

City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

Place name: Sheffield Manor & Wansbeck
Other names: -

Citation No:
2431

INSERT MAP



Address: 110 & 125 Westbury Street,
Balaclava

Heritage Precinct: Not applicable

Category: Residential: Flats

Heritage Overlay: TBC

Style: Interwar: Old English

Graded as: Significant

Constructed: 1938

Victorian Heritage Register: No

Designer: James H Wardrop

Amendment: TBC

Comment: New citation

Significance

What is significant?

Sheffield Manor at 110 Westbury Street and Wansbeck at 125 Westbury Street, Balaclava, designed by James H Wardrop are significant.

Sheffield Manor was constructed by J A Trencher for owners Myer and Sarah Lasky in 1937-38. It is a brick building with a terracotta tiled roof, expressed as two volumes: a single-storey section at the front and double-storey behind it. The front section is clad in clinker brick, while the two-storey section employs clinker and salmon bricks used in bands and other decorative patterns. Both sections have a hipped roof, though the two-storey volume also has gables to two elevations. Applied ornament to both sections consists of large timber brackets supporting window and door hoods. The driveway is entered via a clinker brick gateway, with the building's name in mild-steel lettering. The garages are also contributory elements.

Wansbeck was created out of the conversion and extension of a 1914 single-storey house for owner John Clough in 1938. It is a two-storey apartment building with a complex hipped roof and projecting front gabled volume, all clad with terracotta tiles. There is a front chimney, sitting to one side of the front gable. Walls are of red brick, with a vertical band of clinker and salmon bricks to the front façade. The north side of the front façade has a curved balcony, set below a tiled hood on large timber brackets. The garages, brick fence and metal pedestrian gate are also contributory elements.

Alterations and additions are not significant.

How is it significant?

The flats at 110 (Sheffield Manor) and 125 (Wansbeck) Westbury Street, Balaclava are of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

Why is it significant?

Sheffield Manor and Wansbeck are of historical significance as representative of flats constructed during the Interwar period when huge growth in flat development characterised St Kilda and Elwood as the transition from detached single family dwellings to flat living became increasingly popular encouraged by the proximity to the beach, parklands and good public transport networks. Sheffield Manor was designed to appear like 'one large home', with a single-storey front volume transitioning to a two-storey rear section. This contextual design allowed it to fit into the Westbury Street streetscape which was still transitioning from single-family homes to denser development. Wansbeck illustrates another characteristic manner in which this transition took place: the conversion of an earlier dwelling into flats, which is a distinctive building typology in the St Kilda. While some conversion designs were of poor-quality, both aesthetically and in regard to amenity, Wansbeck was designed seamlessly with great skill, resulting in a skilfully massed composition that incorporates the red-brick materiality and window details of the 1914 house. (Criterion A)

Sheffield Manor and Wansbeck are of aesthetic significance as intact examples of the late 1930s fashion to combine historicising styles, in this case Old English/Tudor Revival, with the ahistorical Moderne style. They exemplify the idiosyncratic approach of the architect James H Wardrop who was adept at working with these two styles, both individually and in combination to create hybrid designs, and who was responsible for a number of flats in the municipality. Both buildings exhibit characteristics of Old English, such as vergeless gables, and timber brackets to porches and hoods, and characteristics of Moderne such as multicoloured brickwork in horizontal and vertical bands, and the use of small parapets and chimneys as vertical accents. The curved rendered balcony, with incised horizontal lines at Wansbeck is also strongly Moderne. Both flats are distinguished by their lively use of multicoloured brickwork. Wansbeck employs a broad vertical band of alternating solid courses of salmon and dark clinker bricks on a backdrop of red bricks with a curved brown glazed centre element. Sheffield Manor features salmon and clinker brickwork, used as banding, recessed vertical lines and in soldier courses. Sheffield Manor is further aesthetically distinguished by the sculptural massing of the two-storey volume, with a vergeless gable abutting a short length of parapet and a corner chimney. (Criterion E)

Thematic context

Victoria's framework of historical themes

6. Building towns, cities and the garden state: 6.3 Shaping the suburbs, 6.7 Making homes for Victorians

Port Phillip thematic environmental history

5. Buildings and cultural landscapes: 5.2 Shaping the suburbs (5.2.2 Private development), 5.3 Diverse Housing (5.3.5 Higher-density housing)

History

Contextual history

The early twentieth century saw a marked decline in the viability of large mansions across Melbourne's suburbs in general, but it was particularly felt in the more affluent inner southern suburbs such as St Kilda and Brighton, where land was highly sought-after by a new generation of homebuilders seeking smaller detached dwellings, duplexes or flats. The trend toward higher-density living in St Kilda began with the conversion of mansions and terrace houses into boarding houses in the early 1900s and continued with the first purpose-built flats that appeared at the beginning of World War I. A 1919 newspaper article noted:

It was held to be no longer necessary to labour with a house and all the domestic drudgery that entailed when by borrowing Continental ideas, people who could afford it could live in flats... Land has become so

valuable the villa of the Victorian days, in a crowded thoroughfare, no longer shows anything like an adequate return of interest on the land's present capital value. It is more profitable to pull the house erected thereon down, and to erect flats. When the flat became popular in England the experiment was made in St Kilda, and it did not take long to discover there was a genuine demand for flats (Pahran Telegraph 18 Oct 1919 p4)

Higher-density housing in the form of boarding houses paved the way to flat development. Flats first appeared in Melbourne around 1906 and slowly spread to the suburbs. They followed a strong pattern of development, appearing close to transport routes, particularly along or within walking distance of tram routes, to allow easy travel to the city. With their proximity to the beach and parklands, good public transport networks and seaside character, the suburbs of St Kilda and Elwood were especially popular locations for flats. Flats became a dominant characteristic of St Kilda and Elwood, and still make up a high percentage of dwellings in those areas. They include some of the earliest surviving flats in Melbourne, some of the best examples of architectural styles and types of flats, and as a group demonstrate the increasing popularity of the lifestyle of flat living from the early twentieth century (TEH).

There was huge growth in flat development in St Kilda and Elwood in the 1920 and 1930s, attracting migrants, single people, and people of diverse sexuality. In 1920 there were 527 purpose-built flats in 92 blocks in St Kilda municipality. By 1925 this had increased to 884 flats in 164 blocks, including large complexes such as the Ardoch flats in Dandenong Road. By 1935, despite a slowing of development due to the Great Depression, there were more than 2,800 flats in over 500 blocks. A further 2,000 flats were added by 1940; however, the onset of World War II slowed development. Nonetheless, by 1947 St Kilda contained 5,500 purpose-built flats, a quarter of all flats in Melbourne (TEH).

Westbury Street, with access to Alma Park and tram routes at either end, and close to Balaclava Railway Station, became a popular location for flats during the Interwar period. The first block, constructed in 1927 at the south end of the street (now 147 Westbury Close), was to remain the only flats until 1934, when a further three blocks were built. This was the start of minor boom in flat building in the street, which saw at least a further 12 blocks constructed in the five years from 1935 to 1940 (SM).

Sheffield Manor & Wansbeck, 110 & 125 Westbury Street

The subject sites formed part of Crown portion 153A, parish of Prahran at East St Kilda (PP). The four-acre allotment was purchased in November 1853 by W R Belcher. No development is shown on this land on the 1855 Kearney Plan of Melbourne. Westbury Street was originally known as Bull Street until 1865 when the name was changed at the request of the street's residents (Herald 30 March 1865 p3).

The 1873 Vardy plan (Figure 1) shows there was residential development along much of Carlisle Street. The land that now comprises 125 Westbury Street was part of the rear yard of a villa facing Carlisle Street. The extensive land of this villa (blocks 171-173 on the Vardy Plan) was owned by George Rolfe. The land that that now comprises 110 Westbury Street was the rear yard of an attached pair of dwellings. This land was also owned by George Rolfe (blocks 190 & 191), as was the large block to the north (No. 189) and several blocks of land to the west fronting Blenheim Street (Nos. 177-179).

George Rolfe and his son, also George Rolfe, were partners in Rolfe and Co., merchants, headquartered on Bourke Street, Melbourne. George Sr. had emigrated from England to Adelaide in 1848 and was a member of the Victorian Parliament in the 1860s. His daughter, Marian Australia, was married to Frederick Thomas Sargood (the first owner of Ripponlea house), who was also a partner in Rolfe and Co.

In 1870, George Sr. and George Jr. lived quite near the subject sites - George Jr. on the north side of Carlisle Street, just east of Balston Street, while George Sr. lived on the south side of the street, around 239 Carlisle Street (neither of these houses survive). By the time of his death in December 1871, George Sr. resided on Balaclava Road (Telegraph, St Kilda, Prahran and South Yarra Guardian 23 Dec 1871 p8).

From his probate, it is clear that it was George Rolfe Sr. who owned the subject sites, and not his son. At the time of his death in 1871, George Sr. had extensive landholdings in the area. This included land and two houses on Blenheim Street, his own house on Carlisle Street as well as 'Irona', 'Aston Lodge', 'Woodslee' and two more unnamed houses on that street, and vacant land at the corner of Alma and Brighton roads,

at the corner of St Kilda Road and Carlisle Street, and on Westbury Street. George Sr. also owned the company headquarters on Bourke Street, and land elsewhere in Victoria.

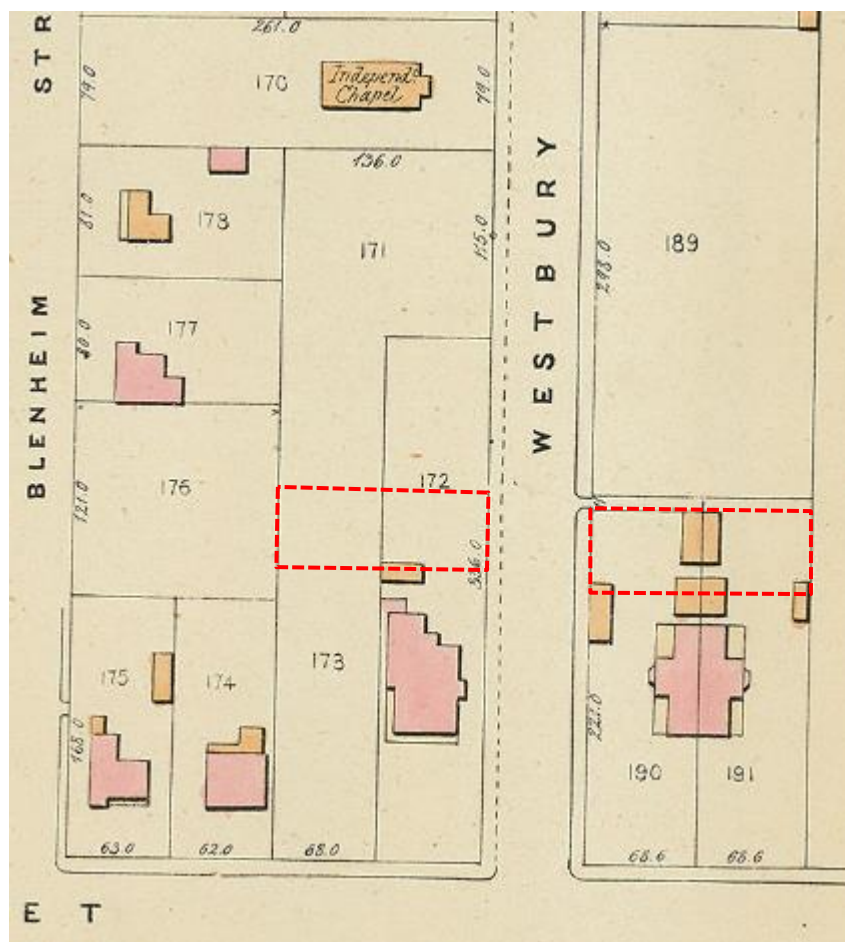


Figure 1 - Plan of the Borough of St Kilda, No. 2 south-west (J.E.S. Vardy, 1873). Showing part of Crown allotment 153A, and the approximate location of the subject sites (outlined) (Source: St Kilda Historical Society).

From late 1879, the blocks containing the attached dwellings on the east corner (including 110 Westbury Street) was owned by John Blythe Lucas, a 'gentleman' of Swanston Street, Melbourne (CT). He took a mortgage out against the property in 1890 to Walter Lucas and William Lucas Flint. Instead of discharging the mortgage, he transferred the property to four members of his family in 1897. Various members of the Lucas family resided at 326 Carlisle Street (the eastern attached dwelling, labelled 191 on the Vardy Plan) until the Interwar period.

By 1889, the villa site on the west corner (including 125 Westbury Street) was owned by William Cross Yuille. Yuille was one of the first Tasmanian settlers in the Port Phillip District, arriving in 1837 with a flock of sheep. He initially settled in Ballarat, then moved to Melbourne in 1839 where he became a well-known horse trader and recognised authority on horse-racing in Victoria for over 40 years. Yuille lived on George Street, East Melbourne, at the time of his death in 1894 (*Australasian* 21 July 1894 p15). He did not reside at the Carlisle Street property.

In 1891, Yuille sold to Alfred Fowler, whose address was already Carlisle Street, and nurseryman George Brunning, of Brighton Road. After George Brunning died, in 1893, his half of the property was inherited by sons George Edward and Herbert George Brunning, also nurserymen, and Frederick Hamilton Brunning, a seedsman. George Brunning founded a nursery dynasty in St Kilda in 1860, with premises initially on Argyle Street and later on Brighton Road, which was carried on by his sons after his death. Under the ownership of Fowler and the Brunnings, the property at the west corner continued to be leased to a series of occupants through the early years of the 1900s.

The 1898 MMBW plan (Figures 2 and 3) shows the villa on the west corner (including 125 Westbury Street) and the semi-detached pair (named 'Dacresfield' and 'Levuka') and their stables on the east corner of Carlisle and Westbury streets (including 110 Westbury Street). Part of the extensive rear yard behind the villa (then 322 Carlisle Street) had been developed with double-fronted houses facing Westbury Street. The land where the flats at 125 Westbury Street now stands was still an undeveloped part of the villa's rear yard.

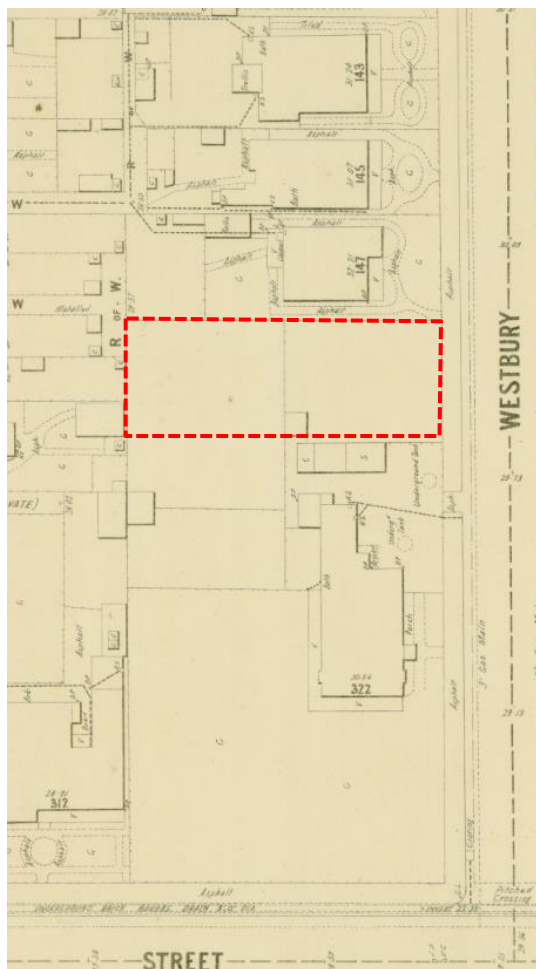


Figure 2 - Extract from MMBW Detail Plan no. 1425 (1898) showing approximate boundaries of 125 Westbury Street (dashed). (Source: State Library of Victoria)

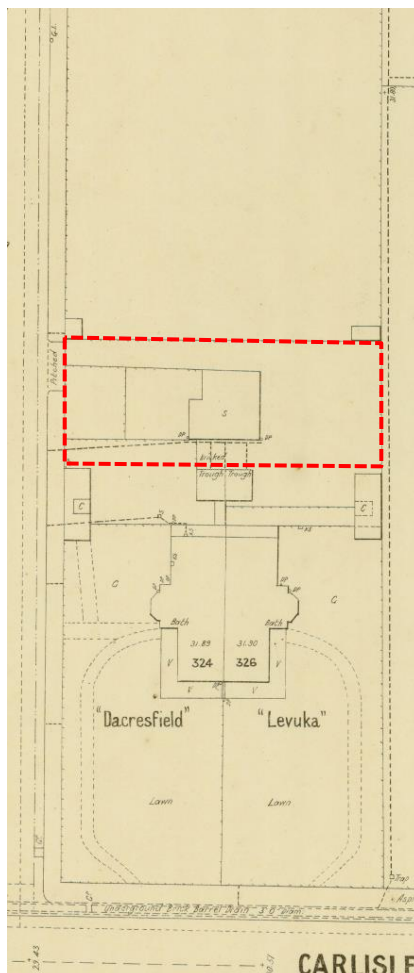


Figure 3 - Extract from MMBW Detail Plan no. 1426 (1898) showing approximate boundaries of 110 Westbury Street (dashed).

The Brunnings and Fowler subdivided the villa site on the west corner into three allotments in 1914, two lots facing Carlisle Street, and the third facing Westbury Street. On 15 June 1914, John Taylor Clough, a foreman who resided on McHenry Street, East St Kilda, purchased the allotment that now comprises 125 Westbury Street. He engaged builder L Hanson to construct a brick villa, with a building permit issued on 1 June 1914. No architect was recorded. He engaged Hanson again two years later to carry out additions (NB: the street address was 149 Westbury Street at the time). Clough himself constructed a brick garage at the site in 1921, and resided in the house.

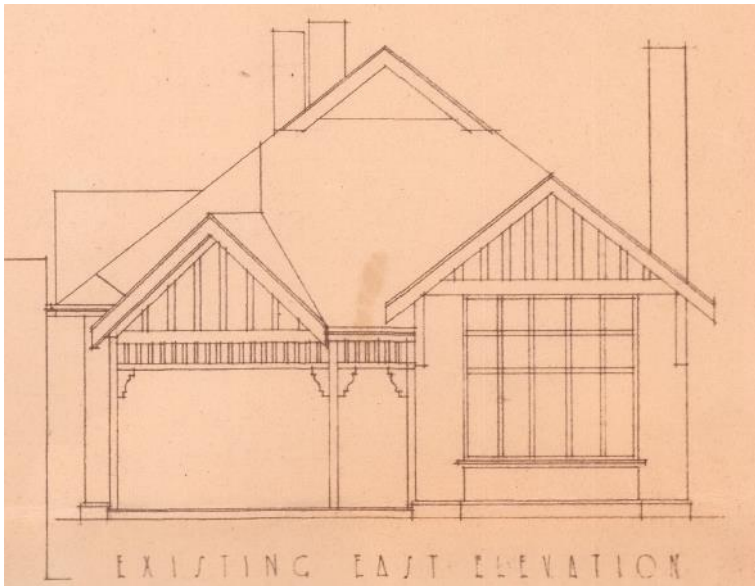


Figure 4 - Front façade of the 1914 Federation house at 125 Westbury Street, which was later converted into flats. (Source: City of St Kilda Building Permit, No. 9916)

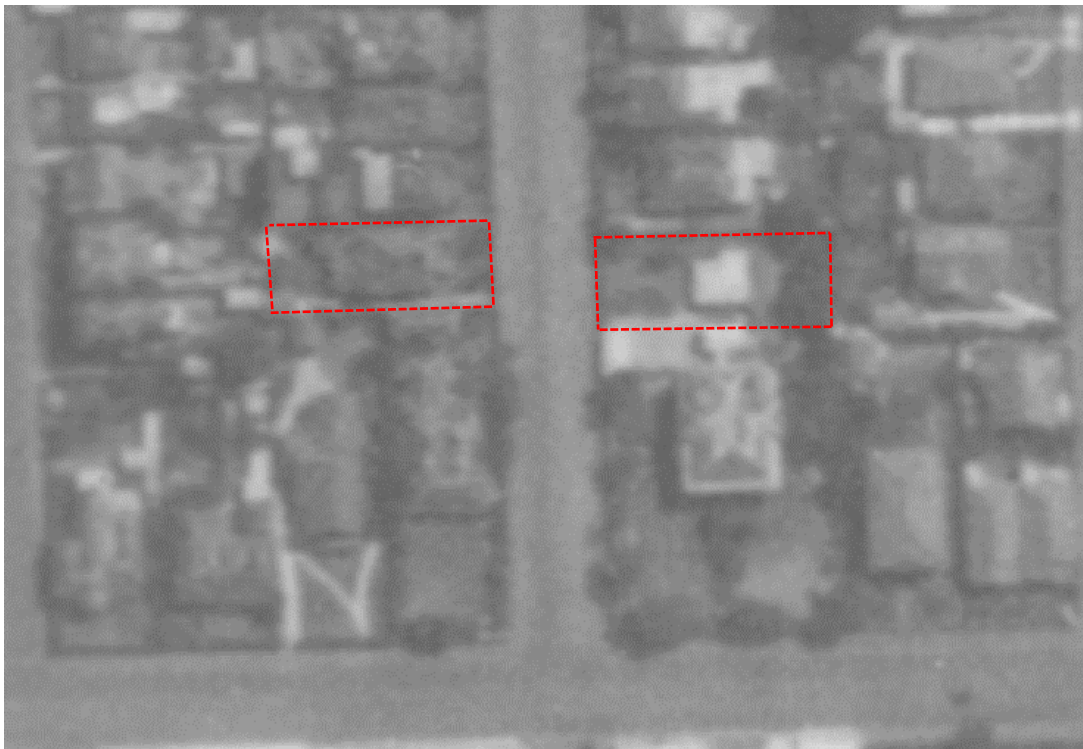


Figure 5 - Aerial photograph dated 1931. The Federation period house at 125 Westbury Street is outlined to the left, and the future site of 110 Westbury Street, then occupied by stables, to the right. (Source: Landata, Proj. No. 1931, Run 15, Frame 2750)

The double block containing the semi-detached dwellings on the east corner transferred from the Lucas family in 1930 to Blanche Moore, who resided in 'Levuka', Mabel Hedley and Florence Mooney. They sold the entire block to Edward Posner Pty Ltd on 18 May 1936. Posner subdivided the block into four, selling the land comprising 110 Westbury Street to Myer Lasky, a grocer, and his wife Sarah Lasky, both of Caulfield, on 25 November 1937.

Myer Lasky commissioned James H Wardrop to design a block of four flats at 110 Westbury Street, with the reassuringly English name of Sheffield Manor. It was constructed by J A Trencher, of 2 George Street,

Caulfield, in 1937-38 (BP). The building permit was granted just two days after the Laskys took possession of the property. The flats were the subject of an article in *The Herald*:

To carry out the aims of the owners several factors of design have been introduced, the most important being that the complete building will be part single, and part double storey. The external effect will be of one large home building up naturally from the single storey front to the higher rear portion. The character of the design will be enhanced by the blended brick tones of the walls, the varying heights of the roof, and an overall use of rich-chocolate graded tiles. (The Herald 'St Kilda flats designed as four homes' 9 Feb 1938 p10)



Figure 6 - City of St Kilda building permit plans for 110 Westbury Street (No. 9831, 28 Nov. 1937). The front (west) elevation is at right, and the south side elevation at left. (Source: Council Building File)

John Clough may have been inspired by the flats rising directly across the street, as he too engaged Wardrop and Trencher to convert his Federation house at 125 Westbury Street to four flats. Wardrop's design almost entirely enveloped the Federation house, retaining its ground-floor brick walls and bow windows to the front and south side elevations.

The building permit was issued on 31 March 1938, and Clough took out a mortgage loan over 125 Westbury Street in November 1938, presumably to finance construction, which he promptly discharged in December 1939.



Figure 7 - City of St Kilda building permit plans for 125 Westbury Street (No. 9915, 31 March 1938). The front (east) elevation is at right, and the south side elevation at left. (Source: Council Building File)

Clough remained the owner of the flats at 125 Westbury Street until his death on 21 May 1950, and occupied Flat 4 (*Argus* 22 May 1950 p10). The property was sold in December 1950 as '4 modern brick flats ... 3 erected in 1938' (this appears to be a reference to the incorporation of the 1914 house into the block of flats as the fourth flat), by the name of 'Wansbeck' (*Herald* 24 Nov 1950 p12).



Figure 8 - Aerial photograph dated 1945, subject sites indicated (red outline). The semi-detached pair at the south-east corner were replaced by new development (Source: Landata, Proj. No 5, Run 17E, Frame 58013)

The City of Port Phillip records include internal details for 110 and 125 Westbury Street, such as tapestry brick fireplaces, internal doors, kitchen cabinets and a breakfast nook with built-in furniture.

James H Wardrop

James Hastie Wardrop was born in Moonee Ponds into a Scottish Presbyterian family in 1891. His father was a sculptor. He studied architecture and structural engineering under Melbourne architect Charles D'Ebro, designer of Princes Bridge. While a student, he won two medals in RVIA competitions (for the design of a bank branch and a measured drawing), and was elected an associate of the RVIA in 1913. Wardrop enlisted in the AIF in October 1915, embarking with the 6th Field Artillery Brigade a year later, and returning to Australia in December 1918.

In 1919, Wardrop returned to Europe to study briefly in England. Once back in Melbourne, he was taken on as a partner by Phillip Hudson, whom he had worked under in D'Ebro's practice before the war. Their early work included the neoclassical St Kilda Army & Navy Club in St Kilda (1923) and the Greek Revival styled Shrine of Remembrance (1924-34). In 1929 they took on a third partner to assist with the Shrine: architect and engineer Kingsley Ussher.

The practice of Hudson, Wardrop and Ussher was responsible for a broad variety of work, including a number of notable Arts & Crafts and English Domestic designs such as 13-23 Hull Road, Croydon (1924), 97 Argyle Road, Kew (1928), 1 Chesterfield Avenue, Malvern (c1928), and a house on Albany Road, Toorak (c.1927) that was feted in *Australian Home Beautiful* (May 1928 p15). Wardrop designed a house for his own family at 24 Alston Grove, St Kilda East, in 1924 (Contributory in City of Glen Eira HO74). It is a two-storey Arts & Crafts dwelling, with roughcast rendered walls and a hipped roof.

The practice disbanded in the early 1930s, with Hudson continuing his work in the Old English style. Wardrop's early solo designs were also in this style, before he transitioned to its ahistorical, polar opposite: the Moderne. Like other architects in the 1930s, such as Harry Norris, Wardrop often combined these two styles for his residential architecture, with examples seen in Port Phillip and beyond (e.g. the Shirley Court group of flats in Travancore, 1939). His best-known Moderne buildings are Alkira House, Queen Street, Melbourne (1937), and the United Kingdom Hotel (now McDonalds), Queens Parade, Clifton Hill (1938).

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Description

The flats at 110 and 125 Westbury Street stand directly across the street from each other, just north of Carlisle Street. The street is dominated by blocks of flats, with a few dating from the late 1930s at the southern end (including the subject buildings), but most built post-World War II. There are also remnant Victorian and Federation single-storey dwellings scattered among them.



Sheffield Manor, 110 Westbury Street

Sheffield Manor is an apartment building with unusual massing, featuring a single-storey wing projecting toward the street and a two-storey form behind it. The side drive is intersected by a 'porte-cochere' gateway adjacent to the two-storey front façade, and leads to clinker brick garages at the rear. The gateway is of clinker brick and features the name, Sheffield Manor, in mild steel lettering. The low front fence, of clinker bricks, is partly original, though it has been altered to allow the insertion of metal fence panels (not original).

The front single storey section has a complex hipped roof with expressed rafter ends, clad in terracotta tiles. Tiled rooflets shelter front windows and the side entrance. The walls of this section are clinker brick with plain jointing. Windows are six-over-one double-hung timber sashes. Compared to the two-storey section, this part of the building is quite plain, with the only decorative detail being large timber brackets supporting the rooflets, and a parapeted entry to the north side with horizontal raised brick bands. The original drawings show timber brackets framing the opening to a sunporch on the north side of the front façade, but these have apparently been removed when the porch was enclosed by a window.

The rear two storey section is far more varied in its cladding and decorative detailing. The roof is hipped and clad with terracotta tiles, but it is visually broken up by vergeless gables that accent the front and south side elevations. Chimneys are also employed in a sculptural manner, particularly the front corner chimney whose shaft is buttressed by a short length of parapet. The south side chimney has an external breast and it rises up at the centre of a gable. These chimneys retain their slender glazed terracotta pots.

Apart from its sculptural massing, the two-storey section is distinguished by its brickwork, which can generally be described as clinker bricks with broad salmon (deep cream) brick bands. The salmon bricks are also used in soldier courses to the vergeless gables, and in recessed vertical rows of headers to the chimneys and front parapet. This interplay of strong horizontal lines balanced with discrete vertical elements is a defining feature of the Moderne style, much as the vergeless gables are a defining feature of the Old English style. The entrance to the two-storey block is located just beyond the gateway; it has a hipped rooflet resting on the same large timber brackets used for the single-storey section.

The flats appear to be highly intact externally, apart from discrete changes to the front fence. Note that the gateway is shown with more ornament on the original plans (corbels and vertical lines), so it may have been widened at some point.

Wansbeck, 125 Westbury Street

Wansbeck sits behind a relatively large front garden, bounded by a simple red and clinker-brick fence with a metal pedestrian gate (north end) which appears to date from the 1938 works. There is a driveway on the south side, which retains remnants of the original divided track concrete paving. There is a garage block at the rear.

It is a two-storey apartment building with a complex hipped roof and projecting front gabled volume, all clad with terracotta tiles. There are dark burned terracotta capping tiles to the front gable, which reflects other materials of the façade. Chimneys are of red brick with horizontal bands of dark clinker bricks at the top. At least one of the rear chimneys retains two orange terracotta chimney pots. One of the chimneys forms part of the front façade, sitting to one side of the front gable.

The principal walling material is pressed red bricks with plain jointing, which was clearly dictated by the incorporation of the 1914 brick house in the flats design. This colour of brick was not as fashionable as clinker or dark cream (salmon) bricks in the 1930s. To provide up-to-date details, there are recessed horizontal bands of clinker bricks to the first floor, and a broad vertical band to the centre of the projecting front gable. This band is made of alternating soldier courses of salmon and recessed dark clinker bricks, with a brown glazed centre element that appears to be spoon-drain tiles. This striped band is intersected by

windows, and extends above the roofline to form a small parapet, abutting the front chimney. It is topped by three horizontal bands of clinker bricks.

Balancing this strong vertical element of the façade is a curved Juliet balcony intersecting the chimney and then wrapping around the recessed northern half of the façade where it is sheltered by a tiled hood resting on large timber brackets.

First-floor windows are twelve-over-one double-hung sashes, with leaded panes, while the ground floor retains some 1914 windows. These include bow windows to the ground floor front façade and the south side elevation, and a double-hung window with a segmental arch just before the side porch.

The plans held by the City of Port Phillip show a slightly different form of the front façade than was actually built. They show two front gables. Instead, the north gable form was not built and a hood over the balcony was added. The detailing of these elements is in keeping with the rest of the building, and the timber brackets supporting the hood are characteristic of Wardrop's work, strongly suggesting this was his final design. Another change to the building permit plans, which appear to be Wardrop's work, is to the side entry. Shown on the plans as a porte-cochere below a standard window. Instead, this was built as first-floor rendered balcony below a hipped hood with large timber brackets. The balcony rests of corbelled wing walls below.

The building appears to be highly intact to its 1938 form.

Comparative analysis

The Old English and Moderne styles dominated domestic architecture of the 1930s.

Often referred to as Tudor, Interwar Old English had its roots in the English Arts and Crafts movement of the mid to late nineteenth century. The revival of this style, along with many other English and American revival styles became popular with the upper end of the housing market. The use of red or clinker brick was typical of Old English architecture. Modelled chimneys and terracotta roof tiles were typical, as were steeply pitched roofs. Picturesque asymmetry was pursued with multiple fronts and offset massing. Old English styled houses evoked the 'Home country' in the British Empire, using the associations of the manor to convey wealth and social status.

The style was long-lived and evolved over this period. Early examples, in the late 1910s and 1920s tended to have gabled roofs and half timbering or brick nogging in gables. By the mid-1930s, most examples had hipped main roofs accented by vergeless gables, and walls and gables were entirely of brick enlivened by patterning in multiple colours.

The Moderne style emerged later in domestic architecture. One of the earliest examples in Victoria was Harry Norris' Burnham Beeches in Sassafras, of 1931-33; a mansion designed for Alfred Nicholas. By the mid-1930s, examples of the style began to appear in Melbourne's suburbs. Intended to evoke the machine age and speed, Moderne houses had a strong horizontal emphasis, often provided by incised 'speedlines' on walls, horizontal glazing bars to windows, and roofs partially or wholly hidden behind a parapet. There was often a minor vertical element to provide balance, for example, a pier or small parapet projecting above the eaves. External chimneys were also used in this capacity, forming an important part of the front façade. In keeping with the machine age aesthetic, many Moderne houses had rendered walls (emulating concrete) and metal windows.

Combination of seemingly disparate styles was not uncommon in the late 1930s. Examples can be seen, for example, in the work of architect Harry Norris. He melded Georgian Revival with the Moderne at Methodist Ladies' College (Nicholas Building, 1939) and at the University of Melbourne (Vice Chancellor's House, 1937-8), and crossed Tudor with Moderne (MLC's Boarding House & Dining Hall Wing, 1938-39, and Nicholas Hall at the Wesley Church complex, Latrobe Street, Melbourne).

As discussed in the history, Wardrop designed Old English houses and Moderne commercial buildings during the 1930s, sometimes combining the two styles.



Other examples of Interwar flats designed by James H Wardrop and included in the Heritage Overlay in Port Phillip are:

- Mandalay, 17 & 17A Albion Street, Balaclava (1934), Moderne house and Old English flats, J A Trencher, builder (Citation 396, Brunnings Estate & Environs Precinct).
- Sefton, 4 Broadway, Elwood (1934) conversion of existing single storey residence into three flats (Contributory within St Kilda Botanical Gardens & Environs precinct).
- Belmac, 1 Goldsmith Street, Elwood (1934) Old English, E Jennings & Sons, builder (Contributory within St Kilda Botanical Gardens & Environs precinct).
- Zaneth Manor, 33 Brighton Road, St Kilda (1935-36) J A Trencher, builder (Citation 432, St Kilda Botanical Gardens & Environs precinct)
- Flats, 4A Meredith Street, Elwood (1934-35) E Jennings & Sons, builder (Citation 2061, HO365).
- Duplex, 34 Vautier Street, Elwood (1935) Old English, conversion of existing single storey residence (Contributory within HO8)
- Celine Court & Christina Court, 1 & 3 Cyril Street, Elwood (1936) T C McDonald, builder (Contributory within HO404)

Other buildings designed by Wardrop and included in the Heritage Overlay are:

- House, 24 Murchison Street, St Kilda East (1933) (Contributory within HO391 precinct)
- Wesleyan Methodist Church Hall, 101 Carlisle Street, St Kilda (1939) (Citation 319, Carlisle Street Commercial Precinct)

The combination of Old English or Tudor Revival and Moderne, exemplified by Wardrop's two designs on Westbury Street, is seen in several other of his flat designs in Port Phillip. The first is Sefton, 4 Broadway, Elwood (1934), where he combined a vergeless gable and simplified Tudor flat arched opening with a parapeted stair tower adorned with a Jazz Moderne motif. He employed a parapet with a similar tapestry brick motif at Belmac, 1 Goldsmith Street, Elwood, which otherwise references medieval models. The most striking example is Zaneth Manor, 33 Brighton Road, St Kilda. A three-storey, L-shaped block of flats, it has multiple vergeless gables with wide corbelled eaves and dark brick detail to the gables that appears to be 'dripping' down. This strong medieval massing is contrasted with projecting horizontal rows of bricks beneath windows and a curved stair tower with a banded horizontal parapet, both strongly Moderne elements.

Further afield, Wardrop employed Juliet balconies, as seen at 125 Westbury Street, along with the rich banded brickwork, as seen at 110 Westbury Street, on other examples of his flats. These include the Shirley Court group of flats buildings on Mooltan Street, Travancore (1939), which are largely Old English apart from the balconies, as well as an L-shaped block of flats at 7 Elm Street, Hawthorn.

In comparison with the other Old English-Moderne flats in Port Phillip, Sheffield Manor at 110 Westbury Street is distinguished by its striking use of salmon and clinker brick, used as banding, recessed vertical lines and in soldier courses. It is also one of Wardrop's more sculptural compositions, with the asymmetric chimney-plus-parapet at one corner of the front façade, partially balanced by the central gable. The design gains further interest in its two-part form, with a single storey front and two-storey rear, designed to fit in with the remnant detached housing still on Westbury Street in the 1930s.

The Wansbeck flats at 125 Westbury Street, which were created from an existing house is representative of a distinctive St Kilda building type. 'Conversions' were among the earliest flat types to emerge in Port Phillip and according to Sawyer (1982:61) the poor quality of some brought flats 'into disrepute'. Sawyer cites a 1923 *Australian Home Builder* article that was highly critical of the practice:

Take any old house, dress up the front with a coat of roughcast and an outside staircase; insert a bathroom and lavatory somewhere on the upper floors, also a stove and a sink. If there is room at the back, add a back verandah – platform rather – to the upper floor...

However, at the other end of the scale there were also a number of conversions of exceptional quality such as the 1911 transformation of the former *Cliveden* in East Melbourne into *Cliveden Mansion Flats*. Many of these transformative conversions were designed by architects.

Port Phillip has examples of both types of conversions. One of the earliest examples of a terrace row conversion is 'Marli Place', 3-7 The Esplanade, St Kilda, which was converted to flats around 1911 (Significant within HO5). This is an example of a basic conversion with prominent external staircases being the most visible change. Otherwise the terrace largely retains its mid-Victorian character.

Examples of more sophisticated architect-designed terrace conversions include 'Grosvenor Mansions' (1919, plans prepared by Howard R. Lawson) at 74-88 William Street, Balaclava (Citation 910, Balaclava Flats Residential Precinct), 'Carnong Courts' (1926, plans prepared by A & K Henderson) at 29-33 Robe Street, St Kilda (Citation 794, HO5 precinct). Both have Arts & Crafts detailing, and 'Carnong Courts' is notable for the arrangement of semi-enclosed stairwell towers at the front of the building as an integral and distinctive part of the design. Another example is 'Duband Court' (former Hilda Terrace) at 28-36 Alma Road, St Kilda, a 1926 flat conversion designed by Harry R. Johnson of a c.1870 terrace row (Citation 397, HO6 precinct).

James H Wardrop designed several other 'conversions' in Port Phillip including 4 Broadway and 34 Vautier Street in Elwood, and 22 Holroyd Avenue, St Kilda East. Contemporary newspaper articles identify several others in other areas. This work was sometimes more successful than others in creating a cohesive architectural output. Some, like 4 Broadway and 34 Vautier Street, have resulted in refined results whose 'hybrid' origins are not readily apparent. Others are not so successful, like 22 Holroyd Avenue, which retains a typical California Bungalow gabled porch with a later Moderne parapet behind it, and two-storey mass to the side with Wardrop's typical combination of Arts & Crafts brackets and Moderne mild-steel balcony balustrade. The composition is disjointed and looks like a building 'designed by a committee'.

In contrast, Wansbeck at 125 Westbury Street is one of Wardrop's better flats conversions. While the use of red brick cladding and the survival of the two bow windows indicates its Federation-era origins, they have been successfully incorporated into a skilfully massed composition typical of the Old English style, combined with Wardrop's very contemporary integration of Moderne details.

Assessment

This place has been assessed in accordance with the processes and guidelines outlined in the Australia ICOMOS *Charter for Places of Cultural Heritage Significance* (The Burra Charter) 2013, using the Hercon criteria.

Recommendations

Add to the Heritage Overlay as an individual place.

Apply the following controls in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay.

- fence controls to 125 Westbury Street (original front fence)
- outbuilding controls for the garages at 110 and 125 Westbury Street (original garages)

Primary source

RBA Architects & Conservation Consultants, *HO7 Elwood St Kilda Balaclava Ripponlea Precinct heritage review Stage 2*, 2021

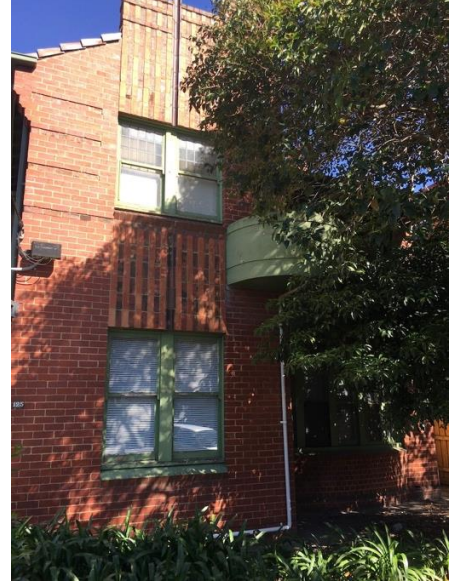
Other studies

Andrew Ward & Associates, *Port Phillip Heritage Review*, 1998

Other images



125 Westbury Street



Sheffield Manor, 110 Westbury Street



Area to be included in HO

