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Place Name 5 Alma Street, Aberfeldie

Prepared by: Context Pty Ltd

Address: 5 Alma Street, Aberfeldie

Name: 5 Alma Street, Aberfeldie	Survey Date: 7 July 2017
Place Type: Residential	Architectural Style: Interwar Bungalow
Grading: Significant	Builder:
Extent of Overlay: Coincident with the title boundary	Construction Date: c.1929-30



Figure 1. 5 Alma Street, Aberfeldie, with its principal elevation to Alma Street. (Source: Context, July 2017).



Figure 2. Designed to address both street frontages the house has a distinctive street presence on the corner allotment. (Context, July 2017)

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History

Thematic context

This place is associated with the following themes in the Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History (MVTEH):

Theme 2: Peopling Victoria's Places and Landscapes; 2.7: Promoting Settlement (Developing townships and private housing estates)

Theme 6: Building Towns, Cities and the Garden State; 6.3: Shaping the Suburbs (Expanding services to meet demands); 6.7: Making Homes for Victorians (Establishing homes for the wealthy, working class homes, middle class homes)

Many of the first land purchases in the Moonee Valley area through the 1840s and 1850s were of very large blocks, with smaller lots sold along the Saltwater (Maribyrnong) River and Moonee Ponds Creek. Some land became farms but other land may have been purchased as speculative ventures. Almost all of the land in Moonee Valley had been sold by the 1860s.

In June 1888, the Aberfeldie Investment Company Limited advertised the 'Aberfeldie Estate' bounded by Buckley Street to the north, Park Street (now Park Crescent) to the south, Aberdeen Street to the west, and Waverley Street to the east ('Aberfeldie Estate', Essendon 1888).

Bounded south and west by the Maribyrnong River, the locality was initially settled as riverside estates (Victorian Places2017). In spite of earlier attempts to subdivide this land for sale, located some two kilometres from the Moonee Ponds railway station (estab. 1860) and until the tram along Maribyrnong Road to the river commenced in 1906, the area that became known as Aberfeldie was slow to develop.

The Aberfeldie Ward of the City of Essendon was introduced in 1912. Prior to that, areas later listed as Aberfeldie were included as part of Moonee Ponds. It is believed that the suburb's name came from a property, 'Aberfeldie', at the corner of Park Crescent and Aberfeldie Street'. (Victorian Places2017).

Aberfeldie became a more populous area in the first decades of the twentieth century. With increased population in the 1910s and 1920s, local residents were successful in agitating Council to provide adequate recreational grounds, parks, and community facilities. In 1913 Essendon high school was built, in the north of Aberfeldie on Buckley Street.

In the post-WWII years, with high birth rates and massive immigration programmes, Moonee Valley experienced perhaps its greatest era of residential development and areas such as Aberfeldie (along with West Essendon, Niddrie, Avondale Heights and Airport West) saw development of public housing (1945) and, at the same time, private home owners rapidly filled remaining land exemplifying the postwar dreams of all Australians to own their own homes.

Place history

The brick residence on the corner site at no. 5 Alma Street is situated on land that was part of the 'Aberfeldie' estate of Mr James Robertson. Robertson owned a residence named Aberfeldie at the corner of Park Crescent and Aberfeldie Street, and the land bounded by the Maribyrnong River on the southwest border (Victorian Places2017).

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The subdivisions of the Estate were first advertised for sale in June and July 1888, and the Estate was described as a 'most fashionable locality in Victoria – the Toorak of the north', boasting 'charming views' of the city, bay, Dandenong Ranges, and Mt Macedon (*Argus* 5 July 1888:2). The subject land at the southeast corner of Beaver and Alma streets was allotment 19 of section E, measuring 71 x 150 feet with a frontage to Alma Street ('Aberfeldie Estate', Essendon 1888, see Figures 3 and 4).

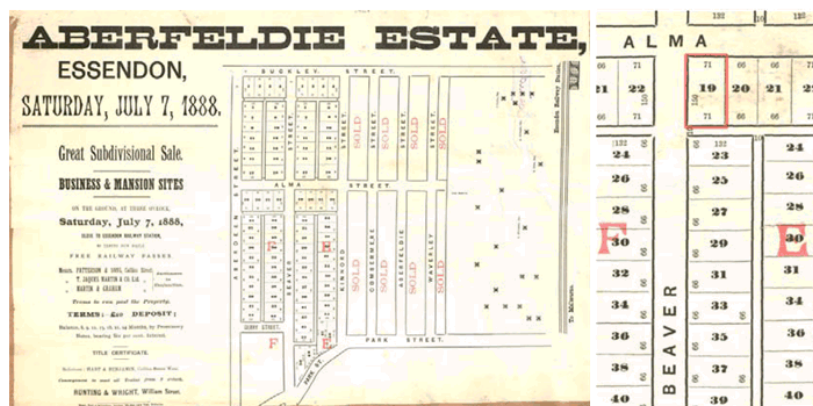


Figure 3 and 4. Subdivision plan for 'Aberfeldie Estate', Essendon, 1888, with detail (right) showing the subject site outlined in red (Source: SLV).

The 1888 land sale was followed by an economic depression, and much of the Estate land remained as open land until the turn of the twentieth century (Victorian Places2017). In November 1915, 48 allotments were re-advertised for public auction (*Essendon Gazette and Keilor, Bulla and Broadmeadows Reporter* 18 November 1915:2).

Despite the street names already appearing in the 1888 subdivision plan, neither Alma nor Beaver streets were included in the street directories until 1915, presumably due to the lack of residential development. Houses were gradually developed in the east side of Beaver Street throughout the late 1910–20s (S&Mc 1892, 1912–28).

One of Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) sewerage maps surveyed around this period shows that the subject site was empty until the late 1920s (MMBW Scale 400-feet-to-1-inch no 99, dated 1933, but surveyed earlier). Although full residential development of Aberfeldie was not realised until the early post war period, it is evident that, built in 1929, the house at no. 5 Alma Street was, relatively, a later development in the neighbourhood (see Figure 5).

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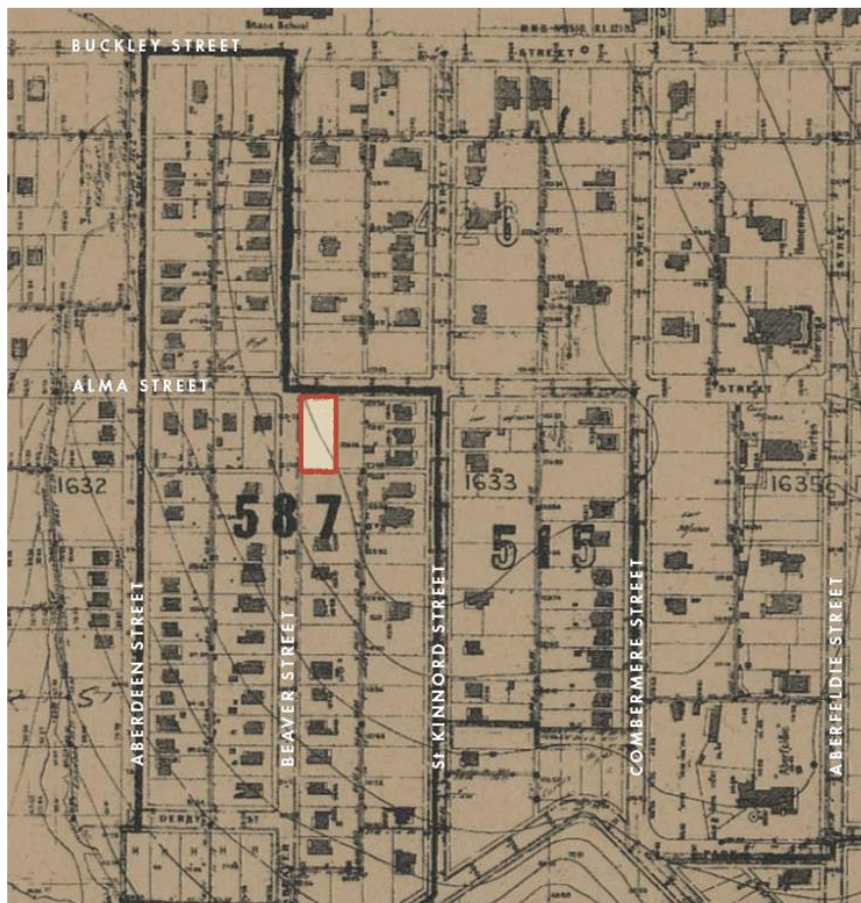


Figure 5. A section of MMBW Scale 400-feet-to-1-inch no 99, dated 1933, but surveyed earlier, showing the empty allotment at the subject site (Source: SLV).

The house at no. 5 Alma Street is likely to have been built in 1929 or early 1930; first appearing in the street directory in 1930. The first occupier was an Edward McWiggan, commercial traveller, who resided at the house until around 1931–32 (S&Mc 1930–31), until c.1932 when the next occupant, Henry William Coussins, munitions inspector, moved in (S&Mc 1933). The Coussins family stayed in the premises until 1941–42 (S&Mc 1942; *Electoral Roll*, 'Essendon' 1943).

The subject property was put up for sale in November 1950. The house was described as a 'substantial brick residence' situated in 'a high position, convenient to buses and close to schools'. By this time, the house comprised an entrance hall, lounge with a bay, a dining room, three bedrooms, an enclosed sleepout, renovated kitchen and bathroom, a brick garage and storage shed (Age 21 October 1950:21).

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Description & Integrity

No 5 Alma Street, Aberfeldie, is an asymmetrically designed villa designed to address not only the principal Alma Street frontage, but also the Beaver Street frontage.

The return verandah and fenestration addresses both frontages, as do the two gables. The house combines an eclectic and rich combination of styles with an unusually high standard of detailing.

It has a strong sense of horizontality, deriving from the wide verandah and the low pitched hipped roof. This is punctuated by the two projecting gables, which terminate the return verandah. This low building form comes from the Craftsman houses in the west coast of USA. Terra cotta finials punctuate the roofline.



Figure 6. Detail of the short precast cement fluted columns on brick bases. (Source: Context, July 2017)

The wide colonnaded return verandah is the most striking feature of the house. Six pairs of short precast cement square fluted columns with brick bases support the verandah roof and its extension past front bay window. Such paired colonnades were used by architects such as Walter Butler at 12 Lansell Road Toorak in 1916. This idiom is possibly derived from colonial buildings in South East Asia, such as the former Dutch East Indies, or from an Indian Bungalow style. The brick balustrade has separate openings for the two entrance doors.

The walls are unpainted roughcast with a red brick base extending to the window sills, and repeated on the verandah balustrade. The red brick work has clinker brick highlights. Matching materials are used for the front fence, but in a different configuration. The house is of particular note for the unusual quality of roughcast, especially under the verandah where it has been protected from weather. The long low fence matches the materiality of the house.

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The two bay windows are of note for the leaded glass with a distinctive vertically oriented geometric pattern on both upper and lower sashes of the double hung windows. These are located below the front gable and on verandah return.



Figure 7. One of the two bay windows, notable for their leaded glass with a distinctive vertically oriented geometric pattern on both upper and lower sashes of the double hung windows (Source: Context, July 2017)



Figure 8. Projecting gable on the Beaver Street elevation. (Source: Context, July 2017)

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Figure 9. Verandah showing patterned terra cotta tiled floor and paired front doors, fully glazed in a vertically oriented geometric pattern. (Source: Context, July 2017)

The paired front doors are fully glazed in a vertically oriented geometric pattern with timber glazing bars. The design is repeated for the second entrance on the verandah return. This gives the house an ambiguity with respect to the main entrance.

The verandah has a patterned terra cotta tiled floor.



Figure 10. Second set of paired front doors at the end of the return verandah. (Source: Context, July 2017)

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The house is sited with equal setbacks from both frontages with a simple path system entered from the corner gateway under the timber pergola. The brick and roughcast front fence, as noted above, is designed to extend the house design along the street frontage and it returns along Beaver Street as a foreground to the return verandah. The simple landscape design of the path layout with beds for annuals and minimal permanent planting is characteristic of the interwar period. The lack of large plants in the front garden ensured the house remained the dominant feature of the corner site.

The large double garage is of a design that is rare for the period in the manner that the gabled roof and final match the house. It retains its original industrial grade roller shutter doors.



Figure 11. The large double garage is rare for the period. It retains its original industrial grade roller shutter doors. (Source: Context, July 2017)



Figure 12. Detail of Beaver Street elevation. (Source: Context, 2017)

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The integrity of the house and grounds (including front fence, garage, and garden) is remarkably high, other than for the replacement grey cement roof tiles. Replacement of the roof tiles was possibly necessitated due to the low roof pitch. Presumably unpainted cement tiles were first fitted. The timber pergola has been rebuilt, but appears to be an original design. Similarly, the ripple iron side fence is new, but the previous fence could have been the same.

Comparative Analysis

There are other substantial and elaborately-designed corner houses in Aberfeldie which were built during the interwar period and which are in the Moonee Valley Heritage Overlay. Some of these houses are included in the Heritage Overlay for their individual significance. Others are within residential Precincts in the Heritage Overlay.

HO007 Riverview Estate, Aberfeldie. Within this residential precinct two houses in particular are closely comparable to 5 Alma Street. They are 10 and 30 Leslie Road and both are places of individual significance within the Precinct (see Figures 13 and 14). They share largely similar integrity of the site as a whole when viewed from the street. Both are corner houses of comparable high architectural quality, high standards of detailing, and high intactness as 5 Alma Street. They are also comparable as large single dwellings on garden allotments with original low front fences. Designed to address both street frontages, both houses have comparable landmark qualities as 5 Alma Street. No. 30 Leslie Road appears to have been extended at the back (with similar Federation-era detailing and gable end treatment but different ridge detailing and roof pitch) and a new double carport/garage. It is not known if the garage at 10 Leslie Street is original, or has been modified or designed to be sympathetic to the style of the house and re-using terracotta slate tiles from another roof plane not visible from the street. The villa at 5 Alma Street is of comparable architectural quality relative to 10 and 30 Leslie Road, and of comparable or higher intactness and integrity in terms of the site as a whole.



Figure 13. Interwar Bungalow at 10 Leslie Road, an individually significant building within the Riverview Estate Precinct (HO007). (Source: Context, August 2017)

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Figure 14. House designed with Federation-era detailing at 30 Leslie Road, Aberfeldie, an individually significant building within the Riverview Estate Precinct (HO007). (Source: Context, August 2017)

HO173 'Barter', 393 Buckley Street, Aberfeldie (see Figure 15). Built in 1921, no. 393 Buckley Street is comparable to 5 Alma Street in terms of the period in which it was built (interwar), its eclectic design, and combination of styles with an unusually high standard of detailing. It differs, however, in that it is a considerably more modest residence than the villa at 5 Alma Street and not a landmark corner building. Furthermore, the villa at 5 Alma Street is of considerably higher quality and intactness. The integrity of the 5 Alma Street property as a whole is also higher than at 393 Buckley Street.



Figure 15. 393 Buckley Street, Aberfeldie, 1921 (Source: HERMES)

HO2 1–9 Dalene Street, Essendon (see Figure 16). In nearby Essendon, the interwar brick villa and Bungalow style residences in this residential precinct in the Heritage Overlay (HO2) are comparable in terms of the period in which they were built (interwar), the architectural style, elegant proportions and detailing of the houses. The precinct

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includes houses on corner sites, such as the house on the corner of Glass and Crisp streets which, like 5 Alma Street, is oriented to both street frontages. 5 Alma Street is a grander, more elegantly designed, and a more intact example than the example pictured.

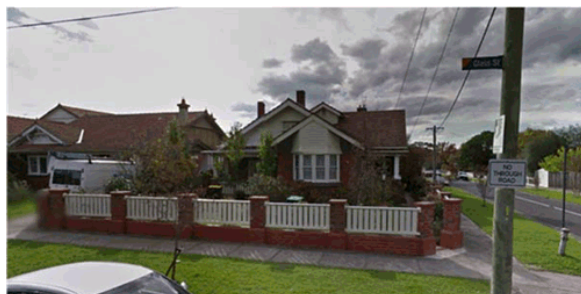


Figure 16. Corner house oriented to Glass and Crisp streets, in the 1–9 Dalene Street, Essendon, residential precinct (HO002). (Source: Google streetview, 2017)

Widening the comparative sample beyond Moonee Valley, 5 Alma Street emerges as an excellent example of substantial and elaborate post-Federation and interwar houses built on corner allotments. Many are landmark buildings, specifically designed to make maximum benefit of their siting. They often have two principal facades as well as corner entrances to provide an elongated entry path, sometimes with some form of entry pergola. They are often of larger or more elaborate designs than surrounding houses constructed at the same time. Local people of substance, including doctors, keen to demonstrate their status, often built such houses. With the exception of the status of the first occupant (a commercial traveller), 5 Alma Street shares many of these qualities and features, and because of the integrity of the site as a whole, remains as one of relatively few comparable examples.

Some examples include two well-known houses, now demolished:

- ‘Shameen’ 1050 Malvern Road, built by Beaver and Purnell 1916
- Grange Road, Toorak (cnr Trawalla Avenue).

Some surviving examples include:

- 57a Droop Street, Footscray (see Figure 17) — a highly intact, interwar Bungalow with quirky high quality architectural detailing, original front fence, original garden features.
- 46 Stevenson Street, Kew (see Figure 18) — a highly intact interwar Bungalow of high architectural quality, on a corner site, designed to address both streets, with original front fence, original or early garden paths, and original garage. Like 5 Alma Street, the garage design matches the house.

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Figure 17. 57a Droop Street, Footscray. (Source: Google Streetview 2017)



Figure 18. 46 Stevenson Street, Kew. (Source: Context, August 2017)

Discussion

In comparison with other early twentieth century houses on corner allotments in Aberfeldie that are included in the Heritage Overlay, 5 Alma Street is of comparable and, in some instances, higher architectural quality and intactness. Further, as a substantial and elegant villa on a prominent corner site, 5 Alma Street compares favourably with 10 and 30 Leslie Road in terms of its landmark value.

The integrity of the house and grounds (including front fence and garage) is remarkably high, other than for the replacement grey cement roof tiles. In this regard, 5 Alma Street compares favourably with 10 and 30 Leslie Road, Aberfeldie, both of which are identified as individually significant places within the Riverview Estate Precinct. This integrity distinguishes 5 Alma Street (and 10 and 30 Leslie Road) from other interwar corner houses in Aberfeldie in the Heritage Overlay of similar architectural quality.

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The house, its intact associated features, and the integrity of the site as a whole, compare favourably with some of the best-known interwar landmark corner houses in Melbourne.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criteria referred to in *Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay*, Department of Planning and Community Development, revised July 2015, modified for the local context.

CRITERION A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of the City of Moonee Valley's cultural or natural history (historical significance).

Historically, 5 Alma Street, Aberfeldie, is significant for the evidence it provides of key phases in the development of Aberfeldie as a suburb in the first decades of the twentieth century. Aberfeldie was first subdivided from the earlier riverside estates in 1888 but, located some distance from train and tram services, it did not develop significantly until the 1910s and 1920s. Built in c.1929-30, 5 Alma Street was. Relatively, a later development in the neighbourhood. (Criterion A)

CRITERION B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Moonee Valley's cultural or natural history (rarity).

The large double garage is significant for its design, rare for the period in the manner that the gabled roof and final match the house. It retains its original industrial grade roller shutter doors. (Criterion B)

CRITERION C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Moonee Valley's cultural or natural history (research potential).

N/A

CRITERION D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

Aesthetically, 5 Alma Street is significant as an interwar villa that exhibits many features typical of the interwar brick Bungalow style, a popular form of domestic architecture in the suburbs during the 1920s, with elements that recall both California and India Bungalow idioms. Typical features of the styles include the strong horizontality of its roof form, the visually prominent low-pitch roof, the wide colonnaded return verandah, the grouped verandah posts, roughcast rendering, shingled panel above the corner bay window, and geometric pattern leadlight glazing, and projecting timber window frames. (Criterion D)

Also significant is the simple landscape design of the path layout with beds for annuals and minimal permanent planting, which are characteristic of gardens from the interwar period. The lack of large plants in the front garden ensured the house remained the dominant feature of the corner site. (Criterion D)

The aesthetic quality of 5 Alma Street is enhanced by the high degree of intactness of the house and its original features and detailing, and by the high degree of integrity of the site as a whole which retains its characteristic front garden, original front fence, and garage. (Criterion D)

CRITERION E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

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5 Alma Street is distinguished by its high architectural quality and intactness. The house combines an eclectic and rich combination of styles with an unusually high standard of detailing. The house is of particular note for the unusual quality of roughcast, especially under the verandah where it has been protected from weather. The two bay windows are of note for the leaded glass with a distinctive vertically oriented geometric pattern on both upper and lower sashes of the double hung windows. These are located below the front gable and on verandah return. The wide colonnaded return verandah is the most striking feature of the house. Six pairs of short precast cement square fluted columns with brick bases support the verandah roof and its extension past front bay window. (Criterion E)

Aesthetically, 5 Alma Street is significant as a landmark. The design of the house, the striking architectural features, its corner siting, and low scale front garden augment this landmark quality. (Criterion E)

The integrity of the house and grounds (including the garden, front fence and garage) is remarkably high, other than for the replacement grey cement roof tiles. In this regard, 5 Alma Street compares favourably with 10 and 30 Leslie Road, Aberfeldie, both of which are identified as individually significant places within the Riverview Estate Precinct. The integrity of 5 Alma Street distinguishes it from other interwar corner houses in Aberfeldie in the Heritage Overlay that were built in a similar style and which are of similar architectural quality. (Criterion E)

The intactness of the house, its landmark quality, and the integrity of the site as a whole, compare favourably with some of the best-known interwar landmark corner houses in Melbourne. (Criterion E)

CRITERION F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

N/A

CRITERION G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

N/A

CRITERION H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Moonee Valley's history (associative significance).

N/A

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The property at 5 Alma Street, Aberfeldie, built in c.1929-30, is significant. The house is an asymmetrically designed villa, designed to address not only the principal Alma Street frontage, but also the Beaver Street frontage. The house is sited with equal setbacks from both frontages with a simple path system entered from the corner gateway under the timber pergola. The house combines an eclectic and rich combination of styles with an unusually high standard of detailing, including unpainted roughcast walls with a red brick base that extend to the window sills, repeated on the verandah balustrade, geometric pattern leadlight windows and original fully glazed doors with vertically oriented

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geometric pattern with timber glazing bars. The red brick walls have clinker brick highlights. The house has a strong sense of horizontality, derived from the wide verandah and the low pitched hipped roof punctuated by the two projecting gables that terminate the return verandah.

The garden, with simple path layout and beds for annuals and minimal permanent planting, which is characteristic of interwar gardens, is significant. The original long low fence, which matches the materiality of the house but in a different configuration, is also significant. The large double garage, with gabled roof and finial designed to match the house, and the original industrial grade roller shutter doors are also significant.

Non-original alterations and additions to the house are not significant, including the replacement grey cement roof tiles. The ripple iron side fence and timber pergola are sympathetic in style but not significant.

How is it significant?

5 Alma Street, Aberfeldie, is of local historic, architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

Historically, 5 Alma Street, Aberfeldie, is significant for the evidence it provides of key phases in the development of Aberfeldie as a suburb in the first decades of the twentieth century. Aberfeldie was first subdivided from the earlier riverside estates in 1888 but, located some distance from train and tram services, it did not develop significantly until the 1910s and 1920s. Built in c.1929-30, 5 Alma Street was. Relatively, a later development in the neighbourhood. (Criterion A)

Aesthetically, 5 Alma Street is significant as an interwar villa that exhibits many features typical of the interwar brick Bungalow style, a popular form of domestic architecture in the suburbs during the 1920s, with elements that recall both California and India Bungalow idioms. Typical features of the styles include the strong horizontality of its roof form, the visually prominent low-pitch roof, the wide colonnaded return verandah, the grouped verandah posts, roughcast rendering, shingled panel above the corner bay window, and geometric pattern leadlight glazing, and projecting timber window frames. Also significant is the simple landscape design of the path layout with beds for annuals and minimal permanent planting, which are characteristic of gardens from the interwar period. The lack of large plants in the front garden ensured the house remained the dominant feature of the corner site. (Criterion D)

The aesthetic quality of 5 Alma Street is enhanced by the high degree of intactness of the house and its original features and detailing, and by the high degree of integrity of the site as a whole which retains its characteristic front garden, original front fence, and garage. The large double garage is significant for its design, rare for the period in the manner that the gabled roof and finial match the house. It retains its original industrial grade roller shutter doors. (Criteria D and B)

Aesthetically, 5 Alma Street is distinguished by its high architectural quality and intactness. The house combines an eclectic and rich combination of styles with an unusually high standard of detailing. The house is of particular note for the unusual quality of roughcast, especially under the verandah where it has been protected from weather. The two bay windows are of note for the leaded glass with a distinctive vertically oriented geometric pattern on both upper and lower sashes of the double hung windows. These are located below the front gable and on verandah return. The wide colonnaded return verandah is the most striking feature of the house. Six pairs of short precast cement square fluted columns with brick bases support the verandah roof and its

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extension past front bay window. (Criterion E)

Aesthetically, 5 Alma Street is significant as a landmark. The design of the house, the striking architectural features, its corner siting, and low scale front garden augment this landmark quality. (Criterion E)

The integrity of the house and grounds (including the garden, front fence and garage) is remarkably high, other than for the replacement grey cement roof tiles. In this regard, 5 Alma Street compares favourably with 10 and 30 Leslie Road, Aberfeldie, both of which are identified as individually significant places within the Riverview Estate Precinct. The integrity of 5 Alma Street distinguishes it from other interwar corner houses in Aberfeldie in the Heritage Overlay that were built in a similar style and which are of similar architectural quality. The intactness of the house, its landmark quality, and the integrity of the site as a whole, compare favourably with some of the best-known interwar landmark corner houses in Melbourne. (Criterion E)

Recommendations

Add to Heritage Overlay as a significant place with specific HO controls, as shown in the table below. The HO is to apply to the whole of the property as defined by the title boundary.

External Paint Colours <i>Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface?</i>	No
Internal Alteration Controls <i>Is a permit required for internal alterations?</i>	No
Tree Controls <i>Is a permit required to remove a tree?</i>	No
Victorian Heritage Register <i>Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?</i>	No
Incorporated Plan <i>Does an Incorporated Plan apply to the site?</i>	No
Outbuildings and fences exemptions <i>Are there outbuildings and fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	Yes Garage, and front fences on Alma and Beaver streets
Prohibited uses may be permitted <i>Can a permit be granted to use the place for a use which would otherwise be prohibited?</i>	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place <i>Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006?</i>	No

Identified by

5 Alma Street, Aberfeldie: Preliminary Heritage Assessment, prepared by Context Pty Ltd, July 2017

References

'Aberfeldie Estate' 1888, State Library of Victoria map collection, accessed online 7 July 2017.

Age, as cited.

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Victorian Places2017, *Aberfeldie*, <http://www.victorianplaces.com.au>, accessed online 7 July 2017.