

# City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

**Place name:** House  
**Other names:** -

**Citation No:**  
**341**



**Address:** 4 Los Angeles Court, Ripponlea

**Heritage Precinct:** Brunnings Estate & Environs

**Category:** Residential: House

**Heritage Overlay:** **HO7**

**Style:** Interwar: Spanish Mission

**Graded as:** Significant

**Constructed:** 1930-31

**Victorian Heritage Register:** No

**Designer:** Schreiber & Jorgensen

**Amendment:** TBA

**Comment:** Revised citation

## Significance

### *What is significant?*

The house, designed by Schreiber & Jorgensen, and constructed in 1930-31 for C.J. Nankervis, at 4 Los Angeles Court, Ripponlea is significant. Designed in the Spanish Mission style, the house forms part of an intact inter-war residential subdivision. Other contributory features include the original garage in the rear yard, and the low rendered front fence.

Alterations and additions are not significant.

### *How is it significant?*

The house at 4 Los Angeles Court, Ripponlea is of local aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

### *Why is it significant?*

This house is of aesthetic significance as a fine and well detailed example of an inter-war house designed in the Spanish Mission style, which closely references precedents set in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on the Spanish Mission, and Spanish Colonial Revival architecture of California. Elements on the house that are characteristic of the style include materials and detailing such as the Cordova unglazed terracotta roof tiles, trowelled render finish to the exterior walls, and wrought iron decoration. It is notable for the treatment of the windows to the projecting bay that demonstrate Baroque influences, and the chimney expressed on the east wall with a distinct curved profile. The aesthetic values of the house are complemented by the garage, which has Cordova unglazed terracotta roof tiles and rendered walls. This house and the low rendered front fence make an important contribution to the intact inter-war residential

character of Los Angeles Court, that is itself also influenced by planning of Southern Californian cities of the early twentieth century. (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, 5.3.4 Model housing estates)

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## History

### Contextual history

Private development in the City of Port Phillip began from the time of the first sales of Crown land in the 1840s and 1850s. The gradual development of infrastructure, including roads, public transport networks and utilities, paved the way for increasing development of private land. Private subdivision within the broad framework set out by Hoddle's survey saw neighbourhoods in the City of Port Phillip grow into populated, thriving communities.

Significant population growth after World War I created a demand for housing, leading to the subdivision (or re-subdivision) of the remaining pockets of vacant or underdeveloped land in the City of Port Phillip. This included vacant land previously thought to be unsuitable for housing, such as in Fishermans Bend, as well as the re-development of the remaining mansion estates. Apart from the mansion estate subdivisions, there were two major interwar subdivisions at either end of the City of Port Phillip: The 'Garden City' estates in Port Melbourne and the Brunnings Estate subdivision in Ripponlea.

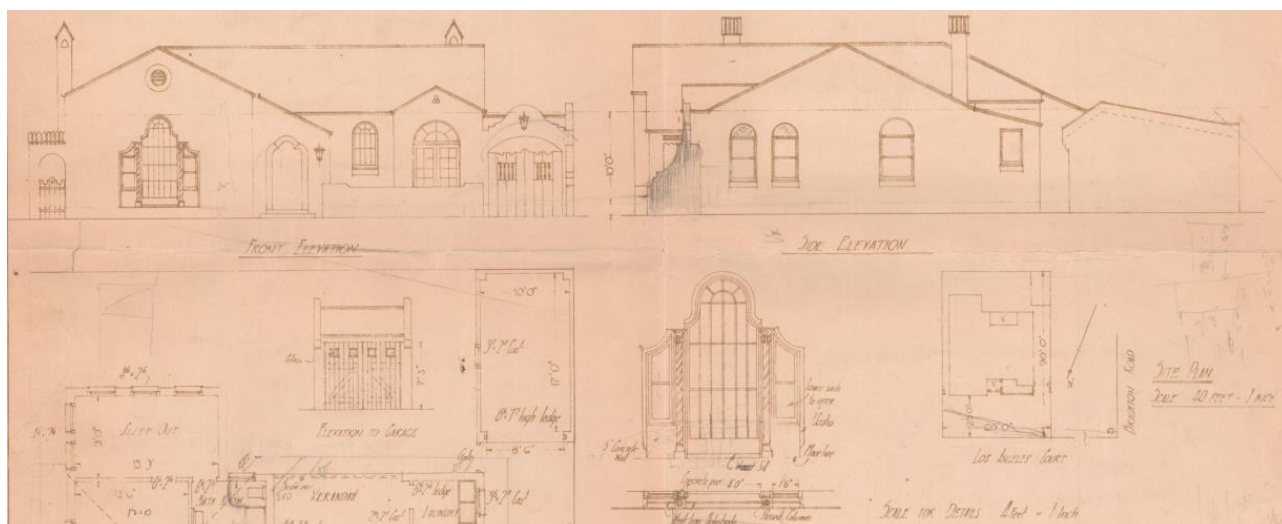
The Brunnings Estate was established on the site of George Brunning's nursery in St Kilda (Balaclava), which had been in that location since 1884. Subdivision and sales commenced in 1920, but most of the estate was surveyed and subdivided into 53 blocks in 1927. Los Angeles Court has been identified as the first cul-de-sac in Melbourne and other notable features included concrete roads, street lamps and consistent low brick fences to all properties. At least 17 stylish, detached houses were built on Los Angeles Court and Brighton Road by the late 1930s in a range of popular styles including Old English, Spanish Mission and Moderne and a high proportion of these were architect-designed. As a result, the Brunnings Estate contains perhaps the most comprehensive and intact collection of interwar housing styles in Port Phillip.

### House, 4 Los Angeles Court

The first building permits for houses in Los Angeles Court were issued in 1927 and by 1930 permits for five houses, including this one, had been granted. However, it appears the onset of the economic depression in the late 1920s delayed building, as only three houses had been constructed by 1931. As the depression eased three houses were constructed in 1932 and by 1935 only three vacant lots remained. The street was fully developed by 1940 (SM).

Architects Schreiber and Jorgensen designed this house, which was built in 1930 for C.J. Nankervis, as an investment (In 1932 Mr. Nankervis built another house at 9 Los Angeles Court) (BP). The original plans show the house contained two bedrooms and a 'sleep out' at the rear. An entry wall opened via sliding doors to a lounge, at left, and a dining room, at right, which had French doors leading to the front patio. Behind the dining room was a breakfast room, adjacent to the central kitchen. There was a small detached garage in the southwest corner.

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Extract of original building plans showing elevations and detail of garage and front window (Source: Port Phillip building file)

## Schreiber & Jorgensen

Schreiber and Jorgensen, which consisted of architect Robert Schreiber and his nephew Justus Jorgensen, was active from the 1910s through the early 1930s. Although a qualified architect, Jorgensen later became better known as an artist and one of the founders of Montsalvat, Eltham. Notable works of the firm include additions to the Xavier College Chapel (1927-34), Kew, Burke House (1929), 340-342 Collins Street, and Our Lady of Lourdes Church, School and Presbytery (1930), Prahran. The firm also designed several interwar Arts and Crafts Bungalows in Brighton, Elwood, Armadale, Malvern and Camberwell. The firm was described in an advertisement for a bungalow in Brighton as 'masters at planning artistic and pleasing exteriors and up-to-date and labour-saving domestic arrangements' (*Argus*, 29 May 1920:16).

In Port Phillip they are known to have designed at least four blocks of flats and several houses in St Kilda and Elwood during the 1910s and the 1920s. The other known examples, included within the HO and still extant, are:

- House (1915), 152 & 154 Mitford Street, Elwood (Citation 2382)
- Flats (1917), 73-75 Mitford Street, Elwood (Citation 353)
- Chandos Court flats (1920-21), 17-25 Charnwood Crescent, St Kilda (Citation 868)
- House (1923), 96 Barkly Street, St Kilda (No citation)
- House (1924), 5 Broadway, Elwood (No citation)
- Flatman House (1925), 207 Alma Road, St Kilda East (Citation 2138)
- Duplex (1925), 93-95 Ormond Road, Elwood (Citation 764)
- Flats/duplex (1927), 1 Oak Grove, Ripponlea (Citation 2021)
- Flats/duplex (1929), 18 Glen Eira Road, Ripponlea (No citation)

Most of the above buildings demonstrate the influences of the bungalow and Arts & Crafts styles. This is the only known house by the firm in the Spanish Mission style.

## References

Apperly, R., Irving, R. & Reynolds, P., *A pictorial guide to identifying Australian architecture. Styles and terms from 1788 to the present*, 1989

Cuffley, Peter, *Australian houses of the twenties and thirties*, (2nd edition) 2007

Port Phillip Thematic Environmental History (TEH) **Version 1, July 2020**

St Kilda Council building permit (BP) no.7800, 11 August 1930

Sands & McDougall Directories (SM) 1935, 1940

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## Description

An inter-war house designed in the Spanish Mission style, which is set back behind a mature garden. A low rendered brick fence, with plain square rendered piers, extends along the street boundary; its materiality complementing that of the walls of the house and forming part of the consistent treatment of front fences in Los Angeles Court.

The roof of the house is clad in unglazed terracotta Cordoba tiles, and the brick walls of the house are finished in trowelled render. The façade of the house is asymmetrically composed, with a transverse vergeless gable roof with a larger gable projecting forward at left and a smaller gable at right. The larger gable has a catslide roof to its right, and this contains a porch reached through an arched opening. The front door of the house is accessed from this porch. To the right of the porch is a patio, which is accessed by a pair of doors in an arched wall opening below the smaller projecting gable. The patio is canted in plan and has a wrought iron railing extending along the top of its rendered base wall. A smaller arched multi-pane window is to the left of the projecting bay.

The larger projecting bay at left has windows in a tripartite arrangement below an indented circle. Demonstrating Baroque influences of Spanish Mission, and Spanish Colonial Revival architecture of California, the window is divided into bays with engaged columns and the windows have curvilinear heads. Another notable element on the projecting bay is at its side, where, beyond an arched wall opening leading to the side setback, is a chimney expressed on the wall with a distinct curved profile and pointed top.

The driveway along the west side boundary leads to a rendered segmental arched opening with wrought iron gates, and a stepped and curvilinear profile top. Beyond the gateway, towards the rear of the site, is the original garage with rendered brick walls and an unglazed terracotta Cordoba tile roof.

The house, garage and fence are in good condition and have a high degree of external integrity. The garage has a non-original roller door.

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## Comparative analysis

Following the economic depression of the 1890s, there was concern that inner Melbourne was becoming overcrowded. Terrace houses fell out of favour, as they were perceived as being cold and dark with limited garden space. Instead, detached bungalows became the most popular form of housing from the Federation/Edwardian period onward.

Spanish Mission is a romantic and evocative style. It emerged in the late nineteenth century in the United States and was popularized in the 1920s, particularly in California and Florida. In Australia, awareness of the style owed much to the influence of Hollywood and the first examples appeared by the mid-1920s. It is characterized by use of light tones and colours, exploitation of sunlight and shadow and concentrations of elaborate ornament contrasted with plain surfaces. Buildings are generally asymmetrical with stuccoed wall surfaces with simulated handcrafted texture. Roofs are medium pitched and often feature half-round tiles. Distinctive features include arcaded loggias and balconies, often supported by 'barley twist' columns, and use of decorative wrought-iron work, ceramic tiles, or plaster ornament, often invoking classical features. Fences were often high and solid. (Apperly, 1989:179, Cuffley 2007:94-97).

This is a fine example of a Spanish Mission-style house with characteristic features and detailing such as the Cordova tile roof, trowelled render finish to the walls, and wrought iron decoration, which closely references precedents of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of Spanish Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival styles of California. It is notable for the treatment of the windows to the projecting bay at that demonstrate Baroque influences of Spanish, and Spanish Colonial architecture of California, and the chimney expressed on the east wall with a distinct curved profile and pointed top. Its setting, within an intact interwar residential subdivision, is itself, also influenced by planning of Southern Californian cities of that period. A comparable house within the nearby area is 20 Monkstadt Avenue (1931), designed by Marcus Barlow (Citation 356).



Other Spanish Mission style houses in Port Phillip include:

- House, 11A Charnwood Road, St Kilda (1927) designed by Leslie J.W. Reed (Citation 956)
- Granada, 28 Eildon Road, St Kilda (1927) designed by F.D. Meadows (Citation 899)
- Midlothian, 64 Brighton Road, Ripponlea (1929) designed by Dickson & Yorston (Citation 307)
- House, 36 Tennyson Street, Elwood (1929) designed by Gordon J. Sutherland (Citation 373)
- House, 14 Maryville Street, Ripponlea (1933) designed by Alder & Lacey (Citation 348)

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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

Retain in the Heritage Overlay with exterior paint controls.

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## Primary source

Peter Andrew Barrett, *H07 Elwood St Kilda Balaclava Ripponlea Precinct heritage review Stage 2: Review of existing heritage citations*, 2021

## Other studies

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

Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan, *St Kilda 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural study*, Volume 3, 1992

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## Other images

