

# 'Coronal', 7 Coronal Avenue, Newtown

## - Statement of Significance

City of Greater Geelong, 2023

<b>Heritage Place:</b>	'Coronal', 7 Coronal Avenue, Newtown VIC 3220	<b>PS ref no:</b>	HO126
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### What is significant?

'Coronal' at 7 Coronal Ave, Newtown, is of historical heritage significance as a grand early Geelong estate incorporating a particularly fine example of a Victorian Italianate style residence set amidst generous landscaped grounds with numerous mature trees, and prominently situated atop the escarpment of Herne Hill with impressive vistas over the Barwon River and Queens Park.

### How is it significant?

Coronal is of HISTORICAL significance at a local and regional level as a substantial early Geelong estate dating from 1854-55 – a relatively early phase in the development of the City. (criterion A)

Coronal is of HISTORICAL significance at a local and regional level for its association with early Geelong architect Benjamin Backhouse (criterion H).

Coronal is of AESTHETIC significance at a local and regional level as a fine example of Victorian Italianate architecture of the residence. (criterion D).

Coronal is of AESTHETIC significance at a local and regional level for the cohesive and attractive visual composition of the Italianate architecture with the landscaped gardens and backdrop of mature trees, and its dramatic siting atop the escarpment with views across the Barwon River (criteria E).

### Why is it significant?

Coronal was designed and built as the private residence of architect Benjamin Backhouse, to showcase the prowess of the firm Backhouse and Reynolds, in which he was a partner. Backhouse practised in Geelong and Ballarat for only a short period, 1853-1860, prior to his return to England.

Coronal was established high above a bend in the Barwon River, upon a large rectilinear lot. Formal tree plantings were arranged along each boundary to form a staged backdrop to the grand lightly-coloured residence, which was surrounded by space in which gardens were established to complement the Italian style of the house. The house was initially designed as a grand two-storey residence of eight rooms, constructed of brick and stone. Construction commenced late in 1854 and completed mid-1855, marking an early phase in the expansion of Geelong upstream along the Barwon River.

Willingham 1997 describes the residence and its key architectural attributes: "This substantial mansion house of the 1850s, with axial plan, projecting ground floor bay windows, surmounted by canopied balconettes, rusticated bracketed eaves, slate roof and distinctive wrought iron balustrades, is one of Backhouses' finest designs in Victoria and a powerful indication of the success of this architect in Western Victoria in the 1850s."

### Primary source

*Willingham, Allan 1986: Geelong Region Historic Buildings and Objects Study Volume 3, pp303-304*