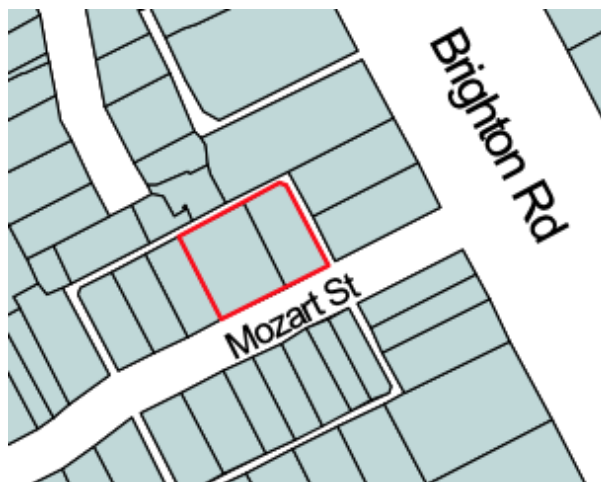


# City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

**Place name:** Terrace Houses  
**Other names:** Flats, Narribri

**Citation No:**  
2119



**Address:** 2-4 Mozart Street, St Kilda

**Category:** Residential: Houses, flats

**Style:** Victorian: Queen Anne;  
Interwar

**Constructed:** 1890, 1939

**Designer:** Unknown

**Amendment:** TBA

**Comment:** Revised citation

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

**Heritage Overlay:** HO7

**Graded as:** Significant

**Victorian Heritage Register:** No

## Significance

### *What is significant?*

The Queen Anne style terrace houses built in 1890 for H.S. Wills and later converted to flats and the flats constructed in 1939 at 2-4 Mozart Street, St Kilda are significant. The render and brick front fences also contribute to the significance of the place.

Alterations and additions to the 1890 and 1939 buildings, other buildings and the metal balustrades to the front fences are not significant.

### *How is it significant?*

The former terrace houses and flats at 2-4 Mozart Street, St Kilda are of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

### *Why is it significant?*

The former terrace houses and flats are of historical significance for the associations with two key phases of residential development in St Kilda: the land boom and the establishment of mansions and substantial villas in the late nineteenth century and the conversion of these buildings into flats in the early twentieth century as the social demographics of the area changed. It demonstrates the enduring popularity of the residential area surrounding the St Kilda Botanical Gardens. (Criterion A)

The former terrace houses are of representative significance as rare and early examples of the Queen Anne Revival in the style of noted English architect Richard Norman Shaw and were in the vanguard of a style

that was to dominate 20 years of Melbourne's domestic architectural history in the early twentieth century (Criteria B & D)

The former terrace houses are of aesthetic significance as substantial houses in the Queen Anne style. Of note is the intricate detailing to the central bay comprised of twin pedimented gables with half-timbered gable ends above a cornice and rendered frieze with intricate patterning and framed by pilasters with pedimented tops, the dominant terracotta tiled roof with ridge cresting, which extends to form the two-level timber return verandah and details such as the tall windows with multi-pane coloured glass, and the prominent brick and render chimneys. (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 (5.3.1 Mansions and grand villas, 5.3.5 Higher-density housing)

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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 (TEH).

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 shown on that plan. 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 (TEH).

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 (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. 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).

### Terrace houses and flats, 2-4 Mozart Street

The development of the St Kilda Botanical Gardens from c.1860 onwards encouraged the development of the surrounding area into a desirable residential neighbourhood. By the end of the nineteenth century Blessington, Tennyson, Dickens, and Herbert streets and the east side of Brighton Road were lined with substantial villas and mansions set in large grounds.

The eastern half of Mozart Street was created in 1888 by the subdivision of land owned by Charles W. Russell, which created 10 allotments facing Mozart Street and a further six facing Brighton Road. Initially, the street was a dead end, which terminated at the rear of the Corinella mansion estate which faced Tennyson Street. By 1890, all the Mozart Street lots were owned by H.S. Wills, and each was described as 'vacant' with a frontage of 50 feet and a Net Annual Value of 30 pounds. During that year, Wills built this pair of brick houses on the north side. The houses had eight rooms each and NAVs of 130 pounds. Thomas Loader, a merchant, leased no.2 and Elias Blaubaum, a clergyman leased no.4.

The properties were in the hands of the Trustees Ex. and Agency Co., Melbourne in 1896 and continued to be at the turn of the century. Blaubaum continued as a tenant, the other house being let to David Dickinson Wheeler. The houses are shown on the 1897 Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works Plan of this area (see Figure 1). At the time no.2 was known as 'Narrabri'. This plan also shows masonry fences across the frontages of both houses with a return section in the middle.

By the 1930s the houses had been converted to flats and in 1939 a two-storey building containing two additional flats was constructed on the west side of the original building (SM, BP).

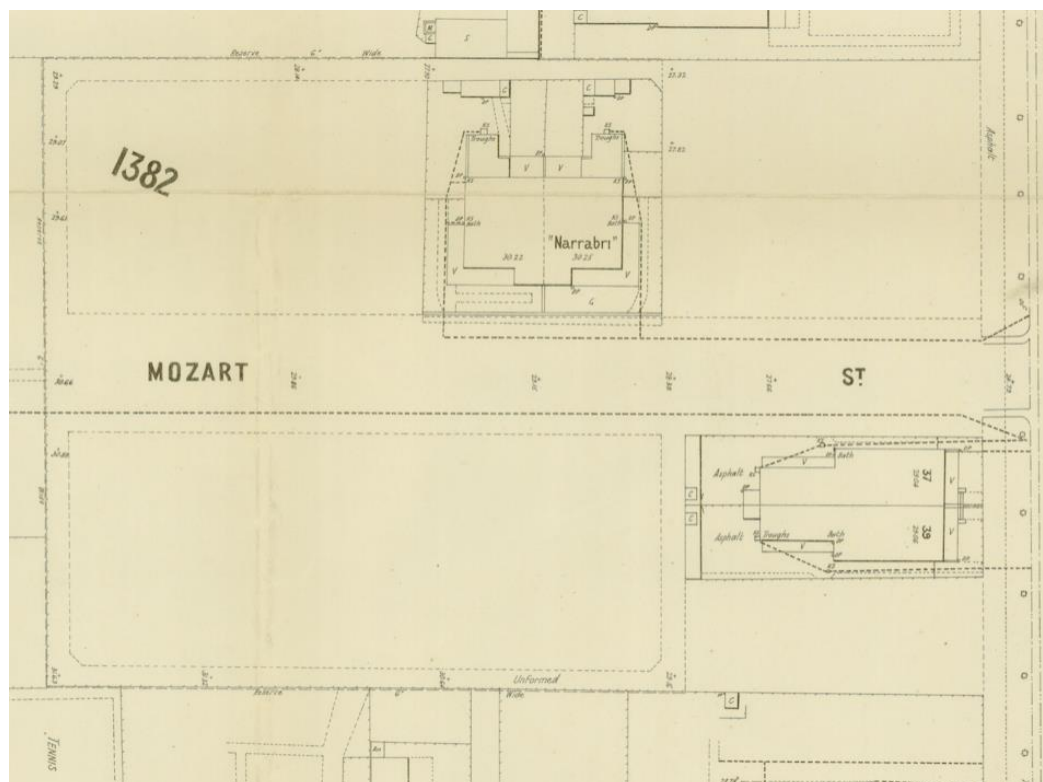


Figure 1: MMBW Detail Plan No.1382 (detail)

## References

Heritage Victoria, North Park citation (VHR H1286)

Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan No. 1382, dated 1897

Port Phillip Thematic Environmental History (TEH) **Version 1, July 2020**

St Kilda building permit 10172, 1 February 1939

St Kilda Rate Books (RB) 1890/91 no. 3920, George Connibere owner, Charles Hicks importer occupant, N.A.V. 90 pounds

Sands & McDougall Directory 1930, 1935, 1940

## Description

This property contains the two-storey terrace houses built in 1890 and later converted to flats, and the 1939 two-storey duplex flats.

The 1890 building is a substantial two storeyed Queen Anne terrace constructed of red brick being arranged symmetrically about a projecting bay having twin pedimented gables with half-timbered gable ends above a cornice and rendered frieze with intricate patterning and framed by pilasters with pedimented tops. Between the pilasters are tall windows with sixteen panes top sashes with coloured glass. Those at first floor have rendered lintels with incised reveals and continuous rendered sills, while those at ground floor have segmental arch lintels. There are similar windows in the main elevations.

The terracotta tiled hip roof with ridge cresting extends to form the two-level return timber verandahs on either side of the central bay. These have turned timber posts, solid curved timber brackets and pedimented corners. Part of what appears to be the original timber frieze with a cross pattern survives along the ground floor on the west side, while the other friezes have been covered over. The symmetrical composition of the building is further enhanced by the tall red-brick chimneys with rendered bands, cornices, and balloon tops.

To the west of the 1890 building is the 1939 duplex. This is a simple red brick building with a hipped tile roof and a projecting bay to the front, with an open stairwell to one side. The windows are multi-pane timber sash and there are plain brick chimneys.

The buildings are in good condition, and each has a relatively high degree of external integrity. At the front of the 1890 building is a cut-down rendered fence with piers at regular intervals. This could be the remnants of the fence shown on the MMBW plan. At the front of the 1939 building is a red brick fence (now overpainted) with a castellated top, which was likely constructed around the same time. Both fences have been extended with metal balustrades.

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## Comparative analysis

In the last decade of the nineteenth century architecture began to articulate a new stylistic approach which challenged the predominance of the eclectic Classical idiom typified by much of Victoria's boom-time building. The red brick styles introduced in the 1880s were the harbingers of this change, but despite the 'powerful impression made by red brick Romanesque', it was the half-timbered English Domestic or Vernacular Revival pioneered by English architects Richard Norman Shaw and William Eden Nesfield that was to gain favour in Victoria. It became the prevailing expression in house design by the early years of the twentieth century, and by 1915 it was popular with builders of modest suburban villas. Coming from England as well as from the east coast of America, this picturesque expression has been traditionally described as the Queen Anne style. Characterised by decorative detail, colour and picturesque outline, the style was expressed by red brick for walls, turned timber for verandah and porch supports, half-timbering with roughcast in the gables, orange terracotta tiles, decorative finials and chimneys, stained or coloured glass, and ridgeline cresting (Heritage Victoria).

These terrace houses, constructed in 1890, are a very early example of the Queen Anne style in Melbourne. They compare to North Park, 69 Woodland Street, Essendon designed in 1888 by Oakden, Addition & Kemp (VHR H1286) and Redcourt, 506 Orrong Road, Armadale designed in 1887 by Reed, Henderson & Smart (Stonnington Planning Scheme HO166).

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## Assessment

This place has been assessed using with the processes and guidelines outlined in the Australia ICOMOS *Charter for Places of Cultural Heritage Significance* (The Burra Charter) 2013, and applying the Hercon criteria in accordance with PPN1: *Applying the heritage overlay*.

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## Recommendations

Retain in the Heritage Overlay with external paint controls.

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## Primary source

David Helms, *HO7 Elwood St Kilda Balaclava Ripponlea Precinct heritage review Stage 2: Review of existing heritage citations (Part 2)*, 2022

## Other studies

Andrew Ward & Associates, *City of Port Phillip Heritage Review*, 1998

David Bick, *St Kilda Conservation Study. Area 2*, 1985



## Other images

