
Inkerman Street Commercial Precinct

Places of individual significance within the precinct that have a separate citation in the Port Phillip Heritage Review with additional descriptive and historical information are indicated in **bold**.

1.0 Thematic Context

Victoria's framework of historical themes

- 5. Building Victoria's industries and workforce: 5.3 Marketing and retailing
- 6. Building towns, cities and the garden state: 6.3 Shaping the suburbs

Port Phillip thematic environmental history

- 5. Buildings and cultural landscapes: 5.2 Shaping the suburbs
- 6. Commerce, trade and work: 6.2 Markets, shops and retail

2.0 History

The Inkerman Street Commercial Precinct formed parts of Crown portions 151B, 157A and 158A at St Kilda in the Parish of Prahran. On the north side of Inkerman Street, Crown portions 151B and 157A, each comprised of five acres, were respectively purchased by T Hide in 1857 and J Gill in 1853, while on the south side of Inkerman Street, Crown portion 158A, comprised of 4 acres, was purchased by H Balston in 1857 (PP).

Soon after the Crown land sales, in December 1857, tenders were called for the 'cutting, filling and forming' of Inkerman Street between High (Brighton Road) and Hotham streets (Age 5 Dec 1857 p3).

In January 1858, the 'Inkerman Estate' subdivision (Figure 1), derived from Crown portions 151B and 157A, was auctioned, comprising 132 allotments fronting Inkerman (north side), Malakoff, Leslie, Prentice and Sebastopol streets (Argus 23 and 27 Jan 1858 p8). The auction took place on the grounds where attendees were entertained by a performing band. Advertisements for the sale emphasised the desirability of the location being proximate to both the proposed new Balaclava railway station (opened in 1859) and the residence of the Attorney-General (in Alma Road).

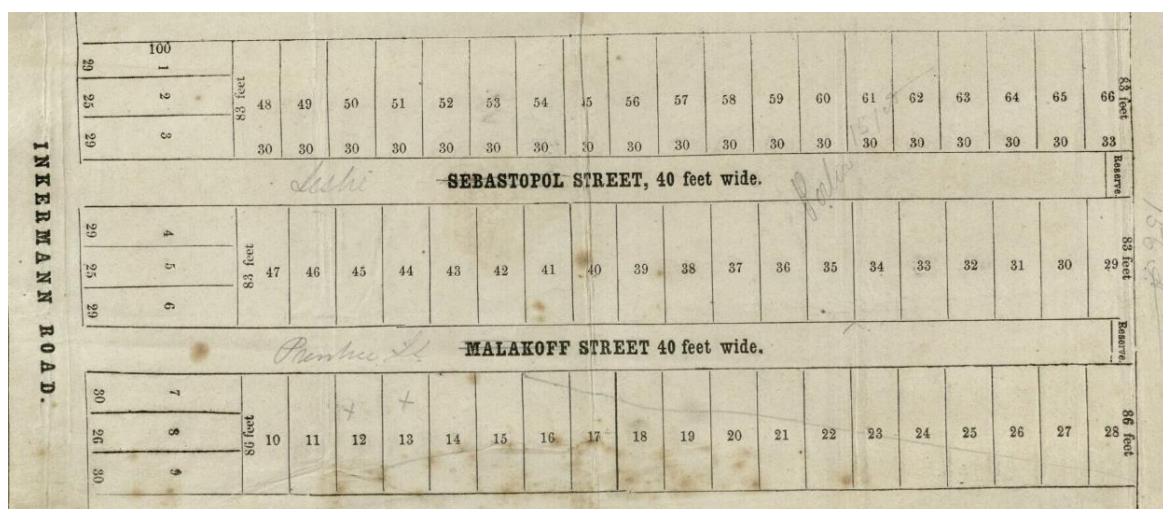


Figure 1 - 'Plan of the Inkerman Estate, St Kilda' (1858). Showing Sebastopol and Malakoff streets (151B) with Leslie and Prentice streets (157A) written in pencil beside, presumably indicating that the subdivisional arrangement was the same for both 151B and 157A (Source: State Library of Victoria)

In early 1859, Henry Balston subdivided Crown portion 158A, creating allotments in the northern half of Balston Street and fronting the south side of Inkerman Street; in March, these allotments were advertised for sale for 20 shillings a foot (*Argus* 1 Mar 1859 p8).

Nineteenth century development

Between 1859 and the early 1870s, the western part of the precinct was developed with a cluster of brick and weatherboard buildings, mostly commercial, either side of Malakoff Street. Also part of this commercial cluster, although outside precinct boundaries, was the timber Albion Hotel built c.1871 (now demolished) on the east corner of Sebastopol Street and the Inkerman Hotel built 1859 on the west corner of Balston Street (rebuilt 1960).

Later, between 1877 and circa 1890, the eastern part of the precinct on the north side of Inkerman Street was developed with commercial buildings and a house.

The mid-nineteenth century development within the precinct is illustrated on the 1873 Vardy plans (Figures 2 & 3) and the 1898 MMBW plans below.

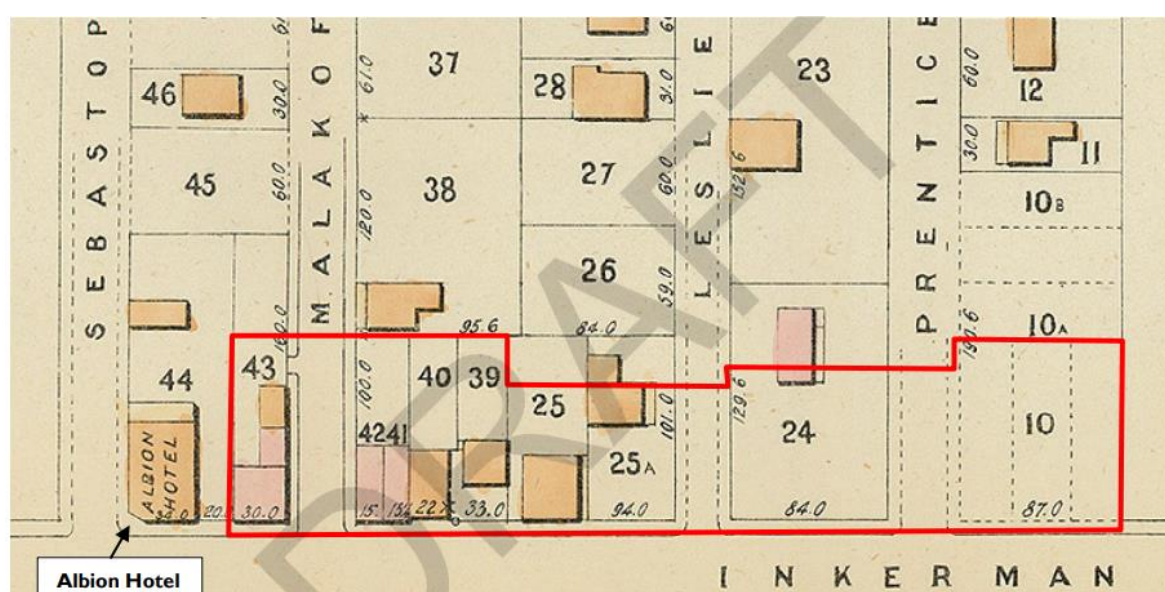


Figure 2 - Plan of the Borough of St Kilda, North Ward No. 7 (J.E.S. Vardy, 1873). Showing the north side of Inkerman Street, with the extent of the precinct indicated. Masonry buildings are shaded pink and timber buildings are shaded orange.

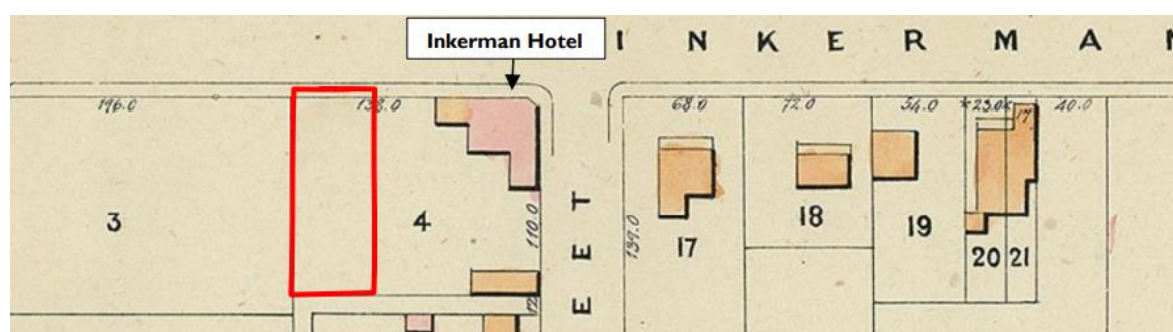


Figure 3 - Plan of the Borough of St Kilda, South Ward No. 3 (J.E.S. Vardy, 1873). Showing the south side of Inkerman Street, with the extent of the precinct indicated.

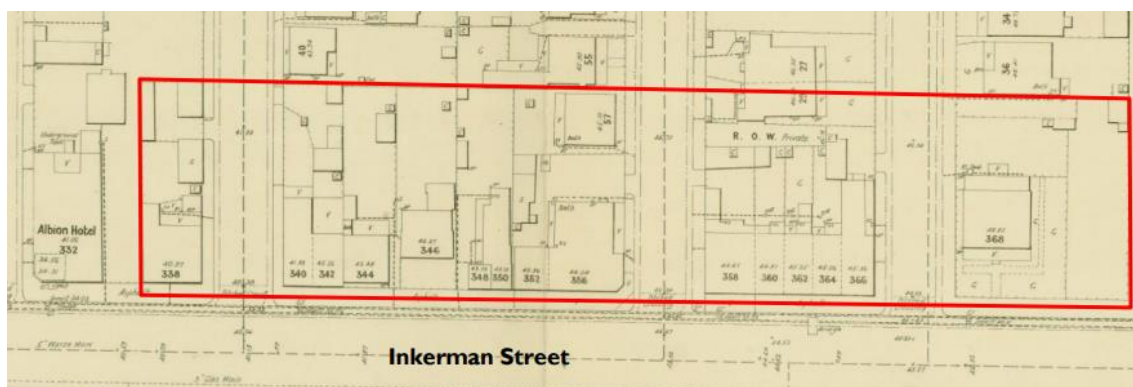


Figure 4 - MMBW detail plan no. 1421 (1898). Showing the north side of Inkerman Street, with the extent of the precinct indicated.

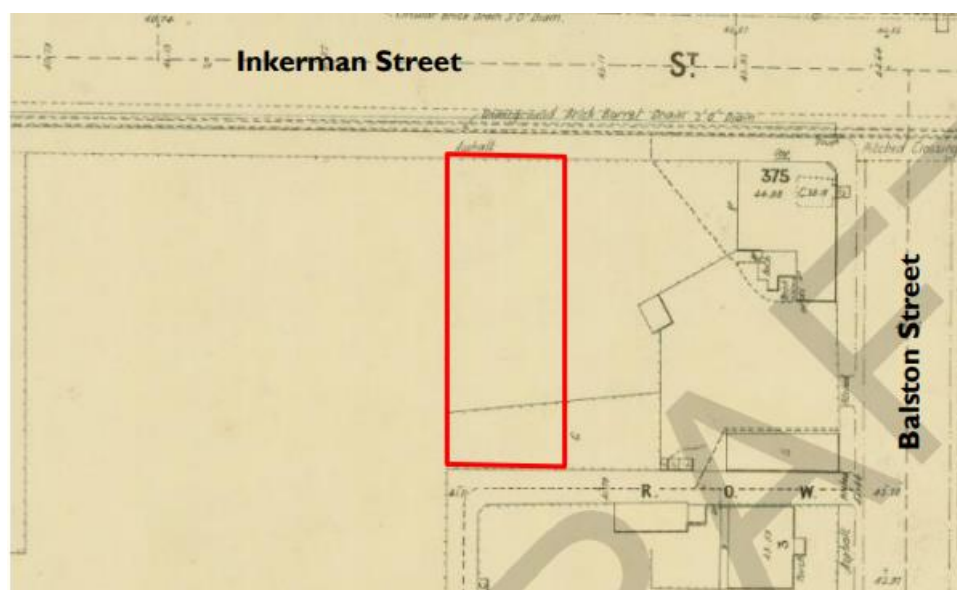


Figure 5 - MMBW detail plan no. 1426 (1898). Showing the south side of Inkerman Street, with the extent of the precinct indicated.

Several Victorian period buildings dating between 1859 and 1880 survive in the precinct. Historical information on these is outlined below:

244 Inkerman Street

In 1868, a brick shop with residence was built for Miles Farrington, butcher, who was the owner and occupant (RB Jan 1869 no. 1593). In 1887, thieves broke into the shop and made off with 100 pounds of meat (*Herald* 7 Oct 1887 p3). Following Miles' death in 1891, the building continued to be occupied by butchers until into the late 1930s.

In 1941, alterations were undertaken to adapt the building for factory use. During the 1950s and 1960s/70s, various substantial additions and alterations were undertaken, including a two-storey extension to the rear and a new two-storey building on the adjacent site at 240-242 Inkerman Street replacing an early 20th century house (BP 57/92, 2015, 1074, 57/760, 1959). In the 1940s and early 1950s, occupants included leather goods manufacturers and jewellery chain manufacturers, and from the mid-1950s it was used as a knitting factory.

248-250 Inkerman Street

In 1859, a brick building containing two premises (each comprised of a shop and dwelling) was erected on the east corner of Malakoff Street for James Reynolds. Early occupants of the shops included a grocer with post office (no. 248) and a bootmaker (no. 250).

Not long after their construction, in December 1859, both premises were advertised for auction and marketed to 'bakers, grocers, and others' (*Age* 28 Dec 1859 p7). They were described as 'capital brick-built houses and shops' each having a frontage of 15 feet to Inkerman Street and a depth of 90 feet with a right of way at the rear, and the eastern premises (i.e. no. 250) having a brick water tank and outhouse.

The sale was apparently not successful, as in mid-1860, James Reynolds was still the owner. At this time Reynolds lived at the back of one of the premises (no. 248) and was accused of twice attempting to burn down the building by depositing lighted rags inside while the tenants were at home (*Argus* 9 Jun 1860 p5; 16 Jun 1860 p4). Although he was ultimately discharged due to insufficient evidence, it was suggested that Reynolds, who had a large mortgage on the property, may have been motivated by the insurance money of £300.

By 1861, ownership had been transferred to Peter Langdon, along with properties adjacent to the north in Malakoff Street. Peter Langdon died in 1878, and the following year the whole building was advertised for sale, which was described at the time as 'a very substantial brick shop (upon a bluestone base) and dwelling' (*Argus* 15 May 1879 p2).

By 1950, the building was being used for manufacturing purposes, with a knitwear factory at no. 248 and a confectionery factory and later a button factory at no. 250.

268-276 Inkerman Street

In 1880, a row of five brick shops with dwellings was built for Dr. Ray, a surgeon, on land which had previously formed part of the grounds of a brick house to the north (*Telegraph St Kilda Prahran and South Yarra Guardian* 7 Aug 1880 p5). During construction of the buildings, Dr. Ray drew Council's attention to the 'necessity of kerbing the portion between Leslie and Prentice streets, and of asphaltting the same'. Four of the dwellings had four rooms and one had five rooms. Early tenants of the shops included a grocer, butcher, stationer, dressmaker and baker.

Although Dr. Ray had died by 1884, the executors of his estate retained the properties and continued to lease them until into the 20th century.

278 Inkerman Street

In 1877, a four roomed brick and weatherboard house was constructed on the east corner of Prentice Street for Robert Lateus and his wife Ann (RB Dec 1877 no. 744). It appears that Robert may have been 'Robert Latus' a cotton spinner from Lancashire, England, who in 1824 had been convicted of shooting and wounding a strike-breaker during an industrial strike and transported to Tasmania for life, despite doubts as to his guilt (*Cotton Factory Times [England]* 11 May 1888). He was pardoned in 1840 and settled in Melbourne where he apparently prospered. Following Robert's death in 1884 aged 76, Ann remained at the house for several more years (*Age* 16 Jun 1884 p1).

Interwar development

For a forty-year interval between 1880 and 1920, there was little, if any, development within the precinct. It was not until the Interwar period that a second phase of substantial development activity occurred, as new commercial buildings were introduced, either as replacements for earlier timber buildings or on land excised from the grounds of larger allotments. The 1945 aerial photograph below shows the development of the precinct at the end of the Interwar period.



Figure 6 - Aerial photograph dated 1945, showing the development of the precinct by the end of the Interwar period.

Historical information relating to the surviving Interwar period buildings dating between 1921 and 1930 is provided below.

258 Inkerman Street

This site was originally developed during the 1860s with a timber shop. In 1927 and 1929, building permits were issued to owner A Kay for 'brick and wood' additions costing an estimated £200, and then 'brick additions' for an estimated cost of £800 (BP nos 6988, 7645). Given the substantial amount of the 1929 works, it is more likely that a wholly or largely new building was constructed at this time.

Just 10 years later, in 1937, a further building permit was issued to a subsequent owner, R Lockwood, for a brick addition and alterations. Again, the estimated cost was substantial (£700), suggesting extensive works, if not rebuilding. The builder was P G Goldby of Elsternwick (BP no. 9823). During the 1940s and 1950s, the shop was occupied by a newsagency.

262-66 Inkerman Street

This site was first developed during the 1860s with a timber house fronting Leslie Street which was set back from Inkerman Street. Sometime between the 1870s and the 1890s, the house was replaced with a timber shop built to the corner.

In 1936 and 1938 two building permits were issued to owner W H Smeeton, a grocer who had occupied the site since the 1920s, for brick additions/alterations (BP nos 9161, 9874). Given the substantial estimated cost however (both £400), and the current appearance of the buildings, it is more likely that a wholly or largely new building was constructed. The builder cited in both permits was H McConnell of St Kilda East. Smeeton continued operating his grocery at the site until into the 1960s.

280 Inkerman Street

This site was previously part of the grounds of the adjacent house at no. 278. In 1921, a permit was issued to the owner Dunn Bros. motor engineers, for a brick garage (BP no. 4683). The 1935 Sands and McDougall's directory records it was occupied by female motor engineer, Doris Little (*Table Talk* 3 Dec 1936 p42).

The building has been continuously used as a motor engineering garage.

353-355 Inkerman Street

This site on the south side of Inkerman Street previously formed part of the grounds of the Inkerman Hotel, which was constructed in 1859.

In 1930, a pair of brick shops with dwellings above were erected for Herbert William Goldby of Bentleigh (BP 7771, 7766). The newly completed building can be seen on a 1931 aerial photograph. Early businesses included a dry produce store and later a hairdresser at no. 353, and a chemist at no. 355.

References

Certificates of Title: Vol. 4058 Fol. 552 (no. 244) and Vol. 1293 Fol. 425 (no. 248-250)

Council Building File (BF) for 244 Inkerman Street

Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plans nos. 1421 (1898) and 1426 (1898)

Newspaper Articles, various

Parish Plan (PP), at Elwood, Parish of Prahran, P81(13)

Port Phillip Thematic Environmental History (TEH), February 2021

Rate Books for St Kilda (RB) 1859-1900

St Kilda Council building permit records (BP)

Sands and McDougall's Directories (SM) 1859-1965

3.0 Description



The Inkerman Street Commercial Precinct comprises a small group of buildings from the Victorian and Interwar periods, mostly commercial, situated on both sides of Inkerman Street in St Kilda East.

The original basalt kerbing and channelling survives in the side streets, as well as a basalt paved crossover at the rear of nos 248-250. The footpaths are asphalt and the kerbing to Inkerman Street is concrete. There are several street plantings of various species, including young saplings and older, moderately sized trees.

Victorian


The Victorian era buildings in the precinct include the two storey shops, with upper-level residences, at 244, 248-250 and 268-276 Inkerman Street and the house at 278 Inkerman Street.

The commercial buildings from this period are similar in form, materials, finishes and detailing - all are of masonry construction and are smooth rendered with upper levels detailed with cement-rendered ornamentation. Windows are double-hung sashes. Some original chimneys survive. No original Victorian shopfronts survive.

| Details | Image |
|---|--|
| <p>244 Inkerman Street Built in 1868</p> <p>Shop residence, converted to factory use mid-20th century. First floor intact, although presumably the parapet detailing has been removed (with later roof alterations). Unusual beaded edges to window openings and pilasters, timber framed sashes, and projecting sills. Paired timber brackets to cornice. Tooled lines evident to rendered finish (overpainted). Elaborate mouldings to either end of ground floor cornice.</p> <p>Key additions and alterations undertaken in the 1940s-1960s include façade alterations at ground floor, replacement of the original hipped roof with an exposed gable roof (including gable end at front), and the two-storey rear extension.</p> |  |
| <p>248-250 Inkerman Street Built in 1859</p> <p>Pair of shop residences. First floor intact, although likely original parapet detailing has been removed. Three arched window openings with moulded architraves and timber framed sashes. Rendered finish may not be original. Ground floor retains basalt columns (overpainted) – upper parts of shafts rusticated with picked faces and draft margins, lower parts of shafts rendered. Side walls in English bond brickwork (overpainted) and some original openings. Shopfronts are not original or early.</p> |  |
| <p>268-276 Inkerman Street Built in 1880</p> <p>Group of five shop residences. No. 268 is the widest.</p> <p>First floor intact, although presumably parapet detailing removed. Paired console brackets with floriated panels, arched window openings with female classical head keystones. Rendered chimneys with moulded caps. Shopfronts are not original or early.</p> |  |
| <p>278 Inkerman Street Built in 1877</p> <p>Bichrome brick house (Hawthorn brown with cream to quoining and cornice), hipped roof (likely originally clad in slate), symmetrical composition with central entrance and windows (timber framed sash) either side, timber brackets to cornice, verandah to full width of façade (timber posts and frieze not original), bichrome brick chimneys with rendered caps. Fence not original.</p> |  |

Interwar

The Interwar era buildings in the precinct include the single storey shops at 258 and 262-266 Inkerman Street, the motor garage at 280 Inkerman Street and the shop residences at 353-355 Inkerman Street.

| Details | Image |
|--|--|
| <p>258 Inkerman Street Built in 1937 (may contain some earlier components, but the façade dates to 1930s). Single storey shop with stepped parapet – face red brick with rendered coping and decorative vertical fin-like elements reflecting an Art Deco influence. Shopfront and tiling not original.</p> |  |
| <p>262-266 Inkerman Street Built 1936-38 (may contain some earlier components, but the façades date to 1930s). Single storey shops with rendered parapet featuring panels with Art Deco influenced chevron motifs, chamfered corner, canopy with original ridged soffit lining. Original or early shopfronts mostly survive. No. 266 has some original tiling (overpainted) and shopfront framing has manufacturers badge for 'N&N Shopfitters' (a Prahran based company active from the early 1930s).</p> |  |
| <p>280 Inkerman Street Built in 1921-22 Broad semi-circular parapet, symmetrical composition, central arched vehicular entrance with timber doors, multi-paned timber-framed windows, textured glass to highlights. Remnant painted signage on side (date unknown). Façade has been overpainted.</p> |  |
| <p>353-355 Inkerman Street Built in 1930 Shops with dwellings above. Clinker brick, stepped parapet, end piers, paired timber-framed windows with multi-paned upper sashes, rendered banding (lintels and sills). Shopfronts not original.</p> |  |

4.0 Comparative analysis

The Inkerman Street Commercial Precinct is significant as a small local commercial centre that comprises building stock from the Victorian and Interwar periods. Comparable commercial centres in the municipality include:

- Montague Commercial Precinct, South Melbourne (currently part of HO442 precinct, proposed separate HO through amendment C186port). Comprised of Victorian, Federation and Interwar period buildings dating between 1867 and 1935. Mostly two storey shop residences and single storey shops. There is also a house.
- 71-111 Brighton Road, Elwood - Victorian, Federation, Interwar (within HO7 precinct). Comprised of Victorian, Federation and Interwar period buildings dating between c.1880s and c.1930s. Mix of two storey shop residences and single storey shops.

The precinct is distinguished by its retention of two early shop residences dating to 1859 and 1868. Known examples of pre-1870 shop residences are rare in St Kilda and the broader municipality - in St Kilda there are the following:

- 264 St Kilda Road (1864) (Individual HO506)
- 170-172 St Kilda Road (1867) (Individual HO248)

Elsewhere in the municipality, other known examples of early shop residences include 98-100 Bay Street (PPHR citation 248, c.1860, within HO1 precinct), 397 Bay Street (c.1863, PPHR citation 241, HO1), 235-237 Bay Street (1869, PPHR citation 235, HO1), and 378 Coventry Street (c.1856, PPHR citation 1053, HO96).

The precinct is further distinguished by the retention of a house (no. 278) within a commercial area, where typically earlier residential development was replaced. Built in 1877, the house is notable as one of the earliest surviving residences in St Kilda East. Except for some remnant mansions, most houses date from c.1885 boom period and examples prior to 1880 are rare.

5.0 Statement of significance

What is significant?

The Inkerman Street Commercial Precinct includes 244-280 Inkerman Street (north side) and 353-355 Inkerman Street (south side). The precinct was developed during the Victorian and Interwar periods.

The following features contribute to the significance of the precinct:

- Victorian period development (1859-1880) including
 - two-storey shop residences (nos. 244, 248-50 and 268-276) with rendered finishes and decorative window settings
 - single storey house (no. 278) of bichrome brick with a hipped roof and front verandah
- Interwar period development (1921-1938) including
 - single storey shops (nos. 258 and 262-266) with decorative parapets and partly retaining original/early shopfronts
 - two-storey shop residences (nos. 353-355) of clinker brick with a stepped parapet
 - garage (no. 280) with a broad semi-circular parapet
- Basalt kerbing, channelling, and some crossovers in side streets

The Significant places within the precinct are:

- 248-250, 268-276 and 278 Inkerman Street

The Contributory places are:

- 244, 258, 262-66, 268-276 and 280 Inkerman Street
- 353-355 Inkerman Street

The Non-contributory properties are:

- 254 and 256 Inkerman Street

How is it significant?

The Inkerman Street Commercial Precinct is of local historical, rarity, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Phillip.

Why is it significant?

The Inkerman Street Commercial Precinct is of historical significance for its association with the early phase of development in St Kilda East/Balaclava, following the Crown land sales of the 1850s. The earliest development in the precinct coincided with the 1859 opening of the Balaclava railway station which stimulated development in the area. The buildings at 244 and 248-250 Inkerman Street are rare surviving pre-1870 shop residences in the municipality recalling the earliest phase in the commercial development of this part of Inkerman Street. The 1877 house at no. 278 is a remnant of the residential development that characterised the east end of the precinct during the 19th century and amongst the earliest surviving houses in East St Kilda. The Interwar period shops and garage, which were introduced either as replacements for earlier Victorian period timber buildings or on land excised from the grounds of larger allotments, demonstrate the precinct's commercial expansion into the twentieth century. The precinct is notable for its strong continuity as a small local commercial area for over 160 years since 1859. (Criteria A and B)

The Inkerman Street Commercial Precinct is significant as a representative example of a small, but diverse, local commercial centre developed during the Victorian and Interwar periods which is largely intact to its late 1930s state. The Victorian period shop residences (nos. 244, 248-250 and 268-276) feature distinctive window treatments. The oldest surviving building in the precinct, no. 248-250, is distinguished by a rare example of basalt columns at ground floor. The house at no. 278 is an uncommon example of a surviving house within a commercial area, where earlier residential development was typically replaced. The garage (no. 280) is remarkably intact and a relatively early example of an industrial building retaining timber framed windows. The single storey Interwar period shops (nos. 258-266) have an Art Deco influence and are relatively elaborate façades for the period. Some Interwar period shopfronts survive. (Criteria D and E)

6.0 Recommendations

Include the Inkerman Street Commercial Precinct in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay.

Transfer 268-276 Inkerman Street from individual HO162 to new Inkerman Street Commercial Precinct HO.

7.0 Assessment

RBA Architects & Conservation Consultants, *HO7 Elwood St Kilda Balaclava Ripponlea Precinct Heritage Review Stage 2, 2021*