

HOUSE, 544 WILLIAM STREET, MOUNT LAWLEY



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	House, 544 William St
Other names	Monomeith
Place type	Individual building or group

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	8772
State Heritage Register:	
Other Listing:	Municipal Inventory Adopted 13 Nov 1995

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	544 William St
Locality	Mount Lawley
Survey	LOT: 300 D/P: 91643
Vol/folio	2084/763
Reserve	—

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of significance	<p>Considerable Very important to the heritage of the locality. High degree of integrity/authenticity.</p>
Management category	<p>Category 2 Conservation of the place is highly desirable. Any alterations or extensions should reinforce the significance of the place.</p>
Statement of significance	<p>The place has aesthetic value as a large and intact example of the Federation Queen Anne style executed in brick with the majority of the external detail still in evidence and in good condition.</p> <p>The place is a landmark in the streetscape because of its scale and location on a prominent corner.</p> <p>The place has historic value for its association with the development of Mount Lawley in the early 20th century by private developers who were active in the creation of a suburb for affluent members of the community by creating large lots on elevated sites.</p> <p>The place has historic value for its association with John George Milner who was a prominent real estate agent in Perth in the first half of the 20th century, and for his role in the promotion of Mount Lawley and his contribution to the community through civic roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>The place is valued by the community for the continuity of its prominent presence in the streetscape which contributes to the community sense of place.</p> <p>The place has social value for its role in the provision of community health programs which has meant that many people from across the metropolitan area have a connection to this place for the services it provides.</p>

PLACE USE

Original use	Residential: Single Storey Residence
Current use	Health: Office or Administration
Other use	

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

Construction date	1904
Walls	Tuckpointed Brick
Roof	Terracotta Tile
Architectural Style	Federation Queen Anne
Physical description	<p>A large single storey residence with a complex roof form. The main roof has a gambrel roof form. The street façade has a projecting bay window with a gable over. The side façade has a projecting room with a large arched window and gable above. The corner is marked by an octagonal tower, capped with a finial.</p> <p>The separate skillion verandah is truncated at the corner and is supported on slender doric columns. It runs the full width of the front façade and returns to terminate against the projecting gable room on the side façade. This junction gives emphasis to the entry located at the end of the side verandah.</p> <p>Walls are of face brickwork, tuck pointed, with stucco bands at sill and door head height, following the line of arched window heads. This elegant and energetic design is complemented by its front picket fence.</p>
Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	Moderate

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

This generous former residence, on the east side of William Street between Chelmsford and Grosvenor Roads, was constructed in 1904 for real estate agent John George Milner (1874-1943) and his wife Ellen (c1872-1938) and their four children. The Milners were originally from Victoria and settled in Western Australia in the late 1890s where John Milner established his business as a real estate agent. This was an advantageous time for real estate sales as the population of Perth grew rapidly during this period due to the discoveries of gold in the colony. His firm Milner & Company, House, Land and Financial Agents had premises in William Street in Perth and in the early 1900s the family was living in Lake Street Perth.

The site of this residence was part of a residential subdivision formally approved in 1901 by the Lands and Surveys Department. John Milner would have been well aware of the potential of this subdivision with its elevation above the city, proximity to Hyde Park and new planned public tramways. It is not known who designed and built this residence as no tenders were found in the local press. With John Milner's connection with the building industry it is likely he selected a team based on his knowledge of the industry. It is possible the house was built by a developer and purchased by Milner in 1904, however the Rates Books are inconclusive about this information. The Milner family were in residence by mid 1905, if not earlier and the family named the house 'Monomeith' which is likely to originate with the region in Victoria of that name.

In the early 1900s William Street was known as Clifton Street, and after 1916 changed to William Street. At this time this residence is listed as No. 10 William Street, North Perth. In the following year, the subject place is listed as No. 544 William Street as it is today.

John Milner played an active role in the promotion of the Mount Lawley district. In an item in the Western Mail in 1912 his contribution to the district was outlined.

Mr. Milner came to this State about 15 years ago and has always advocated the claims of the elevated land on the city's northern boundary and taken a prominent part in its development and welfare. On going to reside there some seven years ago he was one of the founders and first president of the East Ward Ratepayers' Association, and Mayor of the municipality during the three years from December 1905 to December 1908. He was appointed a justice of the peace in 1906, and has always taken an active interest in political and municipal affairs.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Ellen Milner died in 1938 and her husband John lived on in the house until his death in 1943. For several years the house was also home to the unmarried sisters of John Milner; Frances and Minnie Milner.

The property was subsequently occupied by railway employee John Gordon Brown until at least 1949 when the publication of the Directories ceased.

In the early twentieth century, No. 12 Clifton Street (now No. 546 William Street), the dwelling to the immediate north of the subject place, was occupied by Alex D. Cameron, of architectural firm Wright, Powell & Company, the firm in which he was later a partner in various combinations with Powell, Chisholm and Nicholl. No. 16 Clifton Street (now No. 552 William Street), the third door up to the north of the subject place, was occupied by Albany Bell, owner of a chain of tearooms and a factory building at Maylands.

The house at No. 552 had an almost identical footprint to No. 544. The occupants of these three residences, and the size and design of the buildings, indicate the upper middle class status of the area at this time. A Metropolitan Water Supply Sewerage & Drainage Department (MWSSD) Plan dated 1917 shows that the subject dwelling has a verandah wrapped around the south west protruding corner, with a stable and wind mill located at the rear of the dwelling.

In 1982, an application to establish a child care centre at the subject site was submitted to the City of Perth however the application was withdrawn by the applicant. In 1983, an application for six double storey residential units on the site was approved. The development did not proceed. In 1985, an application was approved by the City of Perth to utilize the existing dwelling as a chiropractic clinic.

On 18 December 1995, an application to construct an extension to an existing consulting room was approved by the Town of Vincent subject to conditions. The two-storey addition were later built to the rear of the existing building which accommodated four units, a double garage and a paved court. The remarkable octagonal tower at the corner of the original building, with a skillion verandah truncated at the corner, was replicated at the new addition.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

As of 2024 the building houses a number of psychologists, and psychotherapists, and a family therapy training centre in the various units that the ground floor is divided into for commercial purposes.

Aerial photographs from the mid 20th century onwards show the aforementioned extension added in the late 1990s, including the new roofing on the existing building, and the replication of the octagonal tower. Since that time the only visible change has been the addition of solar panelling.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Historic theme	Peopling WA: Demographic Development.	
	Cultural Life: Domestic Life Economy: Commerce	
Associations	John George Milner and family	Owner and Occupant
Sources	Municipal Heritage Inventory 2006 Landgate Aerial photographs 1953-2024. The Western Mail, 27 April 1912, p. 26. City of Perth Rates Books	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

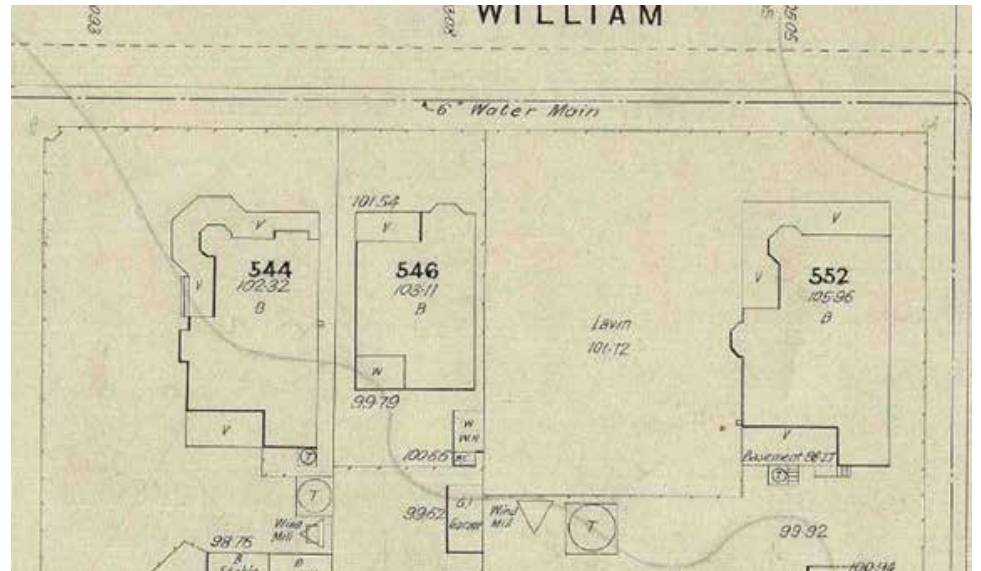


ARCHIVAL IMAGES



A SUBURBAN HOME—MR. J. G. MILNER'S RESIDENCE, NORTH PERTH.
Photo. by Shaw and Green.

The Western Mail, 27 April 1912, p 5.



Sewerage Plan 1917. Courtesy SROWA Cons 4156 item 124.