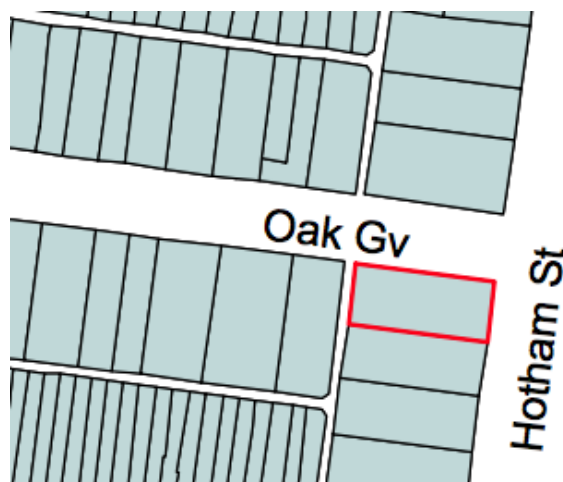


# City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

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

**Citation No:**  
**2021**



**Address:** 175 Hotham Street & 1 Oak Grove, Ripponlea

**Heritage Precinct:** Ripponlea Residential

**Category:** Residential: House, flats

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

**Style:** Interwar: Craftsman Bungalow, Arts & Crafts

**Graded as:** Individual

**Constructed:** 1923, 1927

**Victorian Heritage Register:** No

**Designer:** Schreiber & Jorgensen (1927)

**Amendment:** TBA

**Comment:** Revised citation

## Significance

### *What is significant?*

This house, built by Lees & Irving in 1922-23, for Mrs. M.I. Johnson, at 175 Hotham Street, Ripponlea; and the flats designed by Schreiber & Jorgensen, built in 1927, at 1 Oak Grove, Ripponlea are significant. The house at 175 Hotham Street is a Craftsman-style attic bungalow, inspired by Arts & Crafts influences, which is set back behind a deep garden with a shallower setback from Oak Grove. The two-storey flats, which have restrained Arts & Crafts detailing are situated at the rear of the house and face Oak Grove.

Alterations and additions are not significant.

### *How is it significant?*

The house at 175 Hotham Street and the flats at 1 Oak Grove, Ripponlea are of aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

### *Why is it significant?*

The house is of aesthetic significance as a fine and intact example of a Craftsman-style attic bungalow. It demonstrates expressive massing and application of Arts & Crafts-inspired detailing, most notably its dominant and complex roof forms clad in unglazed terracotta tiles, timber brackets that support the deep eaves of the roof, and timber sash windows with leadlight glazing. The deep-red and cream colour scheme, which may be original, is sympathetic and contributes to the aesthetic value of the house. (Criterion E)

The flats are of aesthetic significance as a fine, and relatively intact, example of the Arts & Crafts-style applied in a restrained manner, which complements the house. The flats are massed on an asymmetrical plan, with a transverse gable roof clad in unglazed terracotta tiles that is parallel to Oak Grove, which has smaller projecting front gables above canted bay windows on both levels. Materiality and detailing on the flats are synonymous with the Arts & Crafts-style and include unpainted rendered walls above a face brick plinth, and timber frame multi-pane sash windows with brick cills. Also of note is the prominent stair finished in roughcast and smooth render, which extends across the elevation and returns at a landing towards Oak Grove, reinforcing the asymmetry of the overall composition. (Criterion E)

The mature garden setbacks from street boundaries of the house and flats contribute to their aesthetic value. (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, 5.3.5 Higher-density living)

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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. 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 (Prahman 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).

### House and flats, 175 Hotham Street and 1 Oak Grove

Land to the north of Glen Eira Road between the Sandringham railway and Hotham Street was subdivided and offered for sale during the Land Boom of the late nineteenth century as the East St Kilda Estate. The estate comprised over 110 lots with frontages to Hotham Street and Glen Eira Road, as well as three new east-west streets: Sycamore Grove, Elm Grove and Oak Grove. However, only a small number of houses were built before the economic depression of the 1890s and it was not until the Ripponlea railway station was opened in 1913 that development finally recommenced. A shopping centre was rapidly established along Glen Eira Road between the railway and Hotham Street. Most of the shops were constructed in a flurry of building that occurred from 1913 to 1918 and the centre was almost fully developed by 1923. This served the growing residential areas filling out the vacant land within the East St Kilda Estate as well as the Quat Quatta and Erindale subdivisions (offered for sale from 1911 onwards) to the south of Glen Eira Road.

The electrification of the railway in 1919 and the extension and electrification of the tramway along Brighton Road in 1925 stimulated development and houses or flats were built on almost all the remaining vacant lots to the north and south of Glen Eira Road during the interwar period. This included the subdivision of the vast Brunning's Nursery as a housing estate, which included creation of the new streets of Los Angeles Court and Monkstadt Avenue.

This property at the south corner of Oak Grove and Hotham Street was Lot 1 in Section E of the East St Kilda Estate subdivision. Like most of the allotments, it remained vacant until the early twentieth century. In 1922-23 a substantial attic bungalow at the front of the allotment facing Hotham Street was constructed by builders Lee & Irving for Mrs. M.I. Johnson. The house contained a bedroom, separate dining and lounge rooms and a kitchen on the ground floor, and a further two bedrooms as well as a large balcony facing Hotham Street on the first floor (BP).

In 1927 Mrs Johnson commissioned a two-storey duplex designed by architects Schreiber & Jorgensen, which was constructed at the rear facing Oak Grove. This contained two, two-bedroom flats. At the same time the architects designed minor additions to the original house, and it is possible they were responsible for the original design (BP).

### Schreiber & Jorgensen

The firm of Schreiber & Jorgensen, comprising 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. They also designed the Maison De Luxe dance hall, situated at the northwest corner of Broadway and Glen Huntly Road, which was demolished in the 1960s. The other known examples, still extant, are:

- Duplex (1915) 152-54 Mitford Street, Elwood (Citation 2382). Arts & Crafts bungalow with Japanese influences.
- Flats (1917) 73-75 Mitford Street, Elwood (Citation 353). Unusual flat roofed building with cuboid form.
- Chandos Court Flats (1920-21) 17-25 Charnwood Crescent, St Kilda (Citation 868). Arts & Crafts influences.
- House (1923) 96 Barkly Street, St Kilda (No citation). Arts & Crafts influences.
- House (1924) 3 Broadway, Elwood (No citation) Bungalow with Arts & Crafts influences.
- Flatman House (1925), 207 Alma Road, St Kilda East (Citation 2138). Substantial attic storey bungalow with Arts & Crafts influences.
- Duplex (1925) 73-75 Ormond Road, Elwood (Citation 764). Two storey brick with Arts & Crafts influences.
- Flats/duplex (1929) 18 Glen Eira Road, Ripponlea (No citation). Two storey brick with Arts & Crafts influences.
- House (c.1930) 4 Los Angeles Court, Ripponlea (Citation 341). Fine example of the Spanish Mission style.

## 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) nos. 5067, 22 November 1922 and 6761, 28 March 1927

Sands & McDougall Directories (SM) 1925, 1930, 1940

## Description

### House

175 Hotham Street is a Craftsman-style attic bungalow, inspired by Arts & Crafts influences, which is set back behind a deep garden with a shallower setback from Oak Grove. Typical of the style, the house has a dominant steeply pitched roof clad in unglazed terracotta tiles that accommodates a large attic level and walls finished in unpainted roughcast render. The main jerkinhead roof has a ridge parallel to Hotham Street, with a smaller jerkinhead roof projecting forward and incorporating a hip roof with a bellcast profile at the eaves above the entrance porch, which is supported by square profile rendered piers. Timber brackets support the deep eaves of the roof. A hood with terracotta tiles extends above the two pairs of boxed timber sash windows on the ground floor of the north elevation. Other detailing on the house includes double-hung sash windows with leadlight panes. On the rear pitch is a rendered brick chimney with terracotta square detailing in the Arts & Crafts style and terracotta pots.

The deep red and cream colour scheme is sympathetic and may be original or based on the original colours and the woven wire front and side fence complements the setting of the house, but is not original.

The house is in good condition. A skylight has been fitted to the east pitch of the main roof facing Hotham Street and the original first floor balcony facing Hotham Street has been enclosed. Otherwise, the house has a very high degree of external intactness.

## Flats

The two-storey flats are situated to the rear of the house and are set back from Oak Grove behind a shallow garden with a small setback from the right-of-way along the west boundary. A timber frame fence, with woven wire, similar to the fence of the attic bungalow, extends along the Oak Grove frontage.

Asymmetrical in plan, the flats have a transverse gable roof, parallel to Oak Grove and a smaller projecting front gable above canted bay windows on both levels. The roofs are clad in unglazed terracotta tiles and the walls are finished in unpainted roughcast render above a face brick plinth. The walls are plain apart from three incised rectangular niches to each gable end. To the left of the projecting bay are entry porches with double timber doors. These are framed by double-height piers with abstracted capitals, which support a flat roof with deep eaves and visible rafters that extends to form the hood of the canted bay window on the first floor. The upper-level porch is accessed by a stair that has a solid balustrade with rectangular cut outs and smooth render capping and returns at 90 degrees at a landing towards Oak Grove. The windows are timber frame double-hung sashes with six-paned upper sashes and clinker brick sills, arranged in triples above and below the front stairs, and as singles in the side elevations. The west elevation has a chimney expressed on its wall with a simple smooth rendered cap.

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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.

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 (for example, 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.

175 Hotham Street is a fine example of a Craftsman Bungalow and is complemented by the flats, which have similar materiality that demonstrates the influences of the Arts & Crafts style in a restrained manner. Each is notable for the relatively high degree of intactness, which includes the original unpainted render and face brickwork and sympathetic and possibly original colour schemes. 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, 26 Hammerdale Avenue, St Kilda East (1926) Citation 2008
- House, 19 Wavenhoe Avenue, St Kilda East (1929) Citation 953

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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, *HO7 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



## Other images

