
Wooragee

Location

28 Clendon Road TOORAK, Stonnington City

Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO302

Heritage Listing

Stonnington City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

Wooragee, 28 Clendon Road, Toorak, designed by noted Australian architect Edward F. Billson for his father, brewer and politician Arthur !. Billson, is of state significance through its associations with the distinguished Billson family and as an important and very early exemplar of the domestic work of Griffin's office in Melbourne.

Edward Billson, the first graduate in Architecture of the University of Melbourne, was articled within the office of Walter Burley Griffin during the design and construction of this house, and was to become a proficient exponent of a Griffin influenced, Prairie School idiom before turning to modernist modes in the 1930s. Through his work in Griffin's office and then in his own practice, Billson was instrumental in the introduction and dissemination of the American Prairie style in Victoria. Wooragee is possibly his first independent commission and appears substantially intact to its exterior, and has high architectural significance both as an early example of the work of a notable architect and as one of the earliest surviving Victorian houses to emanate from the circle led by Griffin.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Stonnington - City of Stonnington Heritage Overlay Report (Stages 1-5) 1998, Bryce Raworth P/L, 1998; Stonnington - Conservation Review City of Prahran Volume 2: Individual Buildings (A1), Context Pty Ltd, 1993;
Construction dates	1918,
Architect/Designer	Billson, Edward F,
Other Names	28 Clendon Road, Toorak,
Hermes Number	31311
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

28 Clendon Road, otherwise known as Wooragee, is located on the corner of two quiet residential streets in Toorak near Toorak Primary School. The two storey house exhibits a variety of architectural influences and is noteworthy for the high standard of its detailing. Edward Fielder Billson's plan consisted, on both levels, of a defined circulation space leading to all the adjoining rooms[1].

Wooragee draws inspiration from the popular contemporary Bungalow styles. The front elevation is dominated by two gabled roof elements. The first floor gable covers the two storey house proper while another, offset gabled roof shrouds the ground floor section and entry porch. The wide eaves are unadorned, with eaves linings rendered in the same continuous roughcast stucco finish as the walls. A low wall which surrounds the porch is capped in smooth render, a finish reiterated along with thin mouldings in a diamond pattern on the upper gables. The overall form and decorative detail is directly indebted to the influence of Walter Burley Griffin, to whom Billson was articulated during the design and construction of this house.[2] Decorative glazing bars, intact to most of the windows throughout the house, also recall Griffin's domestic work.[3] Generous areas of glazing contribute to the 'handsomely lit'[4] interior of the house, an effect which to a large extent belies the house's heavy external appearance. This air of gravity is a consequence of the articulation of piers in the walls, coupled with the unusually massive appearance of the roof forms. A small semi-circular patio at the front of the house is railed in simple curved steel, a detail which might be seen to anticipate a Modern, streamlined aesthetic.

The house is presently complemented, if somewhat obscured, by a garden containing long established trees, and a lawn bordered by flowering plants and bluestone. A white paling fence with a bluestone base fronts the property, but it is possible that this is a recent addition - council records indicate some fences were later added to the property, along with an in-ground pool.[5]

References

[1] D.L. Johnson, *Australian Architecture 1901- 1951*, P 120.

[2] Context Pty Ltd, *City of Prahran Conservation Review*, Vol. 4, P 12.

[3] Prahran City Council Data Sheet- 28 Clendon Road.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*

Local Historical Themes

8.4.2 Functional, eccentric and theatrical - experimentation and innovation in architecture

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.

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