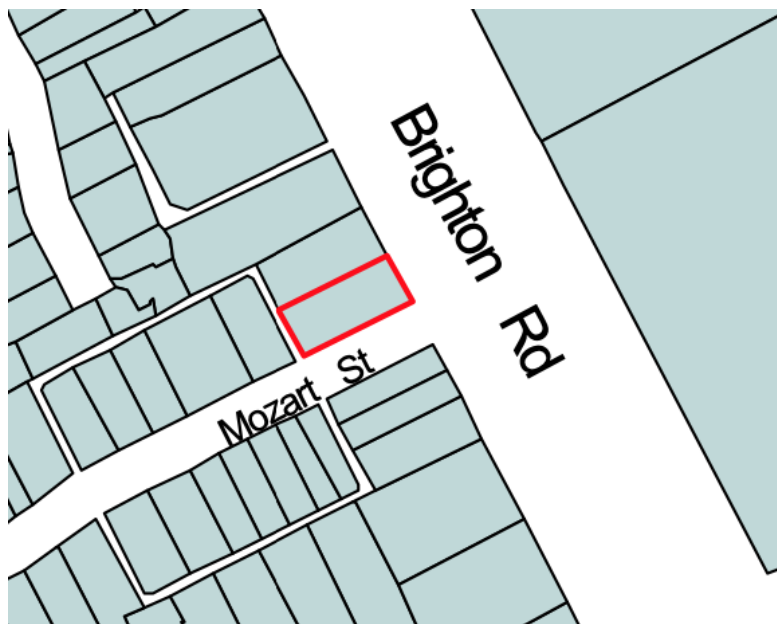


# City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

**Place name:** Zaneth Manor  
**Other names:** Flats

**Citation No:**  
432



**Address:** 33 Brighton Road,  
St Kilda

**Heritage Precinct:** St Kilda Botanical Gardens &  
Environs

**Category:** Residential: Flats

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

**Style:** Interwar: Old  
English, Moderne

**Graded as:** Significant

**Constructed:** 1936

**Victorian Heritage Register:** No

**Designer:** James H. Wardrop

**Amendment:** TBA

**Comment:** Revised citation

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## Significance

### *What is significant?*

Zaneth Manor, the three-storey, brick, Old English-style flats with Moderne influences, designed by James H. Wardrop and built in 1936, at 33 Brighton Road, St Kilda is significant. The low brick front fence also contributes to the significance of Zaneth Manor.

Alterations and additions are not significant.

### *How is it significant?*

Zaneth Manor at 33 Brighton Road, St Kilda is of local representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

### *Why is it significant?*

Zaneth Manor was designed by the James H. Wardrop, who was an eminent architect in Melbourne in the mid-twentieth century, his body of work included a number of commissions for flats and houses in the City of Port Phillip. These were designed in an Old English-style, some, such as Zaneth Manor, incorporated

subtle Moderne influences. Zaneth Manor is a fine and representative example of the work of the important Melbourne architect, J.H. Wardrop (Criterion D).

Zaneth Manor is designed in an Old English-style, with some references in massing and detailing that show Moderne influences, showing the transition that occurred in architecture during the inter-war period from Historicism to Modernism. Hip and gable roofs, and other roofs concealed by horizontal parapets, added with projecting and recessed massing of bays, result in a busy composition, most notably on the Mozart Street elevation. Zaneth Manor is also of aesthetic note, for its distinct detailing, achieved through the unusual application of brick, in particular on gable ends, where brickwork is glazed and expressed with a dripped, almost liquid, effect. (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 (5.3.5 Higher-density housing)

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## 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 (Prahlan 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. 370 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).

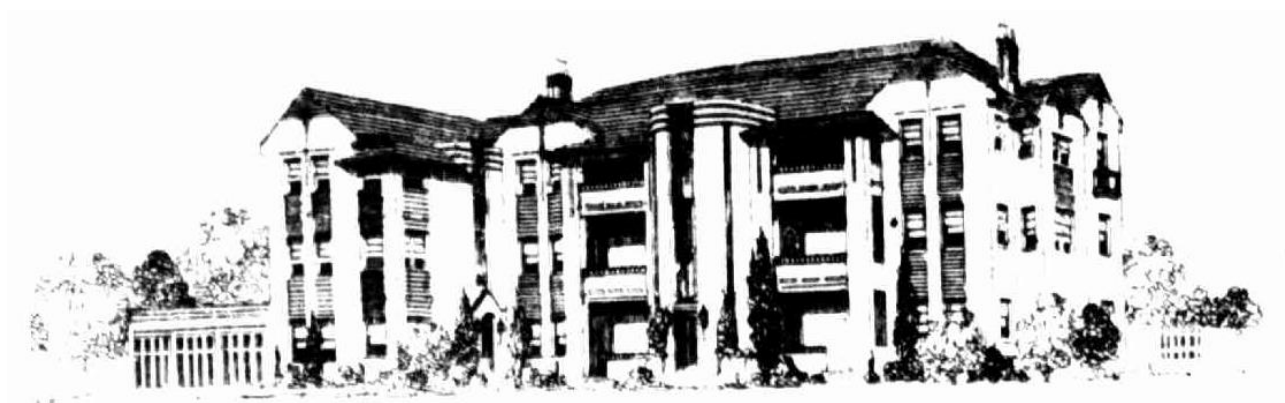
### Zaneth Manor

The first flats in Brighton Road were constructed at the end of World War I. One of the first was Yurunga, designed by local architect Harry R. Johnson, which was constructed in 1920 at the south corner of Brunning Street directly opposite the cable tram terminus. The electrification of the cable tram in Brighton Road and its extension, by 1926, from the terminus in Brunning Street, Balaclava to Glen Huntly Road in Elsternwick encouraged the building of flats along the route. Between 1926 and 1941 no fewer than 21 blocks were constructed in Brighton Road between Carlisle Street and Glen Huntly Road with many more in the adjoining streets.

This property at the north corner of Mozart Street and Brighton Road remained vacant until the present block of flats, known as Zaneth Manor were constructed in 1936 by builder A.J. (John) Trencher of Caulfield for J. Golding. Designed by architect James H. Wardrop, the building contained nine flats over three levels.

A newspaper article described how the planning of the flats had avoided the ‘communal’ aspect and all flats had sufficient privacy, ensuring ‘no tenant in the daily routine need encounter another tenant’. The flats were described as follows:

*Externally the building is designed as a harmony in reds, with light-coloured blended brickwork, reddish brown roof and woodwork in bright reds relieved with black. The internal arrangement reflects the latest in flat planning with labor and space saving features. Each flat has been treated in a different colour scheme to serve varying tastes. (The Herald, 25 February 1936, p.16 ‘Avoiding communal aspect in modern flats’).*



Artist illustration of Zaneth Manor (Source: The Herald, 26 February 1936, p.16)

### References

- Lewis, Nigel & Aitken, Richard, *City of Malvern Heritage Study. Appendix I: Architects of Malvern*, 1992
- O'Hanlon, Seamus, 'Home together, Home apart: Boarding house, hostel and flat life in Melbourne c.1900-1940', PhD Thesis, History Department, Monash University
- Port Phillip Thematic Environmental History (TEH) **Version 1, July 2020**
- St Kilda Council building permit (BP) nos. 9144, 16 December 1935
- Sands & McDougall Directories (SM) 1935, 1940
- 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

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## Description

A three-storey, block of brick inter-war flats, built at the northwest corner of Brighton Road and Mozart Street, which is an amalgam of the Old English Revival and Moderne styles. A right-of-way forms the site's west boundary. The flats are set back from their street boundaries behind gardens, which include a hedge planted behind a low clinker brick fence that has a balustrade with panels of soldier courses and pillars with pointed tops. This fence has been rebuilt in places.

The main hip roof is clad with glazed terracotta tiles, and the chimneys have glazed brick cappings. This materiality relates visually to the distinct detailing on the modest projections of the gable ends on the street facing elevations. That detailing consists of glazed bricks that form a dripping effect on the walls of the gable bays. Elsewhere, some glazed manganese brickwork is used in places to relieve walls, which are mostly faced in brown bricks with a reddish-tinge. A clinker brick base extends around the base of the walls. Windows are single, double, or paired, double-hung sash windows, which have a horizontal glazing bar in the upper sash. Wrought iron signage that says *Zaneth Manor*, is fixed to the wall on the spandrel between the ground and first floor windows of the middle bay of the Brighton Road (east) elevation.

The Mozart Street elevation is busier in composition and the application of its detailing than the Brighton Road elevation. The broad Mozart Street elevation is asymmetrically composed, with a projecting bay off centre that contains the stairwell. This bay is curved at its corners, and has brick detailing that includes a stepped parapet, bands of brick in different bonds, and a clinker brick surround on the entrance to the stairwell. The stairwell has a restrained Moderne appearance, in contrast to the remainder of the detailing which is more consistent with the Old English-style detailing. Flanking the bay containing the stairwell are bays of open balconies, which have brick balustrading with varying details including panels of irregular shaped bricks. The main roof of the flats project to form the roof of the upper balconies. At the west end of the Mozart Street elevation there is a small porch recessed between a projecting bay and a double-garage. A deck has been built upon the roof of the garage in recent years.

The building is in good condition and has a relatively high degree of external intactness.

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## Comparative analysis

The inter-war period was a time of extreme stylistic diversity, to an extent that exceeded the diversity of approaches of the nineteenth century. Boundaries between styles were often crossed in the one building, creating eclectic fusions of features from different styles (Trethowan et al, 1992, Volume I, p.61). Such buildings were very popular in St Kilda and Elwood and make an important contribution to the distinctive character of these areas. While such designs have sometimes been attributed to speculative builders and 'lesser' architects, this approach was also used by well-known or prominent architects such as James H. Wardrop, H.V. Gillespie and J.H. Esmond Dorney.

From the mid-1920s onwards Old English, Spanish Mission and Georgian Revival became the most popular styles for residential architecture in Victoria. As Lewis (1992:1) notes:

*The period after the Depression saw a shift towards the new and exciting modern idioms emanating from Europe and America. Nevertheless, period character was not put totally aside. Old English architecture lingered on throughout the 1930s and the Mission and Georgian idioms provided a formal framework through which modernism could be absorbed and modified.*

James H. Wardrop's career in Port Phillip is represented by several houses and flats, and a church hall, all built during the 1930s. His buildings were mainly in the Old English style, sometimes combined with Moderne detailing. Many of his buildings are distinguished by patterned and decorative brickwork.

Old English Revival, which included Tudor and Medieval influences, was a popular style for residential buildings of the interwar period and there are many examples in Port Phillip. It is characterised by red and clinker bricks, brick nogging and half-timbering, tiled roofs with steeply pitched gables, and highly modelled

brick chimneys. Massing and details are picturesquely asymmetrical, as were window types, ranging from arches, standard casements and oriels, with multiple panes (often with diamond leadlights). Front fences are low and often in clinker bricks.

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.

Zaneth Manor is one of several blocks of flats designed by Wardrop that express his distinct interpretation of the Old English style. The earlier examples have rendered walls, overlaid with brick detailing expressed as quoining, soldier courses, semi-circular and square-panels of tapestry brickwork (reminiscent of brick 'nogging' in traditional Tudor architecture) and brick surrounds around wall openings. These include Camelot Court (1933) at 1 Wimbledon Avenue, Elwood, Mandalay, 17A Albion Street, Balaclava (1934, Citation 396) and 4A Meredith Street, Elwood (1934-35). In later examples by Wardrop such as Zaneth Manor only face brick is used, the Old English influences are more abstracted and Moderne influences are evident.

Zaneth Manor displays Wardrop's skill with the use of patterned brickwork. Especially notable is the dark brickwork to the gables that appears to drip down the façade. The multiple gables and complex picturesque massing typical of the Old English style is contrasted with projecting horizontal rows of bricks beneath windows and a curved stair tower with a banded horizontal parapet that demonstrate the Moderne influence. This blend of styles can also be seen at Sheffield Manor, 110 Westbury Street, Balaclava, designed by Wardrop in 1937 and completed the following year (Citation 2431).

Other examples of buildings that demonstrate a range of styles include La Tourelle, 47A Brighton Road, Elwood (1935, W.H. Merritt, Citation 433), which blends influences of the English Vernacular Revival, Mediterranean and Moderne styles, Moira, the house at 16 Glen Eira Road, Ripponlea designed by H.V. Gillespie in 1936 (Citation 1497) which blends the Mediterranean and Moderne styles and also displays Gillespie's idiosyncratic design approach, as well as El Sonia (1938, designer unknown, Citation 776), 6 Fulton Street, St Kilda East and Olgmend Court (1940, Leslie J.W. Reed, Citation 402), both of which blend Georgian Revival and Moderne (with Art Deco flourishes at El Sonia).

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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 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*, 1992





## Other images

