

# City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

**Place name:** Attached Houses

**Other names:** -

**Citation No:**

**2419**

**INSERT MAP**



**Address:** 79 & 81 Chapel Street, St Kilda

**Heritage Precinct:** Not applicable

**Category:** Residential: House

**Heritage Overlay:** TBC

**Style:** Federation: Queen Anne

**Graded as:** Significant

**Constructed:** c.1904

**Victorian Heritage Register:** No

**Designer:** Unknown

**Amendment:** TBC

**Comment:** New citation

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## Significance

### *What is significant?*

The attached houses at 79 & 81 Chapel Street, St Kilda, constructed c.1904 by builder W Ryall for Donald and Jane McGregor, are significant.

The building is comprised of an attached pair of single storey houses with attics. Contributory features include the high-pitched gambrel roof clad in terracotta tiles with ridge cresting and finials, rear hipped roofs, gabled dormer windows with roughcast and timber battens, corbelled brick chimneys with roughcast shafts featuring brick banding and strapping, terracotta chimney pots, face red brick walls, original window openings, porches supported by turned timber posts and with slatted timber frieze and curvilinear brackets, square bay windows with timber framed windows and toplights, timber framed entrance ensembles (sidelights etc.).

Alterations and additions are not significant.

### *How is it significant?*

The attached houses at 79 & 81 Chapel Street, St Kilda 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 attached houses constructed during the Federation period when intensive development occurred in St Kilda/St Kilda East in the context of local population expansion and smaller detached dwellings, duplexes or flats were sought after. Consolidation in this area was often

achieved through the subdivision of larger Victorian period properties, as in this case where the subject land was excised from the grounds of the villa Ardleigh. (Criterion A)

They are of aesthetic significance as a highly intact Federation period pair of attached houses in the Queen Anne style. Although a common building type in St Kilda and the municipality, they are distinguished by being an unusually substantial and refined example. The corner porches and varied nature of the high-pitched gambrel roofscape with dormers to the fronts and sides are suggestive of a picturesque composition characteristic of the Queen Anne Style, despite being symmetrical. The pair share the main roof giving the impression of a larger single building, a design approach which became more common during the Interwar period. (Criterion E)

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## 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 (5.3.3 Suburban bungalows)

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## History

### Contextual history

The development of St Kilda began following the first land sales in 1842 and by 1854 there were over two hundred houses. The plans compiled in 1855 by James Kearney shows that most of these were situated to the west of Brighton Road (later High Street and now St Kilda Road). The St Kilda East and Balaclava areas by comparison, were largely undeveloped, particularly east of Chapel Street. Improvements to public transport including the opening of the railway station at Carlisle Street, and the establishment in the late 1880s of cable tram routes along High Street (St Kilda Road) and Chapel Street encouraged development during the land boom, however, this remained sporadic and ground to halt during the economic depression of the 1890s.

There was almost no increase in St Kilda's population in the decade from 1891 to 1901. However, as development recovered in the early twentieth century the number of residents in St Kilda almost doubled between 1901 and 1921 rising from 20,500 to 38,500 as land was highly sought-after by a new generation of homeowners seeking smaller detached dwellings, duplexes or flats. Whole new streets of neat brick cottages and villas appeared, however, in St Kilda East this largely remained a period of consolidation and infill on vacant land within the established residential areas, rather than expansion into the still largely undeveloped areas east of Hotham Street, although development did begin to creep along the length of Dandenong Road, following the route of the new electric tram introduced in 1911.

### Attached houses, 79 & 81 Chapel Street

The subject site formed part of Crown portion 70D East of St Kilda, Parish of Prahran, which was purchased in the 1850s (that is, prior to 1857) by Peter Davis. The 10-acre allotment was situated at the north-west corner of Chapel and Inkerman streets. The 1855 Kearney plan (Figure 1) shows that within a couple of years the western part of this allotment had been developed with several buildings fronting Inkerman Street, while the eastern part contained a single building, the brick villa known as Ardleigh.

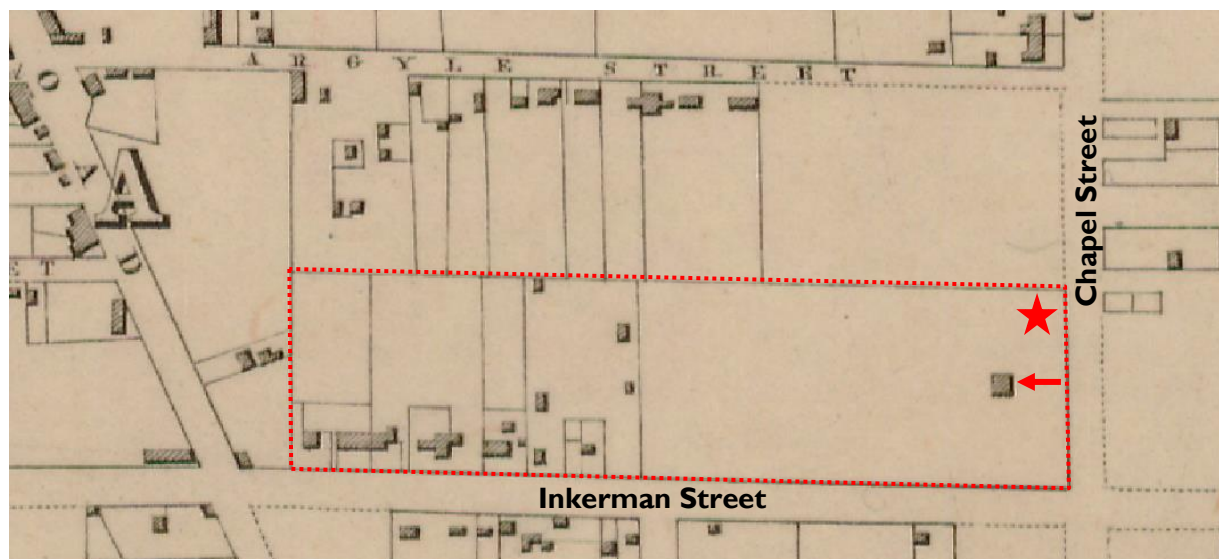


Figure 1 - Plan 'Melbourne and its suburbs' dated 1855 (compiled by James Kearney). Indicated is the original extent of the 10-acre Crown portion 70D (dotted outline), the location of the subject site (star), and Ardleigh (arrow).

In 1874, Ardleigh was advertised for sale and described as a 'substantial and elegantly finished family residence' containing 'spacious dining and drawing rooms, eight bedrooms, two kitchens, coach house and stable' with gardens planted with 'shrubby' and 'a small paddock laid down in English grass' (*Argus* 31 Oct 1874 p3).

The 1897 MMBW plan (Figure 2) shows Ardleigh set within grounds of one and a half acres, just prior to its subdivision by owner Thomas Bent, who was a land speculator and politician (including as mayor of Brighton, minister of railways, and premier between 1904-1909). Between 1898 and 1899, Donald and Jane McGregor purchased Ardleigh as well as all the subdivided parcels in the northern part of the grounds fronting Chapel Street and the newly created Kipling Street (CT). (Kipling Street was created by the contemporary subdivision, also by Thomas Bent, of the adjoining land to the north).

The McGregors lived at Ardleigh for several decades. Donald McGregor was a dentist with rooms in Collins Street in the city.

The subdivided parcels were gradually developed over an approximately 20-year period, with a total of five attached pairs, beginning with the subject site. In around 1904, the McGregors had the subject pair of brick houses constructed. Of likely relevance are two consecutive, but undated, building permits, both for brick villas, which were issued to Mrs D McGregor and which cite the builder as 'W Ryall' (probably William Ryall of South Melbourne) (BP 215 and 216). The subject houses first appear, listed as 'vacant', in the 1905 Sands & McDougall's Directory (note there was typically a delay of one year or more from the time of recording to the time of the publication). The new houses were leased to a series of tenants (SM).

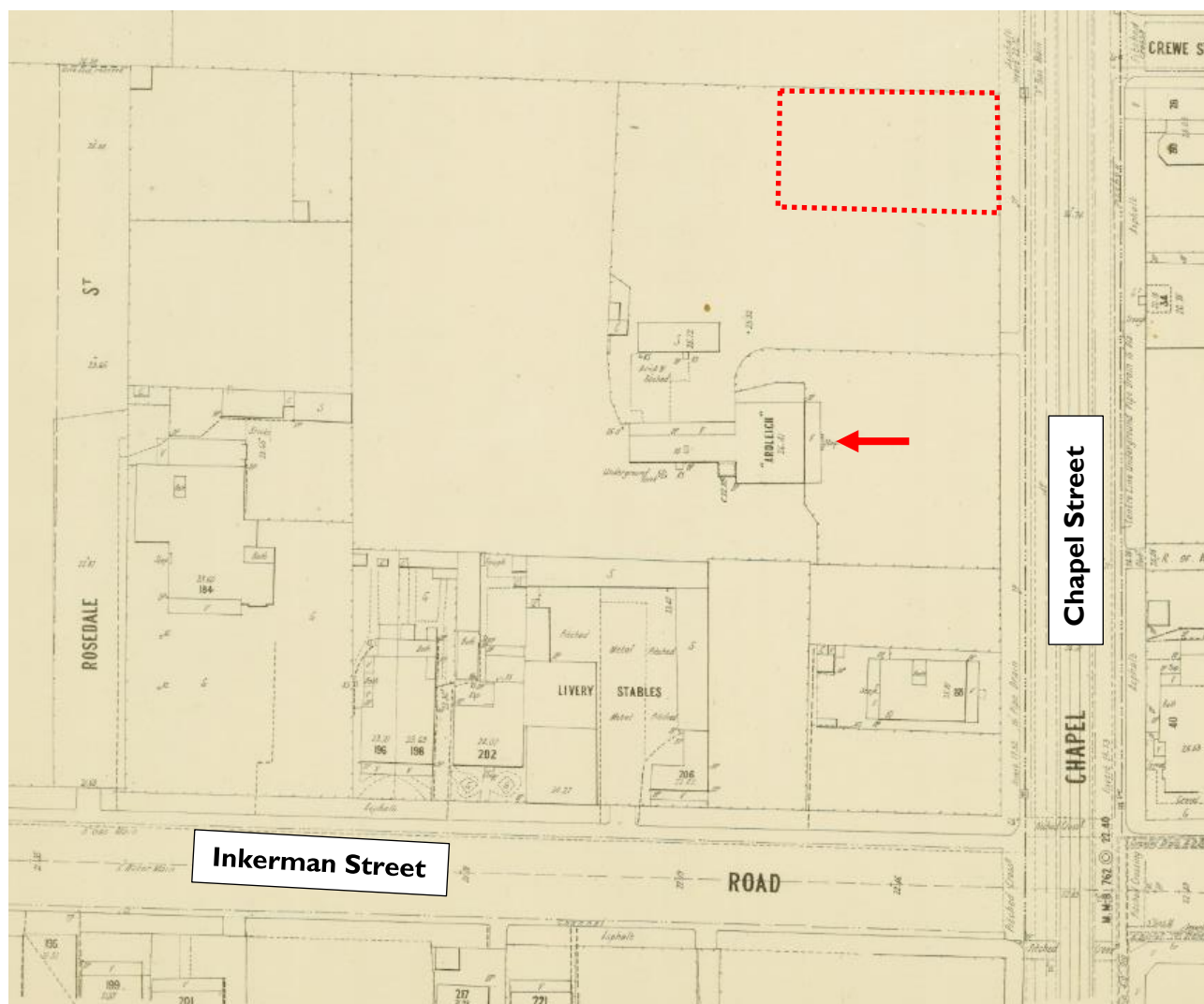


Figure 2 - Extract from MMBW Detail Plan no. 1362 (1897) showing approximate boundaries of the subject site (dotted outline). Ardleigh is also indicated (arrow).

In 1911, the McGregors had another pair of semi-detached houses built adjacent to the subject pair to the south (nos 83 and 85, that is, between Ardleigh and the subject site) (BP 1223). Then in the mid-1920s three more pairs of attached houses were built fronting Kipling Street, although it is not known if the land was still owned by the McGregors at this time. The five pairs of attached houses built on the former grounds of Ardleigh can be seen on the 1945 aerial photograph (Figure 3).

Following the deaths of Donald McGregor in 1933 and Jane McGregor in 1937, the subject pair of houses were sold in 1938 to Reuben Beaconsfield, a local company manager who continued to lease them out (CT). Meanwhile, Ardleigh was converted to a guesthouse and later a private hospital.



Figure 3 - Aerial photograph dated 1945, subject site indicated (solid outline). Also indicated is Ardleigh (arrow) and the extent of the former Ardleigh estate (dash). Note the development of the northern part with five pairs of attached houses. (Source: Landata, Proj No 5, Melbourne and Metropolitan Area Project, Run 17E, Frame 58012)

In the 1950s, the subject site was subdivided lengthways and the two houses were sold individually (CT).

Probably late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Ardleigh and the adjacent pair of houses to the south were demolished. The land remained vacant for some years before being redeveloped with apartments in 2011. The houses in Kipling Street survive.

## References

Certificates of Title: Vol. 2590 Fol. 902; Vol. 2590 Fol. 903; Vol. 2741 Fol. 015.

Cooper, J.B., 1931, *The History of St Kilda. From its settlement to a city and after. 1840 to 1930*, Volume 2

Newspapers, various

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

*Port Phillip Thematic Environmental History (TEH)*, February 2021

St Kilda Council Building Permits (BP)

St Kilda Rate Books, up to 1900 (RB)

Sands & McDougall's Directories (SM)

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## Description

The subject pair of sites are rectangular and located on the south corner of Chapel and Kipling streets. Each has a small front garden bounded by non-original timber fencing. The front façades of the houses are partly obscured by plantings.

The Queen Anne style attached pair of houses are single storey with an attic. They are symmetrical and divided by a party wall with a vermiculated panel. At the front, the roof is a single high-pitched gambrel form clad in terracotta tiles with ridge cresting and finials (although the rear face is now clad in corrugated sheet metal). To the rear there are separate hipped wings clad in corrugated sheet metal. There are gabled dormer windows at the front, sides and rear that have roughcast to the sides and gables ends which also have timber battens. The brick chimneys have corbelled caps, roughcast shafts with brick banding and strapping, and terracotta pots.

The walls are face red brick in stretcher bond, however the front of no. 79 has been overpainted. Each house has two porches either side of central bay windows. The porches are under the main roof, and typical of the Queen Anne style feature turned timber posts, slatted timber frieze and curvilinear brackets. The square bay windows have timber framed windows and toplights and are covered by hipped roofs that extend from the main roof. The front entrances have timber framed side and top lights, and probably retain original doors (obscured by screen doors).

The side wall of no. 79, built to the street boundary, has several original window openings with projecting sills, brick lintels and timber framed sash windows. At the rear there are attached small brick sections with skillion roofs.

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## Comparative analysis

The subject attached pair of houses, built c.1904, are significant as a highly intact and unusually substantial and refined Federation period example in the prevailing Queen Anne style of this common building type in St Kilda and the municipality.

The Queen Anne style was widely employed across Australia during the Federation period for domestic architecture. Imported from England, the style combined elements from many periods of traditional English rural building, often incorporating a Tudor influence, and was adapted to the Australian context. In a reaction to the formal symmetry of much Victorian period architecture, such dwellings were meant to be appreciated diagonally from the public realm, creating an effect that was popularly understood as pleasingly picturesque. Although the subject houses are symmetrical, the corner porches and varied nature of the roofscape with dormers to the fronts and sides are nonetheless suggestive of a picturesque composition.

In keeping with most Federation period examples of attached housing, the subject pair are single storey and have a symmetrical/mirrored composition. However, unlike more typical examples of the period, where each half has a separate roof form or dominant gable ends, the subject pair share the main gambrel roof (albeit divided by a party wall) giving the impression of a larger single building, a design approach which became more common during the Interwar period. The subject pair are more substantial than most other examples and feature two porches each. The high-pitched picturesque roofscape with dormers, also supports the impression of a more substantial building.

There are numerous examples of Federation period attached houses included in the HO in St Kilda or St Kilda East, as listed below. Of these, the subject pair are the earliest.

- 38-40 Wellington Street, St Kilda, built 1908. (Citation 2376, HO491). Arts and Crafts style, separate gable roofs.
- 17-19 Havelock Street, St Kilda, built 1911. (Citation 2009, HO5 precinct). Arts and Crafts style, single gable roof.

- 80-82 Chaucer Street, St Kilda, built 1913, designed by G.B. Leith (Citation 875, HO90). Arts and Crafts style, single gable roof.
- 71 Hotham Street & 290 Inkerman Street, St Kilda East, built 1913. (Citation 35, HO163). Queen Anne style with picturesque roof. More substantial than the subject pair. Generally symmetrical, but southern half is larger and features a return verandah with diagonally projecting bay addressing street corner.
- 245-245A Barkly Street, St Kilda, built 1914, designed by Richardson & Wood (Citation 192, St Kilda Botanical Gardens & Environs Precinct). Unusual two storey example.
- 3-5 & 7-9 Emilton Avenue, built c.1905, and 13-23 Gurner Street, built c.1910 (Contributory within HO5 Precinct).
- 35-45 & 38-40 Fulton Street (c.1910), 27-29 & 31-33 Johnson Street (1917), Lambeth Place, west side (c.1909) (Contributory within HO6 Precinct)
- 3-25 & 6-16 Elm Grove, Balaclava (Contributory within Ripponlea Residential Precinct)
- 19-21 Foster Street (c.1905), 41 & 43 Greeves Street (c.1905), 15-29 Smith Street, St Kilda (1911) (Contributory within St Kilda Botanical Gardens & Environs Precinct)
- Various examples within the Godfrey Avenue Precinct, c.1910-c.1915 (HO386)
- Various examples within the Kalymna Grove & Inkerman Street Precinct, c.1915-c.1920 (HO489)

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## 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.

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## Recommendations

Add to the Heritage Overlay as an individual place.

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## 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

