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Victorian Heritage Database Report

DELGANY



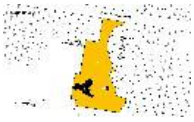




























Location:
3809 POINT NEPEAN ROAD AND 2, 3 & 4 DESBROWE ANNEAR WAY AND 2-28 ARMYTAGE DRIVE AND 1-29 ARMYTAGE DRIVE AND 20-22 DELGANY AVENUE PORTSEA, MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

Heritage Status / Level of Significance:
Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number: H2058
Listing Authority: VHR

Heritage Overlay Number: HO207

Statement of Significance:
What is Significant?
Delgany, Nepean Highway, Portsea is a large limestone building with prominent castellated parapets and towers incorporating an eclectic mix of Gothic and Medieval elements. It is set in an expansive and largely informal landscaped setting. The building was built in three stages; the original house in 1925 with additions in 1953 and 1968. Delgany was designed by Harold Desbrowe Annear as a large country house for Harold Armytage and his sisters. Melbourne's establishment families constructed many large country houses on the Mornington Peninsula as rural retreats and Delgany in its prominent location, was intended to be one of the grandest of these. During the Second World War, from 1942 to 1946, the house was used as the 62nd Australian Army Camp Hospital. In 1947 Delgany was sold to the Dominican Sisters who converted (and extended) the house for use as a deaf school with on-site dormitory facilities. The building was again sold in 1985, undergoing conversions to open in 1988 as a restaurant and luxury country retreat.

The main building complex is situated in an elevated position at the south end of the property with panoramic views over the surrounding landscape and coastal area. The entrance to the site is off the Nepean Highway (also known as Point Nepean Road) where a serpentine drive leads to the building through a treed landscape. Originally the main entrance was a little further to the west but this was moved in the mid 1950s to its current location. To facilitate this change a new section of driveway and the tear drop shaped turning circle were also built. The tear shaped turning circle replaced the original driveway layout, which with the garage formed an integral unit, as the garage was designed for the drive to pass through it. It is unclear where the current gates and gate post came from but is thought that they may have been the gates to a large house built on the site during the1880s by the judge Sir Thomas a'Beckett.

The exterior of the 1925 building is an eclectic mix of elements including Tudor castellation, an Italianate loggia with terrace, Voysean buttresses and a tower. This eclecticism is augmented by the addition a number of Annear's signature details including sliding sash windows recessing into the wall space and a distinct chimney design. The external walls are unusually thick (incorporating limestone, reinforced concrete and concrete bricks). The 1953 and 1968 wings are faced in limestone and match the castellated style of the original structure. While not of any particular architectural merit in themselves, the later components come together with the original building to form a largely coherent whole. The interiors of all sections of the main building have been altered, although the 1925 wing retains some of its original plan form and principal spaces. The 1925 garage is a key element of the original Desbrowe Annear design, and retains a formal relationship to the main house.

The Delgany landscape also provides a largely informal and naturalistic setting for the buildings, with a park-like surrounds featuring numerous Moonah interplanted with scattered pines and conifers. The immediate setting for the hotel, however, which was established after 1988, is considered to be uncharacteristically formal and ornamental.
How is it Significant?
Delgany is considered to be of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.
Why is it Significant?
Delgany is of architectural significance as an ambitious and unusual example of the later work of noted Victorian architect Harold Desbrowe Annear and is considered to be the most ambitious and spectacular of the ten or so Mornington Peninsula houses designed (or upgraded) by him.

Delgany is of historical significance for its association with the prominent Armytage family, and with Harold Armytage in particular. Although his ownership of the property was brief, Harold was the driving force behind the construction of the castle and its establishment as a large and distinctive seaside residence in an area noted for substantial rural retreats.

Delgany is of historical significance for demonstrating the lifestyles of the wealthy and the expression of status provided by owning such a prominent holiday house in an area noted for the presence of many holiday retreats of Victoria's wealthy establishment families. More so than the statement made by the house itself, this aspect of the place's significance is best encapsulated in the garage. Built at a time when car ownership was limited and generally to those with a higher income, such a prominently placed and well designed building as this garage is a demonstration of both the novelty of the car and the expression of the status that it represented. The garage is also a further expression of the leisure lifestyle that the house provided and which car ownership would have assisted in accessing.

Delgany is of historical significance for its role in the education and care of the physically handicapped in Victoria due to its association, from the 1940s to the 1980s, with the Dominican Sisters St Mary's School for the Deaf and Dumb. The latter was a major initiative of the Catholic Church at the time, and when it opened was the only Catholic boarding school for deaf children in Australia. The form that Delgany takes today is a result of major additions made during the Dominican Sisters' ownership.

Heritage Study / Consultant	
Construction Date Range	1923 -
Architect / Designer	Annear, Harold Desbrowe
Municipality	MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE
Other names	
Hermes number	2505
Property number	

This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to Planning Schemes Online