

City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

Place name: House
Other names: -

Citation No:
2008



Address: 26 Hammerdale Avenue, St Kilda East

Heritage Precinct: St Kilda East:
Hammerdale Avenue

Category: Residential: House

Heritage Overlay: HO387

Style: Interwar: Craftsman Bungalow

Graded as: Significant

Constructed: 1926

Victorian Heritage Register: No

Designer: Unknown

Amendment: TBA

Comment: Revised citation

Significance

What is significant?

The house, built by Dickson & Yorston in 1928, for Walter G. Thorpe, at 26 Hammerdale Avenue, St Kilda East is significant. It is an inter-war Craftsman Bungalow with an original curved clinker brick and rendered fence with timber driveway gates, and a garage with unpainted rendered walls at the rear, probably constructed at the same time as the house.

Alterations and additions are not significant.

How is it significant?

The house at 26 Hammerdale Avenue, St Kilda East 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 intact example of an inter-war Craftsman Bungalow. The front elevation is asymmetrically composed, and is a busy composition of elements and materiality, that includes the use of jerkinhead roof forms, gable ends clad in original dark stained timber shingles, and bay and picture windows. The walls of the bungalow are unpainted, textured render, above a clinker brick base with a soldier course at its top. The muted green and cream colour scheme of the house is sympathetic, and may be original, or is at least based on the original colours. Contributing to the rustic character of the Craftsman Bungalow-style, is the house's mature garden setting, enclosed in part by the original curved

clinker brick and rendered fence with timber driveway gates and the rear garage with unpainted rendered walls, probably constructed at the same time as the house. The house with its prominent siting at this intersection, forms an integral element in a fine collection of inter-war housing styles and types. (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 (5.3.3 Suburban bungalows)

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.

Mansion estates – large detached homes on generous allotments – defined early, permanent housing in Elwood and St Kilda, in the mid-nineteenth century. Although the oldest surviving houses in Elwood – such as Vautier House, built in the mid-1850s – are terrace houses, it was mansions on large allotments that came to characterise the neighbourhood in its early years. The estates were located in four distinct clusters: St Kilda Hill; the semi-rural estates occupying the high ground on the south side of Dandenong Road from the Nepean Road (now St Kilda Road) to Orrong Road; those surrounding the St Kilda Botanical Gardens and along Brighton Road; and the remote 'sea-side' estates along Ormond Esplanade. Kearney's 1855 map of the area shows the contrast between dense residential development in St Kilda, and the large mansion estates to the east of the Nepean Road including Charnwood and Marlton, south of Carlisle Street (then known as Beach Road), and on both sides of Brighton Road, including Erindale and Chiverton, and Bramshaw, Osborne House and Wiltonia further south.

As demand for housing grew, mansion estate subdivisions commenced as early as the 1870s when part of the Charnwood Estate in St Kilda was subdivided to create Charnwood Crescent and Charnwood Grove, where detached villas were erected. The original mansion often survived the first two rounds of subdivision, only to be demolished by the interwar or post-war periods. Those that were retained on much smaller blocks of land were rarely used as single dwellings. Instead, many were converted into boarding houses or flats and this often ensured their survival. Examples include Eildon and Marlton in St Kilda and Rotherfield, Tiuna and Thalassa in Elwood. Others that were demolished are remembered in street names such as Charnwood Avenue, Cintra Avenue, and St Leonards Avenue.

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.

House, 26 Hammerdale Avenue

Hammerdale Avenue developed on the site of the eponymous mansion, Hammerdale, formerly 119 Alma Road, which was built c.1868 for Hugh Mitchell Campbell Gemmell (1827-79) a prominent Melbourne auctioneer with the firm of Gemmell, Tucker & Company. The first stage of the subdivision, auctioned in December 1925, consisted of eleven new allotments: five on the east side of that part of Hammerdale Avenue which ran north-south, and the other six on each side of the east-west dogleg which connected the new avenue to Young Street. The mansion itself was retained on Lot 1 (later designated as 1 Hammerdale Avenue) and was offered for sale along with the ten vacant lots on 5 December 1925.

This house, constructed by Dickson & Yorston in 1928 for Walter G. Thorpe, was one of the first houses in Hammerdale Avenue. Dickson & Yorston also built the Georgian Revival style house at 9 Hammerdale Avenue in 1932 for B.J. Burman.

Dickson & Yorston

G.C. Dixon and Yorston was one of Melbourne's most prominent and successful building companies during the interwar period and specialised in residential buildings. As well as constructing single residences and blocks of flats the firm was responsible for developing several distinctive bungalow court subdivisions in late 1920s and 1930s in Melbourne's eastern and southeastern suburbs, often created on former mansion estates. The first of these was Rothesay Avenue in Brighton, constructed in 1925-26 on the site of The Elms mansion estate. This was followed by Lempriere Avenue, St Kilda East (1926-27 on the site of the Rozelle mansion), Fosbery Avenue, Caulfield (1930) and Redcourt Avenue, Armadale (1933, Redcourt mansion). Dickson and Yorston were strongly influenced by the Garden City Movement in the planning of their estates and provided generous front gardens and low front fences. At Lempriere Avenue, services were placed underground and replaced by decorative lamp standards, and the firm also landscaped the entrance from the street to the adjacent Greenmeadows Gardens at their own cost. These subdivisions were targeted at the higher end of residential market making Dickson and Yorston's houses relatively costly in comparison with those of other builder-developers such as A.V. Jennings. Most if not all their houses and flats were architect designed, many of them by Gordon J. and Bruce Sutherland.

References

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

Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan no.1373, dated 1897

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

St Kilda Council building permit (BP) no. 7111, 8 March 1928

Sands & McDougall Directories (SM) 1930, 1935, 1940

Description

The house at 26 Hammerdale Avenue, St Kilda East is an interwar Craftsman Bungalow. The walls are unpainted, textured render, above a clinker brick base with a soldier course at its top and the front elevation is asymmetrically composed with a large jerkinhead roof with a bay that projects forward at left with a lower and smaller jerkinhead roof. The roof is clad in terracotta tiles, and their gable ends clad in original dark stained timber shingles. The projecting bay contains a bay window, which contains timber sash windows with leadlight glazing, and to the right there is a small picture window with leadlight glazing.

A verandah, with a flat profile roof and deep eaves with visible rafters supported on simple square render and brick piers, extends to the right of the smaller projecting bay and forms a porte cochere over the early twin-concrete strip driveway. It is from this verandah that the front entrance of the house is accessed.

The deep green and cream colour scheme is sympathetic and may be original or based on the original colours. Also contributing to the house's rustic character, is its mature garden setting, enclosed in part by the original curved clinker brick and rendered fence with timber driveway gates. A high timber paling fence obscures much of the house from view from Jervois Street. A notable exception to this is three tall,

rendered chimneys, with soldier courses of clinker brick at their tops, visible on the east side of the house. At the rear is an interwar garage with unpainted rendered wall, probably constructed at the same time as the house.

The house has a prominent siting at this intersection, closing the vista along Hammerdale Avenue from the north, where it curves at its intersection with Jervois Street.

The house (and fence) is in good condition and has a very high degree of external intactness.

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.

This concept of a 'garden suburb' (as distinct from the consciously-planned model Garden City estates that came later – see below), comprising a reasonably spacious single-family dwelling in a secluded garden setting, became the ideal expression of urban living in the early twentieth century. Facilitated by improvements to public transport networks, particularly the electrification of the tram and railway networks, this housing defines the suburbs that developed during this era, including much of Middle Park, St Kilda East, Elwood and Ripponlea.

One of the most popular housing styles in suburban Melbourne during the inter-war period was the 'bungalow' and according to Cuffley (1989:48) 'it gained almost universal acceptance in Australia as the ideal style for the average suburban house'. In this style of house, the roof plays an important part in the composition and is sometimes extended to form porches supported by heavy piers of stone or brick, occasionally in combination with wood. Depending on the detailing and pitch of the roof sub-categories could include California Bungalow, Craftsman Bungalow (characterised by its steeper roof) or Australian Bungalow (Cuffley 1989:59-62). The term Australian Bungalow (as used by Cuffley) indicates 'the degree of local identity ... which had evolved from the American Type and other less direct influences'. Cuffley (1989:62) goes on to say that:

Substantial bungalow residences in Australian suburbs of the period 1910 to 1940 show less and less of the horizontal character and low-pitched gables of the California or Pasadena type and more of the Craftsman or Middle West influences. Often there are additional Old English details such as half timbered gables and leadlight windows.

The influence of the magazine 'The Craftsman' led to the adoption of the name 'Craftsman Bungalow'. This style displayed elements of the Arts and Crafts tradition in the roof form and the use of natural materials honestly expressed. Notable architects Oakden and Ballantyne were exponents of this style and many other lesser-known architects adopted the major style indicators in their work. Builders also adopted elements of the style in their designs generally from the 1920s onward. They are characterized by Arts & Crafts features and detailing including the use of contrasting textures and materials on facades (such as facebrick, roughcast render, timber shingles and brackets to gables); entrance porches beneath the main roof supported on heavy battered piers or paired timber posts or columns resting on low piers; simple, geometric decoration created by projecting bricks or small voids (e.g., hit and miss brick walls); box windows (with timber frames that project from the wall, resting on timber or brick corbels) and semi-circular windows and openings. Chimneys are either brick or roughcast, and sometimes tapered. Front fences are of face brick and/or render to complement house with low walls punctuated by dwarf piers, often with mild steel gates.

26 Hammerdale Avenue is a fine example of a Craftsman Bungalow and forms part of a fine collection of inter-war housing in the environs of the intersection of Hammerdale Avenue and Jervois Street. It is notable for its relatively high degree of intactness, which include the original unpainted render and face brickwork to the house, garage and fence, a sympathetic and possibly original colour scheme, which

includes the dark stain to the timber shingles. Other California or Craftsman Bungalows included in the HO in St Kilda or Elwood include:

- House, 217 Alma Road, St Kilda East (1919) Citation 22
- House, 311 Orrong Road, St Kilda East (1920) Citation 46
- House, 175 Hotham Street, Ripponlea (1922-23) Citation 2021
- Houses, 86 & 88 Mitford Street, Elwood (c.1924) Citations 2071 & 2072
- Tecoma, 18 Lansdowne Road, St Kilda East (1924) Citation 2101
- House, 19 Wavenhoe Avenue, St Kilda East (1929) Citation 953

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

Retain in the Heritage Overlay with paint controls.

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 20th century architectural study, Volume 3, 1992*

Other images



