
Hotham Street (BalACLava) – HO317

The Hotham Street (BalACLava) precinct (hereafter referred to as ‘the precinct’) includes the properties at 113-125 Hotham Street, BalACLava, as shown in Figure 1.

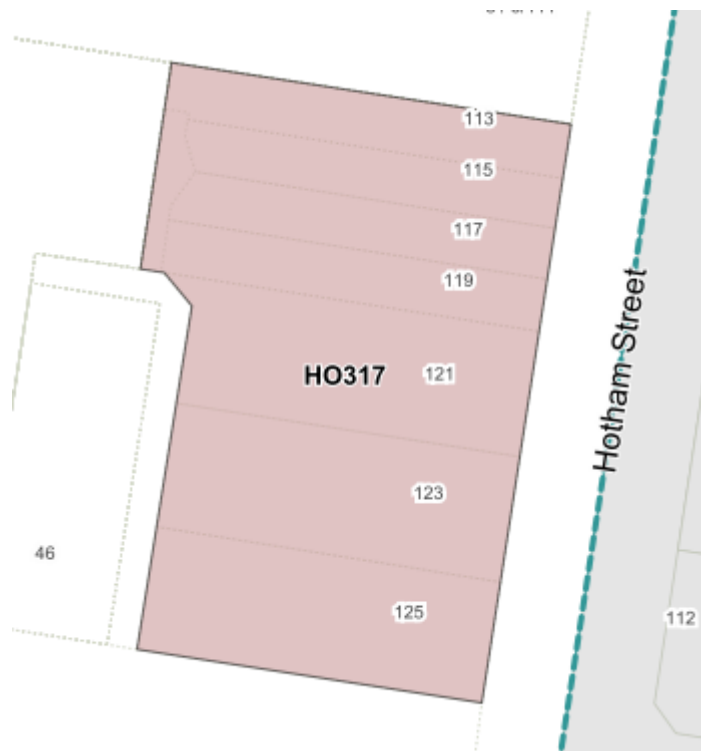


Figure 1 – HO317 Precinct map

1. Thematic Context

Victoria's framework of historical themes

- 2. *Peopling Victoria's places and landscapes: 2.5 Migrating and making a home*
- 6. *Building towns, cities and the garden state: 6.3 Shaping the suburbs, 6.7 Making homes for Victorians*

Port Phillip thematic environmental history

- 3. *People: 3.3 Arrival, 3.4 Making a home*
- 4. *Transport: 4.4 Railway and tramway links*
- 5. *Buildings and cultural landscapes: 5.2 Shaping the suburbs, 5.3 Diverse housing*

2. 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. Apart from the mansion estates, most of the development in Port Phillip prior to 1880 was confined to the early township reserves. However, the boom era of the 1880s saw intense land speculation across Melbourne, with large estates and the original crown allotments carved up into much smaller allotments for residential development that filled in the gaps between the township reserves. During the peak of Melbourne's building boom in the 1880s, almost all the remaining land in Port Phillip (except for the Elwood Swamp and the Fishermans Bend area) was subdivided and offered for sale.

This precinct is situated on two Crown Allotments: section 214B which extended south from Carlisle Street along Hotham Street, and section 219 which extended west from Hotham Street almost to William Street (see Figure 2). The opening of the Windsor to North Brighton railway on 19 December 1859, which included a railway station at Balaclava on Carlisle Street just to the west did not have an immediate impact and it was not until the height of the Land Boom that speculative builders Philip Corkhill and William and Leigh Farr made substantial land purchases in the area and the land was subdivided and developed for suburban housing.

The speculative activities of Corkhill and the Farris transformed this section of Hotham Street, extending west to William Street creating The Avenue and Gourlay Street, which were almost completely built up by the onset of the economic depression of the early 1890s.

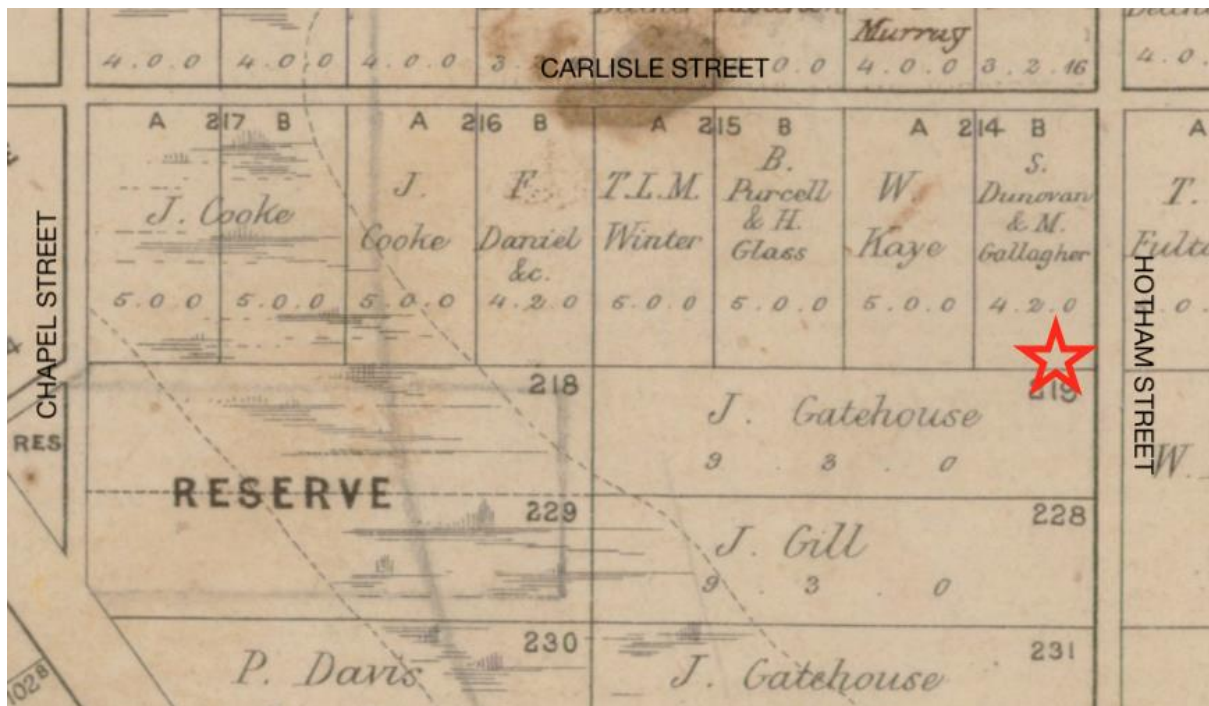


Figure 2 – 1857 Crown Allotments, St Kilda, part of Parish of Prahran (Source: St Kilda Historical Society map collection), approximate location of precinct indicated by red star.

The houses within the precinct were all constructed in 1888 (see detailed histories below) and it is presumed that either William Farr or Leigh Farr was the builder. William Farr is also known to have built nine houses in Hotham Street running south from The Avenue and the first twelve houses in The Avenue on the south side at the Hotham Street end in the late 1880s. Leigh Farr also owned a house in The Avenue that was occupied by Alfred White, an architect. The houses are shown on the 1898 Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works plan of this area, which also shows the similar detached villas lining both sides of The Avenue (see Figure 3).

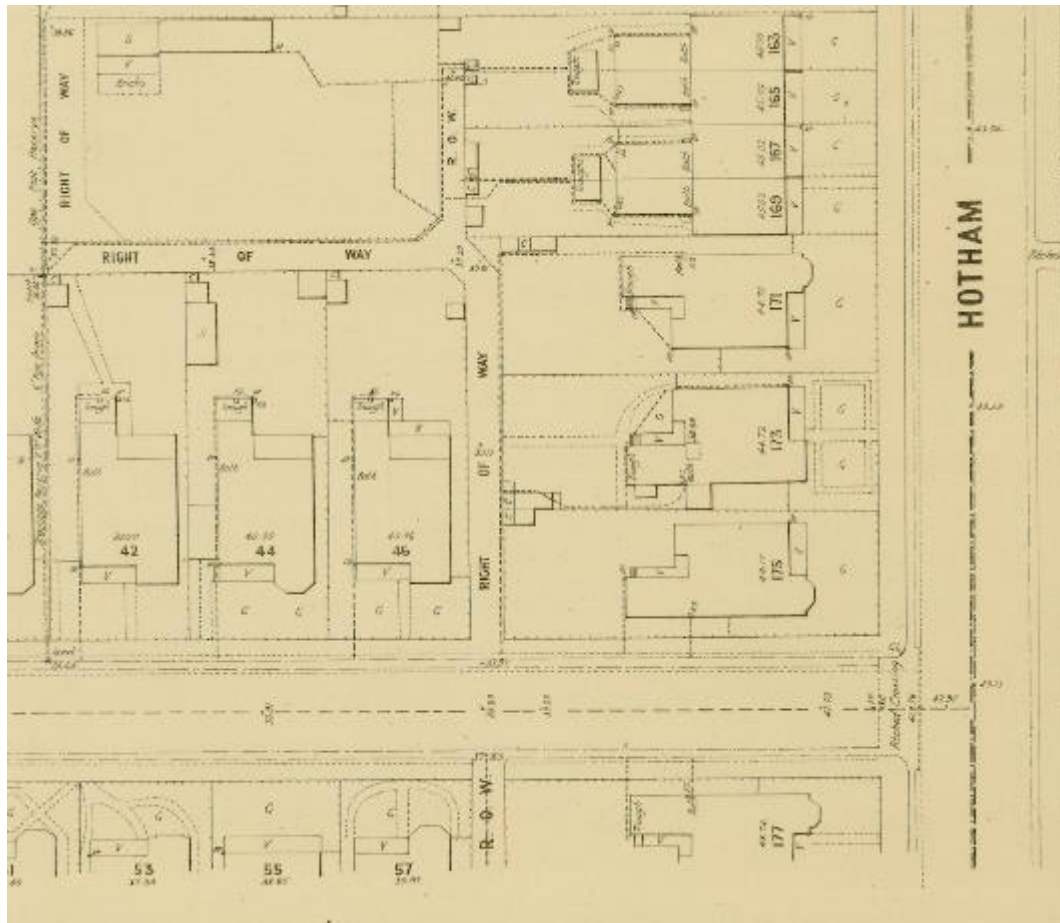


Figure 3 – Extract of MMBW Detail Plan 1438 showing the terrace and houses, then numbered 163-175 Hotham Street, and some of the similar villas lining The Avenue

Terrace, 113-119 Hotham Street

S. Donovan and M. Gallagher were the grantees of section 214B which extended south from Carlisle Street along Hotham Street to the present location of The Avenue. It consisted of about four and a half acres which by 1873 had been subdivided into lots 24 and 28, the latter being the one on which the terrace at nos. 113-119 was subsequently built. At the time it was owned by J. Langdon.

In the 1880s, two houses existed on this lot and a third was unfinished. They were owned by Alfred Shaw, the chemist Henry Francis and the architect Nahum Barnett respectively. William Farr bought the properties of Shaw and Francis in 1887, demolishing them and dividing the land between the agent Arthur Farr and the contractor Leigh Farr, possibly his sons. By November 1888, the former had erected the terrace at nos. 113-119, living in one of them and letting the others to Sarah Beggs, the clergyman William Addis and the accountant Roland Woodward.

In 1889 ownership of the houses passed to Thomas Farr, a gentleman who in the following year sold them to the town clerk of South Melbourne, F.G. Miles. The dwellings were described as brick, each

with eight rooms and were let in 1895 to Jas. Fulton, a gentleman, Robert Henry Shackell, an auditor, Mary Nutting, domestic duties and Charles Hunt, a hydropathist.

At the turn of the century, H.R. Harvey owned the houses, leasing them to three ladies engaged in domestic duties, Marian Bennett, Mary Davey and Louie Sampson and the clerk Joseph Dodd. At the time they had the street numbers 163-169, continuing as such until the 1920s when the present numbering was adopted.

Houses, 121-135 Hotham Street

J. Gatehouse was the grantee of section 219 which extended west from Hotham Street almost to William Street. It consisted of just under ten acres which by 1873 were subdivided into lots 29, 30 and 33. The lots were subdivided at the height of the Land Boom in the 1880s, creating building lots along The Avenue and facing to Hotham Street.

The Hotham Street blocks on the north side of The Avenue became lots 1, 2 and 3 and in 1887 P. Corkhill (presumably the builder Phillip Corkhill) owned lots 1 and 2 and the ladies Ackers and Brook owned lot 3. The blocks had a frontage of 47 feet and by November 1888, houses had been built on each, which were described as 5 rooms, brick. The present nos. 121 and 123 were owned by the gentleman Thomas Farr, while Ackers & Brook owned no.125. They were unoccupied, possibly having been just completed.

Thomas Farr continued as owner of nos. 121 and 123 in 1890, the former at the time being let to the gentleman John Harris, while the latter was occupied by Leigh Farr. The Farrs' business may have failed during the depression as by the turn of the century the Northern Assurance Company owned the houses, which by then each contained seven rooms. No.121 was occupied by George Clark, a warehouseman, while no.123 continued to be occupied by Farr, still described as a contractor. The houses had the street numbers 171, 173 and 175 until the 1920s when the present numbering was adopted.

References

J.E.S. Vardy, *Plan of the Borough of St. Kilda, Hamel and Ferguson, Melbourne, 1873*, South Ward, no.7 Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan 1438, dated 1898

St Kilda rate books: 1887-90, 1895-96, 1900-01.

Sands and McDougall directories: 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.

Parish Plan, St. Kilda and Elwood. SLV Maps 820 bje.

Description

This small precinct comprises seven Victorian era dwellings on the west side of Hotham Street to the immediate north of The Avenue. Of the seven dwellings, four are contained within a two storeyed terrace and the remaining three are detached asymmetrical villas.

The terrace row has a plain solid parapet with central flat-topped pediment and a bracketed cornice below (Figure 4). The pediment has vermiculated pilasters surmounted by urns and is flanked by scrolls. The verandahs have cast iron frieze and balustrades, encaustic tiled floors and dentillated fascias, and vermiculated consoles with scroll brackets to the end walls. At the ground floor there are panelled front doors with sidelights and highlights beside paired Romanesque windows with vermiculated imposts and architraves, and there are tall timber sash windows at the first floor. There are rendered chimneys with cornices. The houses have good external integrity but are now partially hidden behind high brick front fences.

The three Italianate villas have similar form, materiality and details. Asymmetrical in plan, they have stuccoed walls and hipped roofs with bracketed eaves and a flat (no.123) or faceted (121, 125) projecting bay on one side of a cast iron verandah. The faceted bays have Romanesque arched windows with moulded imposts and architraves with key stones. The flat bay has a tripartite window with cabled colonettes and architrave with an arched top, and this style window is also used behind the verandah at all three houses. Other common details include vermiculated quoining and rendered chimneys with cornices. withNos. 123 and 125 retain slate roofs (no.121 has been replaced by tiles), no.125 is distinguished by the cast iron lace ridge cresting to the roof of the faceted front bay.

Today, hedges and high front fences partially obscure the houses from view although the corner aspect of no. 125 and the two storeyed terraced form of nos. 113-119 cause this group of buildings to stand out in the Hotham Street streetscape.



Figure 4 – The terrace at 113-119 Hotham Street showing the Romanesque window heads that are a characteristic of the houses in this precinct.



Figure 5 – Looking north from The Avenue corner with 125 Hotham Street in the foreground

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The Hotham Street precinct is a small residential area, which comprises a terrace of four houses and three detached villas all built from 1887 to 1889. All the houses are Significant to the precinct.

Alterations and additions to the houses and fencing are not significant.

How is it significant?

The Hotham Street precinct is of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

Why is it significant?

The Hotham Street precinct is historically significant, as evidence of the speculative development during the height of the Land Boom, which extended the developed areas of St Kilda and Balaclava as far as Hotham Street. It is also significant for the associations with the activities of a locally prominent family of speculative builders and investors by the name of Farr, William, Thomas and Leigh being involved in the construction and financing of these houses as well as others in the locality. (Criterion A)

The Hotham Street precinct is aesthetically significant as a distinctive group of Victorian houses within an area otherwise characterised by post-World War Two buildings. Presumably constructed by the same builder, the aesthetic qualities of this group are enhanced by common details such as cast iron verandah decoration, moulded stucco ornamentation (bracketed cornices, string course, vermiculated quoining and consoles), arched Romanesque style windows with moulded architraves and imposts, tripartite windows with cabled colonettes, rendered chimneys with cornices and panelled front doors with sidelights and highlights. The cast iron roof cresting to no.125 is a rare and distinctive feature. (Criterion E)

Recommendations

2000: Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the Port Phillip Planning Scheme.

2022: Retain in HO317 with no changes.

Assessment

City of Port Phillip, *HO7 Elwood St Kilda Balaclava Ripponlea Precinct heritage review Stage 2: Review of existing heritage citations*, 2022

Andrew Ward, *Port Phillip Heritage Review*, August 2000