

City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

Place name: Cambury & Lynton
Other names: -

Citation No:
2429

INSERT MAP



Address: 58 & 58A Westbury Street, St Kilda East

Heritage Precinct: Not applicable

Category: Residential: Flats

Heritage Overlay: TBC

Style: Interwar: Moderne

Graded as: Significant

Constructed: 1938

Victorian Heritage Register: No

Designer: A G Oliver (builder)

Amendment: TBC

Comment: New citation

Significance

What is significant?

Cambury & Lynton, the pair of flats at 58 & 58A Westbury Street, St Kilda East, constructed in 1938 by builder A G Oliver for Robert L Rutter and William F Turner respectively are significant.

The two-storey flat buildings are a mirrored pair and are separated by central concrete driveways. Contributory features include the tile-clad hipped roofs, rendered chimneys, cream brick and rendered walls with clinker brick base, projecting balconies (no. 58A semi-circular and no. 58 rectangular with curved corners) with speedline detailing and some with metal hand railings, rounded corners, steel framed windows (faceted at the corners) with horizontal glazing bars, strong vertical elements at the fronts and internal sides with Art Deco detailing, glazed stairwell openings, and side entrances with cantilevered masonry canopies.

The low cream brick fence with metal gate at no. 58 and on the shared boundary, and the four brick garages at the rear with ridged metal doors are also significant elements.

Alterations and additions are not significant. The current paint colour scheme is not significant.

How is it significant?

Cambury & Lynton at 58 & 58A Westbury Street, St Kilda East are of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

Why is it significant?

They are of historical significance as a pair of flats constructed during the latter part of the Interwar period. Huge growth in flat development characterised St Kilda and Elwood during the 1920s and 1930s as the transition from detached single family dwellings to flat living became increasingly popular. Despite being in different ownership, the two buildings were constructed as an almost identical mirrored pair by the same builder within a year of each other. (Criterion A)

They are of aesthetic significance as an intact pair of walkup flats in the Moderne style. The Moderne style, most prevalent in the 1930s and characterised by its interest in the expression of progress, readily aligned with St Kilda's progressive identity and continues to be a style that is strongly associated with this area. Indicative of the Moderne style, the flats express a horizontal emphasis balanced by strong vertical elements, curved balconies and corners, speed lines, Art Deco detailing, combination of render and face brick (cream and clinker) and faceted steel-framed corner windows. The flats are complemented by the surviving sections of low brick fencing and the brick garages to the rear. (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 October 1919, p.4)

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, 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 (147 Westbury Close), was to remain the only flats until 1934, when a further three blocks were built. This was the start of a minor boom in flat building, which saw at least a further 12 blocks, including the subject pair, constructed in the five years from 1935 to 1940 (SM).

Cambury & Lynton, 58 & 58A Westbury Street

The subject sites formed part of Crown portion 151A, parish of Prahran at East St Kilda (PP). The approximately five-acre allotment was purchased in November 1853 by Thomas Fulton, Lauchlan Mackinnon and Frederick James Sargood, trustees of the newly established Victoria Freehold Land Society and purchasers of a number of Crown portions in the St Kilda area (including 150A adjacent to the north). Fulton was a foundry owner, the first deacon of the Congregational Church in Victoria, a leading advocate of the temperance movement, and later a Melbourne city councillor (1854-59). Sargood was a Melbourne soft goods merchant (Sargood, King & Company) and a member of the Legislative Council for Melbourne (1853-56). MacKinnon was a prominent pastoralist, partner in the *Argus* newspaper, and former member of the Legislative Council for Warrnambool and Belfast (1852-1853).

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). A six-roomed brick villa was erected on the subject site in the mid to late 1860s (RB). In 1873, this villa was owned by Patrick Dowling and tenanted (RB 1873 entry no. 791). Between 1888 and 1924 the villa was owned by produce merchant Charles Wood (CT v.1964 f.754).

The 1873 Vardy plan (Figure 1) shows this part of Westbury Street (between Alma Road and Inkerman Street) largely developed with about twenty villas, most of which were brick, including the subject site. The 1873 rate book records the occupations of some of the people who lived in these villas, including banker, accountant, builder, merchant and engineer.

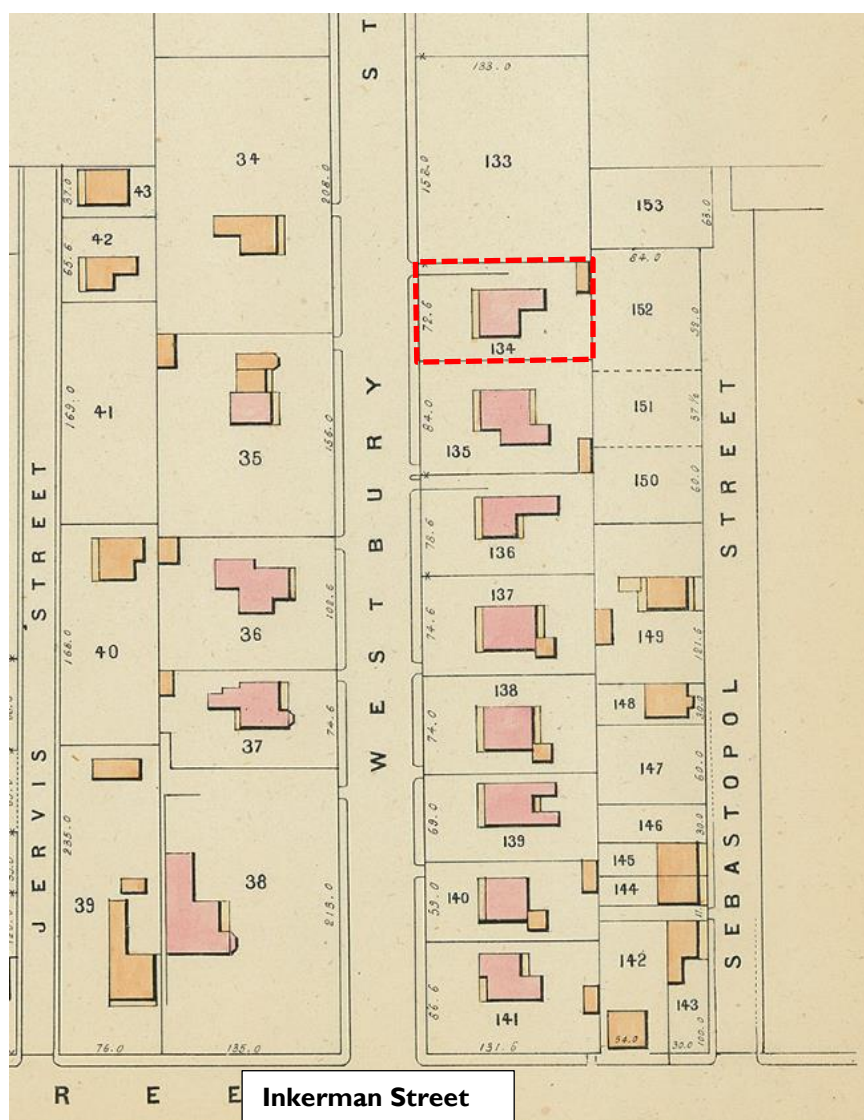


Figure 1 - Plan of the Borough of St Kilda, North Ward No. 6 (J.E.S. Vardy, 1873). (Source: St Kilda Historical Society)

In March 1937, the subject site was acquired by William Frederick Turner, bank official (CT v1964 f754). Turner subdivided the site equally lengthways, retaining the southern part (no. 58A) and selling the northern part (no. 58) to Robert Louis Rutter, director.

Rutter and Turner each had a block of brick flats erected on their land by master builder A G Oliver of 383 Wattletree Road, Malvern East (*Argus* 22 Jun 1938 p16 - reference to Oliver being a master builder). The building permit for Rutter's building (no. 58) was issued first, in March 1938, with an estimated cost of £2,500 (BP 9917, 15 March). No. 58 had apparently been completed by early September when 'attractive new ultra-mod flats' were advertised in the newspaper (*Argus* 3 Sept 1938 p25). Subsequently, in November 1938, the building permit for Turner's building (no. 58A) was issued, with an estimated cost of £2,440 (BP no. 320, 24 Nov). Two brick garages were also built at the rear of each property.

The drawings (Figure 2 and 3) submitted to Council bear A G Oliver's name, indicating he was responsible for the design as well as the construction. Each block contained four flats and were almost identical in design, albeit with some façade variation. Both buildings are recorded in the 1940 Sands and McDougall's directory, and identified as 'Cambury' (no. 58) and 'Lynton' (no. 58A).

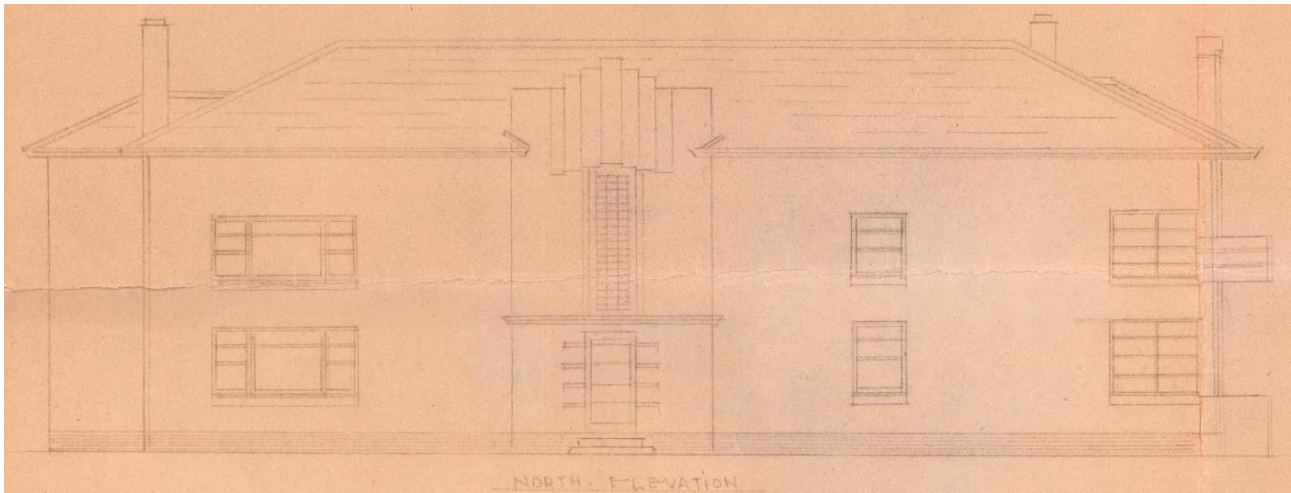


Figure 2 - Original drawing, north side elevation of 58A Westbury Street. (Source: Council building file)

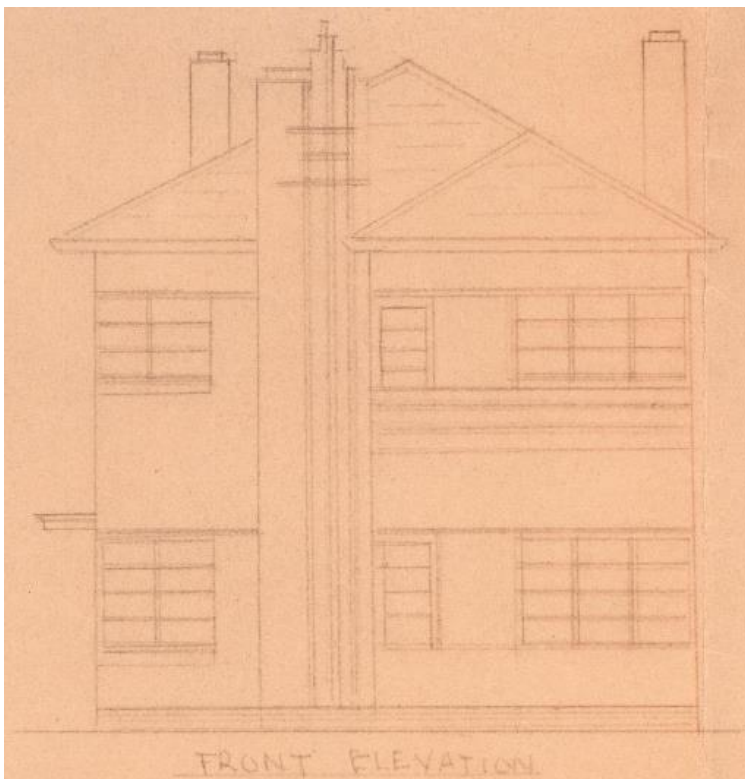


Figure 3 - Original drawing, front elevation of 58A Westbury Street. (Source: Council building file)



Figure 4 - Aerial photograph dated 1945. Subject site is outlined. (Source: Landata, Proj No 5, Melbourne and Metropolitan Area Project, Run 17E, Frame 58013)

In 1939, no. 58A was purchased by two women in equal shares, while no. 58 was sold to single purchasers in 1939 and again in 1940. (CT v1964 f754; v6223 f545; v6327 f383; v6455 f845; v6455 f846). It was not until 1970 that both properties changed hands again.

References

Australian Dictionary of Biography: entries for Lauchlan Mackinnon (by Jaqueline Templeton, 1974), Thomas Fulton (by Roslyn Brereton, 1972) and Frederick Thomas Sargood (John Rickard, 1976). Available online.

Certificates of Title (CT)

Council Building File for 58 Westbury Street St Kilda East

Goad, Philip and Julie Willis (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, 2012 (entry for 'Moderne', p. 462)

Newspapers, various

O'Hanlon, Seamus, 'Home together, Home apart: Boarding house, hostel and flat life in Melbourne c.1900-1940', PhD Thesis, History Department, Monash University

Parish Plan - at Elwood, Parish of Prahran, P81-13 (PP)

Port Phillip Thematic Environmental History (TEH), February 2021

Rate Books 1859-1900

Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan, *St Kilda 20th Century Architectural Study Vol. 1*, 1992

Rules and regulations of the Victoria Freehold Land Society, 1854

St Kilda Council building permits (BP)

Sands & McDougall Directories (SM)

Sawyer, Terry, (1982) 'Residential flats in Melbourne: the development of a building type to 1950', Honours thesis, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, The University of Melbourne

Description

The two subject sites are rectangular and located on the east side of Westbury Street. A pair of concrete driveways lead to the rear where there are original brick garages (two on each site) with original ridged metal tilt doors. The original low cream brick fence and metal gate survives at no. 58 and on the shared side boundary; the upper course features alternating header and rowlock bricks and the piers have gabled tops. The taller timber fence to no. 58A is more recent. Trees are planted in the front setbacks, partly obscuring the building façades.

The Moderne style pair of two storey flats have almost identical, mirrored designs. The primary difference between them is the shape of their balconies, with those to no. 58A being semi-circular and those to no. 58 being rectangular with curved corners.

The hipped roofs are clad in tiles and have eaves with timber lined soffits. Each building has a pair of rendered chimneys. The walls are part cream face brick and part rendered finish with a clinker brick base (although no. 58A has been overpainted). The balconies are detailed with 'speedlines' and some have metal hand railings. The building corners are rounded and have faceted steel-framed windows with horizontal glazing bars. At the front, narrow cream brick parapets pierce the eaves featuring Art Deco detailing in Roman bricks and channelled rendered piers.

The internal sides are reasonably visible given the double width of the central driveways. The side entrances openings have quoining-like indents at the corners and are covered by cantilevered masonry canopies. Above the canopies are tall, glazed openings for the stairwells and rendered parapets with stepped Art Deco motifs in low relief. Windows have fixed central panes with openable casements to the sides with horizontal glazing bars.

Comparative analysis

Cambury and Lynton are significant as a pair of intact Moderne style walkup flats of the late Interwar period. Flats in a variety of architectural styles proliferated in St Kilda in the 1920s and 1930s, many of which survive today strongly contributing to the built character of this part of the municipality. The Moderne style was particularly popular choice for flats in St Kilda as it readily aligned with the area's progressive identity. The Moderne style was most prevalent during the 1930s and was characterised by its interest in the expression of progress, the designs often referencing modern machines, with reductive detailing and simple bold forms.

Indicative of the Moderne style, the flats express a horizontal emphasis balanced by strong vertical elements, curved balconies and corners, speed lines, Art Deco detailing, and faceted steel-framed corner windows. Earlier examples of the Moderne style tended to be finished in white render, to emphasise their sleekness, while late Interwar period examples, were constructed of cream brick with contrasting dark bricks. The subject flats combine both render and face brick (cream and clinker). The use of steel-framed windows elevates the progressive image of the Moderne style. Although they are not strictly identical, reflective of their different ownership, they are similar to the extent that they can be considered a mirror image pair. The flats are complemented by the retention of original sections of brick fencing and original brick garages.

Other individually significant late Interwar period Moderne flats included in the HO in St Kilda and Elwood include:

- Avila, 15 Cowderoy Street, St Kilda West (1935) designed by Beedham & Wright (Citation 879, HO444 Precinct). Three storey, timber-framed windows, rendered façade with brick plinth and entrance piers, curved balconies, Art Deco detailing, original fence.
- La Rochelle, 1A Dickens Street, St Kilda (1935) designed by W H Merritt (Citation 892, St Kilda Botanical Gardens & Environs precinct). Three storey, rendered façade with tapestry brick plinth and vertical component, steel-framed windows, curved balconies and canopies.
- Windermere, 49 Broadway, Elwood (1936) designed by J Esmond Dorney (VHR H911). Predominantly rendered, curved corners, assortment of horizontal and vertical elements, steel-framed windows, original fence.
- Devon Court, 45-47 Chapel Street, St Kilda (1937) designed by Alder & Lacey (Citation 460, HO351). Two-storey mirror image pair, salmon brick with rendered banding, side entrances and prominent stairwell enclosures with glass blocks, some curved corners, timber-framed windows, speed lines, tiled hipped roofs, and original fence.
- 25 Dickens Street, Elwood (1938) designed by I G Anderson (Citation 894, St Kilda Botanical Gardens & Environs precinct). Three storey, clinker brick with darker Roman brick detailing and rendered banding, speed lines, strong vertical component, curved corner and balconies, timber-framed windows, original fence.
- Del Marie, 4 St Leonard's Avenue, St Kilda (1938) designed by Stuart Hall (Citation 221, HO5 precinct). Three storey, mostly rendered, curved balconies, parapeted, faceted steel-framed windows, vertical element at side (entrance and stairwell), original fence.
- Summerleigh, 13 Hughenden Road, St Kilda East (1940) (Citation 2022, HO6 precinct). Two-storey, 'U' shaped arrangement, curved corners, salmon brick and render with clinker brick base, steel-framed windows, tiled hipped roof, original fence.

Of these places, the most readily comparable is Devon Court, which is comprised of a mirror image pair with a similar site arrangement of a central driveway and resident access to the buildings via the internal sides. The brick and rendered banding are also similar. The subject pair are distinguished from this example by its steel-framed windows and inclusion of more prominent Art Deco detailing.

Examples of mirror image Moderne flats which are Contributory within HO6 precinct include 95 Alma Road, 119A & 121 Alma Road, and 43 & 45 Westbury Street, St Kilda (1939) designed by Archibald Ikin.

The builder A G Oliver was also responsible for two other flats in the municipality, both contemporary with the subject pair. Compared with these, the subject pair are a stronger design with more distinct vertical components:

- 24 Meredith Street, Elwood (1938) (Contributory within HO403 precinct). Moderne style, fully rendered façade, curved corner and balconies, timber-framed windows, speed lines, and tiled hipped roof.
- 25 Cardigan Street, St Kilda East (1939) (Not included in HO). Face brick, steel-framed windows, prominent rendered chimney and chimney breast, tiled hipped roof.

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.

In the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay apply:



- external paint controls (to ensure complementary colour schemes are employed and/or encourage restoration of the rendered finish and face brickwork).
- fence controls for no. 58 and the shared boundary fence (original fences)
- outbuilding controls (original garages).

Primary source

RBA Architects & Conservation Consultants, *H07 Elwood St Kilda Balaclava Ripponlea Precinct heritage review Stage 2*, 2021

Other studies

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

Other images



58 Westbury Street



58A Westbury Street





Area to be included in HO

