

City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

Place name: House
Other names: -

Citation No:
2166



Address: 40 Lansdowne Road, St Kilda East

Heritage Precinct: Not applicable

Category: Residential: House

Heritage Overlay: HO296

Style: Interwar: Craftsman Bungalow

Graded as: Significant

Constructed: 1926

Victorian Heritage Register: No

Designer: Lewis Levy

Amendment: TBA

Comment: Revised citation

Significance

What is significant?

The house designed by Lewis Levy and built in 1926 for J. and M.A. Kitts at 40 Lansdowne Road, St Kilda East is significant. The fence to the front and side boundaries also contributes to the significance of the place.

Alterations and additions are not significant.

How is it significant?

The house at 40 Lansdowne Road, St Kilda East is of local aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

Why is it significant?

The house is aesthetically significant as a fine and well-detailed example of the twin influences of the English Arts and Crafts movement and the American Craftsman bungalow on the Melbourne suburban house of the 1920s. The selection of natural materials which imply a dependence on the hand of the craftsman as well as the dominant cross ridged attic roof are key design elements. The setting of the house is complemented by the rock fence. (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 (5.3.3 Suburban bungalows)

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).

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. Prosperity saw land speculation intensify across the suburbs during that period in areas such as Elwood, Balaclava, Ripponlea, St Kilda East that were remote from transport and services. When one of Elwood's oldest estates, Chiverton, was subdivided in 1885, it created 85 allotments. Despite the eager subdivision of land and colourful advertising, however, the actual building of homes in these remote subdivisions was slow. With the onset of the 1890s economic depression, many estates failed and remained undeveloped for a decade or more (TEH).

There was almost no increase in St Kilda's population in the decade from 1891 to 1901. However, as development recovered in the early twentieth century the number of residents in St Kilda almost doubled between 1901 and 1921 rising from 20,500 to 38,500 as land was highly sought-after by a new generation of homebuilders seeking smaller detached dwellings, duplexes or flats.

Most of the development that occurred during the Federation/Edwardian period occurred on subdivisions laid out during the 1880s boom period, as well as in the continuing subdivision of mansion estates in St Kilda, Elwood, Balaclava and Ripponlea. The exception is the low-lying parts of Elwood, which were subdivided and development following completion of the Elwood Swamp reclamation project in 1910 (TEH).

House, 40 Lansdowne Road

In the nineteenth century this area was sold in Crown allotments of about three to five acres and this property was originally part of the five-acre CA 172A which was purchased by J.W. Fawcett. Between 1864 and 1870 Frederick Christian Lange acquired the property and he engaged prominent architect, Lloyd Tayler, to design his new house, which was named Herford.¹ Herford was a substantial two storey mansion set in landscaped grounds with a large conservatory, and extensive outbuildings include a peach house and an orchid house.

¹ Herford is the name cited in nineteenth century newspaper articles. The MMBW Detail Plan 1419, dated 1900 shows Hereford, while the street spelling is Hertford.

In 1914, the grounds of Herford were subdivided into 60 allotments and offered for sale. Lot 20 on the south west corner of Lansdowne Road and Hertford Street was sold to Mrs. Mary Ann Kitts. It had a frontage of 55 feet and a Net Annual Value of 30 pounds. In 1926, Kitts built a brick house there for her residence. Designed and constructed by architect and builder Lewis Levy, it had six rooms on the ground floor with a further four 'sleep outs' in the attic and was valued at 125 pounds upon completion. Kitts whose occupation was described as "home duties", continued to live there in 1930.

Lewis Levy was active during the interwar period and designed several houses and flats in St Kilda, Elwood and Toorak.

References

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

St Kilda building permit no. 6176, dated 19 September 1926

St Kilda Rate Books: 1925-31. VPRS 8816/PI, PROV

Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan no. 1419, dated 1900

Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) litho plan no.47, c.1935

Parish plan, Prahran. SLV, Map Section, St.Kilda and Elwood, 820 bje.

Description

A picturesque two storeyed Arts and Crafts bungalow with rough cast walls and cross ridged roof and prominent gable ends accommodating attic floor windows. There is a circular corner window bay, a balancing curved window bay to the other side of the central porch carried on massive rough cast pillars. The windows have diamond pattern leadlight work and the roof has cement tiles (which have been replaced). The house is complemented by a rock fence with rough cast panels and capped piers in the Arts and Crafts mode and a timber (possibly reconstructed) corner lych gate with a wrought iron gate.

The house is in good condition and has a relatively high degree of external integrity.

Comparative analysis

No information.

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 with external paint controls.

Primary source

City of Port Phillip, *H07 Elwood St Kilda Balaclava Ripponlea Precinct heritage review Stage 2: Review of existing heritage citations*, 2022

Other studies

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

Other images

