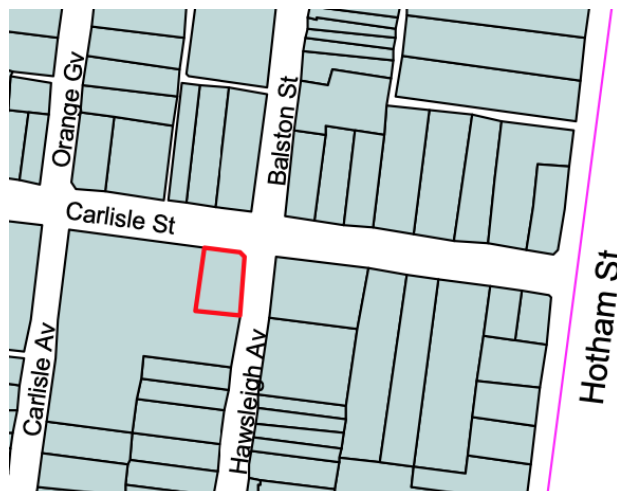


City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

Place name: Astolat
Other names: Flats

Citation No:
317



Address: 301 Carlisle Street, Balaclava

Heritage Precinct: Carlisle Street (East)

Category: Residential: Flats

Heritage Overlay: HO316

Style: Interwar: Arts & Crafts

Graded as: Significant

Constructed: 1934

Victorian Heritage Register: No

Designer: Leslie J.W. Reed

Amendment: TBA

Comment: Revised citation

Significance

What is significant?

Astolat, an Arts & Crafts-style block of two-storey clinker brick flats overlaid with some Tudor Revival detailing, designed by Leslie J.W. Reed and built in 1934, at 301 Carlisle Street, Balaclava is significant. The low brick front fence and iron gates also contribute to the significance of Astolat.

Alterations and additions are not significant.

How is it significant?

Astolat at 301 Carlisle Street, Balaclava is of local aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

Why is it significant?

Astolat is of aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip as a fine example of an Arts & Crafts-style block of flats, overlaid with elements of the Tudor Revival-style. These inter-war flats are notable for their complex massing, and their detailing that includes two arched entrances with decorative brickwork set within a breakfront with a steep gable; dominant chimneys expressed as part of exterior walls and at the northeast corner a porch with a bellcast roof, and timber frame double-hung window sashes with multi-panes, with brick detailing on sills and heads. Two projecting gable bays on the first floor, are overlaid with Tudor-style detailing of half-timbering (one gable bay now enclosed with contemporary steel frame glazing). As a sum, the massing, materiality and detailing of Astolat creates a picturesque architectural composition. The significance of Astolat is enhanced by its high degree of integrity and the low clinker-brick front fence and hedge. (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 (5.3.5 Higher-density housing)

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.

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.

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.

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 (Pahran 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).

Astolat

By the end of the late nineteenth century Carlisle Street east of Balaclava Railway Station was lined with large villas and mansions in large grounds. Two of these were Shawmut and Hawsleigh (MMBW). The opening in 1913 of the electric tramway from Kew to St Kilda Beach via Balaclava Road and Carlisle Street encouraged more intensive residential subdivision and development including the building of flats. In the early twentieth century the grounds of Shawmut and Hawsleigh were subdivided to create Hawsleigh Avenue and the first houses were constructed along the east side in 1913. The mansions were retained at first on reduced allotments, but by the end of the 1920s were demolished.

On the west side of Hawsleigh Avenue the site of Shawmut was in 1928 carved up into six allotments, two facing Carlisle Street and a further four facing Hawsleigh Avenue (LV). The three lots around the corner of the two streets were larger, evidently created for the building of flats and in 1928 the Hawsleigh Court flats were built on Lot 3 facing Hawsleigh Avenue (see Citation 2010).

The two allotments facing Carlisle Street were acquired in 1934 by Shawmut P/L, which in turn sold Lot 2 at the corner to Allan Leslie Hone in May 1934 (LV). Hone had by then already obtained a building permit for the building of Astolat, which was completed by the end of the year. Leslie J.W. Reed was the architect (BP).

Leslie J.W. Reed, architect

Leslie J.W. Reed (1893-1964) commenced practice in about 1914 and became registered as an architect in 1923. Like many of his contemporaries, Reed designed in a range of fashionable historical revival styles including Spanish Mission, Mediterranean, Georgian and Tudor/Old English before finally embracing Modernism by the postwar period. Most of his work was residential comprising houses and flats, as well as some small industrial and commercial projects. Reed continued to practise into the early 1960s until shortly before his death in 1964 at the age of 71 years (Built Heritage PL).

Leslie J.W. Reed's career in Port Phillip is represented by several houses and flats, and at least one commercial development spanning three decades. In 1925 he designed a house in Westbury Street, but it has been demolished. His earliest extant work is the Spanish Mission style house at 11A Charnwood Road, which was constructed in 1928 and his last known work was the Moderne style house at 6A Dickens Street, completed in 1954. Perhaps his most notable work in Port Phillip is Mid Mar, the Moderne style duplex at 48 & 48A Brighton Road, which is notable for the distinctive patterned tapestry brickwork and is complemented by an original low brick front fence.

References

Land Victoria (LV) LP 12544, Certificate of Title Vol. 5902 Fol. 374

Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan no.1438, dated 1898

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) no. 8557, 27 April 1934

Sands & McDougall Directories (SM) 1930, 1935



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

Description

Astolat is a fine, Arts & Crafts-style, two-storey, block of inter-war, clinker brick, flats, with a dominant steep roof mass that is clad in terracotta tiles. The flats are situated at the southwest corner of Carlisle Street and Hawsleigh Avenue, and has shallow setbacks from both streets behind a mature garden. A low clinker brick fence with decorative steel gates extends along street boundaries and behind this fence is a hedge. This hedge, and the garden, provide a fine landscape setting for the house. A rear bay of the flats extends along the Hawsleigh Avenue boundary beside an entrance on this elevation.

Contributing to its fine architectural composition are elements assembled across the two street-facing elevations in a random manner, resulting in a busy design of a distinct, if not quirky, character. These elements include two arched entrances with fine brick detailing set within a breakfront with a steep gable; dominant chimneys expressed as part of exterior walls (one with Astolat in metal letters above an inset arch with tapestry bricks), and at the northeast corner a porch with a bellcast roof. Windows on the flats are mostly timber frame double-hung sashes with multi-panes, with brick detailing on sills and heads. Adding to this busy massing and detailing is the restrained application of Tudor-style detailing on two projecting gabled bays, which are expressed with half-timbering on their gable ends (one gable bay is now enclosed with contemporary steel frame glazing),

A two-storey brick wing is at the southwest corner of the site. It has a garage, which is accessed from a drive leading from Hawsleigh Avenue. The upper portion of this wing has detailing and materiality that references the flats to its front.

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

Comparative analysis

The Old English-style, which incorporated English vernacular influences such as elements of the Tudor and Medieval-styles, 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.

The earliest use of the style in Port Phillip was in the flat conversion known as Hampden, 74 Barkly Street, St Kilda designed by Arthur W. Plaisted and constructed in 1919-20 (HO370, Citation 405). Plaisted also designed one of the finest examples, Hartpur Court (1923) at 9-11 Milton Street, Elwood (included on the Victorian Heritage Register, VHR H797, Citation 381), as well as the house Limerick Lodge (1927) at 58 Brighton Road, Ripponlea (Citation 306).

Other Old English flats within the HO in Port Phillip mostly date from the 1930s and include include Surrey Court (J. Esmond Dorney, 1933), 71 Ormond Road, Elwood (Citation 362), Astolat (Leslie J.W. Reed, 1934), 301 Carlisle Street, Balaclava (Significant within HO316 precinct, Citation 317), Flats (Marsh & Michaelson, 1936) 628 St Kilda Road, Melbourne (Citation 928), Clovelly (Joseph Plottel, 1938) 136 Alma Road, St Kilda East (Citation 400) and Eildon Close (Bernard Evans, 1940) 7-9 Eildon Road, St Kilda (Citation 896).

Astolat is a fine example of the Arts & Crafts-style overlaid with Tudor Revival detailing. It is notable for its complex and picturesque massing and characteristic details, which includes two arched entrances with fine



brick detailing set within a breakfront with a steep gable; dominant chimneys expressed as part of exterior walls, projecting gable bays on the first floor with half-timbering (one gable bay now enclosed with contemporary steel frame glazing), and at the northeast corner a porch with a bellcast roof, and timber frame double-hung window sashes with multi-panes, with brick detailing on sills and heads. The significance is enhanced by its high degree of integrity and the complementary front fence and associated hedge.

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. Specific controls (external painting, internal alterations etc.) are not required

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



