integrity

External Integrity

*Integrity - High. Condition - Good.*

## Physical Description 2

Context

One of a number of large Victorian era maritime villas along The Strand.

## **Historical Australian Themes**

Making Suburbs

## **Physical Description 3**

*Associations*

JP Garnsworthy

*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/>*