

City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

Place name: Houses
Other names: Honiton & Kergunyah

Citation No:
2449



Address: 29-31 & 33 William Street,
Balaclava

Heritage Precinct: Balaclava Flats
Residential

Category: Residential: House

Heritage Overlay: HO7

Style: Victorian: Italianate

Graded as: Significant

Constructed: 1896, 1898-99, 1927

Victorian Heritage Register: No

Designer: Alfred White

Amendment: TBA

Comment: Revised citation

Significance

What is significant?

The houses designed by Alfred White and built in 1896 at 29-31 William Street (Honiton), and in 1898-99 at 33 William Street (Kergunyah), Balaclava for Harriett White are significant. The tiled path and brick garage to no.33 also contribute to the significance of the place.

Alterations and additions and other buildings on the properties are not significant.

How is it significant?

The houses at 29-31 and 33 William Street, Balaclava are of local aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

Why is it significant?

The houses are of aesthetic significance as Italianate villas constructed of bi-chromatic brick with characteristic details such as cast-iron verandahs with tiled floors and bluestone steps (nos. 29-31 having an elegant ogee profile and original cast iron frieze), bi-chromatic brick chimneys with rendered cornices (positioned to emphasise the symmetry), and the frieze comprising paired brackets with rosettes alternating with cricket bat moulds, panelled front doors with sidelights and timber sash windows with bluestone sills. They are of note for their unusual symmetrical form with twin gabled bays, the bold diamond patterned bi-chromatic brickwork, and the intricate detailing of the end gables and porch including ornate timber trusswork screens and bargeboards to the end gables and screen to the central gable of no.33, the tall windows set within recessed bays in the end gables, which have moulded architraves with prominent

keystones above impost bands (the same detailing used for the opening to the gabled porch to nos. 29-31) and rendered sills and panels below, and the original tiled path to no.33. While built much later, the bi-chromatic brick garage complements the houses. Together, they form a striking and highly distinctive pair of houses and the bi-chromatic brick garage, while built much later, is a complementary feature. (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 (5.3.1 Mansions and grand villas)

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).

Houses, 29-31 & 33 William Street

From the 1870s the architect F.M. (Frederick) White owned land on the west side of William Street between Nightingale and Grosvenor streets and bounded on the west side by the Brighton Railway embankment. His family home was at the south end of the allotment and was known as Alfred Villa (see Figure 1).

After White's death in 1888 his wife Harriett remained at Alfred Villa and in the mid-late 1890s, she began to develop the northern part of the allotment, eventually building three houses as an investment to let or for family members.

In 1896 she built the first house at the corner of Nightingale Street. Originally known as Honiton and described as an eight-room brick house the first occupant was Thomas Chapman, a broker (RB). Then, in 1898-99, she engaged J.H. Jarrett, a builder of Box Hill, to construct two further houses between this house and Alfred Villa. These houses were the fourth and fifth buildings to be recorded in the first City of St Kilda building register (RB, BR).ⁱ

In 1903 the three houses were numbered and named as (from north to south) 29-31 (Honiton), 33 (Kergunyah) and 35 (Wissahickon) William Street with Alfred Villa being no.37 (SM, PSP).

It is presumed that Frederick and Harriet's son Alfred, also an architect, designed the houses (Bick). Alfred had taken over firm of F.M. White & Son, Architects in 1888 and by 1903 he was living in no.33 where he remained until he moved into and acquired no.33 in about 1929 (Bick, SM). In 1927 White constructed a brick garage at no.33 (BR).

The four houses continued to be the only houses on the west side of William Street between Nightingale and Grosvenor streets until the 1920s and were consistently numbered from 31 to 37. However, by 1930 there were six listings numbered 29 to 39 and it appears that Honiton had been divided into two flats and renumbered to the present address of 29-31. At the same time, it appears either Wissahickon or Alfred Villa had also been subdivided, while Alfred White remained in residence at Kergunyah, by then numbered as 33 (SM).

Alfred Villa and Wissahickon were demolished in the postwar period and the land was developed as a park.

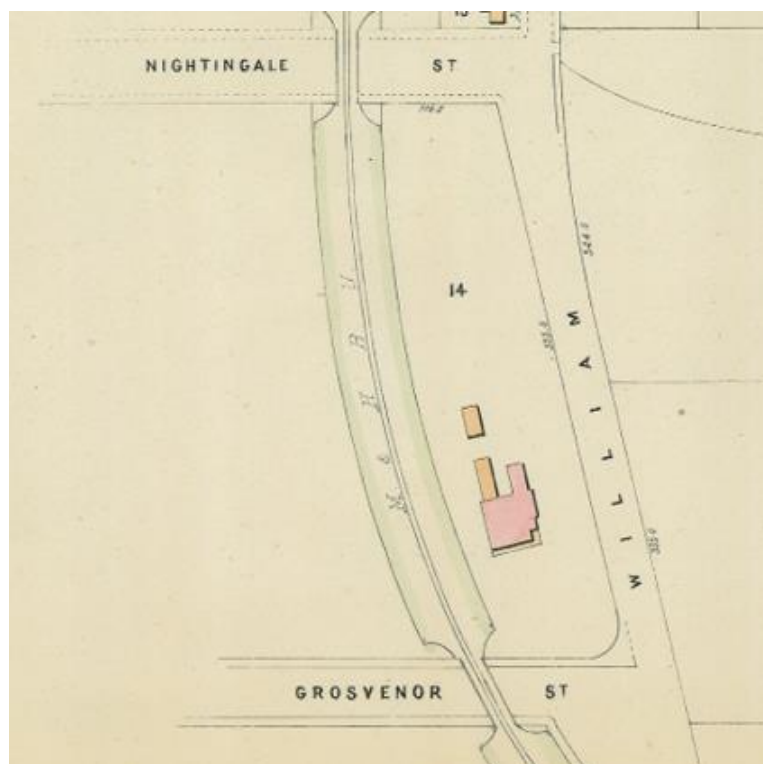


Figure 1: Vardy Plan No.7 South Ward (detail) showing the White family house in 1873

References

J.E.S. Vardy surveyor, 'Plan of the Borough of St. Kilda'. compiled under the direction of the Borough Council, Hamel and Ferguson, Melbourne, 1873, Plan 7 South Ward

Land Victoria (LV): Vol. 2314, Fol. 648 (1890); Vol. 2408, Fol. 474 (1892); Vol. 2408, Fol. 478 (1892); Vol. 2592, Fol. 300 (1895)

Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan No. 1440, dated 1898

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

St Kilda Council building register (BR): entries 4 and 5, 15 November 1898; 7035, 24 November 1927 (garage)

St Kilda Council rate books (RB): 1896 (no. in rate 3488, only the White family home is listed), 1897 (3509, 3510, no.33 is listed for the first time), 1899 (3547-3550, nos. 29-31 listed for the first time 'Honiton' is written in above the listing for no.33).

Sands & McDougall Directory (SM) 1895, 1900, 1905, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940
South East Water Property Sewerage Plan (PSP) PS: 23422

Description

The houses at 29-31 (Honiton) and 33 (Kergunyah) William Street, Balaclava are late Victorian brick villas of very similar design. The houses have symmetrical form with longitudinal hipped roofs and a cast iron verandah between projecting gabled bays at each end. At no.33 the end bays extend to form hipped roof wings to the rear, while behind the main roof of nos. 29-31 is a separate longitudinal gable roofed section with a simple corbelled chimney. The other key difference is the projecting central gabled porch to nos. 29-31, whereas no.33 has a central gablet to the main roof.

The verandah to nos. 29-31 has an elegant ogee profile and retains the cast iron frieze. The frieze has been removed from no.33, but the original posts remain. Both verandahs retain original tiles and bluestone edging and steps flanked by low rendered dwarf walls with a curved profile. The path to no.33 also retains original tiles. Other characteristic details to both buildings include the bi-chromatic brick chimneys with rendered cornices (positioned to emphasise the symmetry), the frieze comprising paired brackets with rosettes alternating with cricket bat moulds, panelled front doors with sidelights and timber sash windows with bluestone sills.

Notable details include:

- The bold diamond patterning created by the bi-chromatic brickwork to the facades, expressed as quoining to the wall corners and around the openings.
- The ornate timber trusswork screens to the gables of nos. 29-31, and the bargeboards to the end gables and screen to the central gable of no.33. The gable ends to no.33 have arched vents.
- The tall windows set within recessed bays in the end gables, which have moulded architraves with prominent keystones above impost bands (the same detailing used for the opening to the gabled porch to nos. 29-31) and rendered sills and panels below.

On the north side of no.33 and set back behind the house is a brick garage. Despite being built during the interwar period, this is constructed of bi-chrome brick, presumably to complement the house (at the time, the original architect was living in this house). The red brick contrasts with cream brick quoining at the corners and forming a rectangular outline above the opening and as coping along the parapet.

The houses are in fair to good condition and have good external integrity. Some elements such as the timber gable screen to no.29 require maintenance. Changes include the non-original roof tiles to both buildings, and the removal of the cast iron verandah frieze to no.33, and additions to the rear.

Comparative analysis

No information.

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 applying the Hercon criteria in accordance with PPN1: *Applying the heritage overlay*.

Recommendations

Retain in the Heritage Overlay with external paint controls.

Primary source

David Helms, *H07 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 in conjunction with Wilson Sayer Core Pty. Ltd., *St. Kilda Conservation Study Area 2 Volume 1*, 1984

Other images



Porch and south gable of nos. 29-31



Verandah (also showing tiled path) and south gable of no. 33



Rear gabled wing of nos. 29-31.

Endnotes

ⁱ Oddly, the house constructed in 1896 is not shown on the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works Detail Plan 1440, dated 1898, but all three houses are shown on the Property Sewerage Plan prepared in 1903.