

City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

Place name: House
Other names: -

Citation No:
46



Address: 311 Orrong Road, St Kilda East

Heritage Precinct: None

Category: Residential: House

Heritage Overlay: HO223

Style: Interwar: American Bungalow

Graded as: Significant

Constructed: 1920

Victorian Heritage Register: No

Designer: Lewis Levy

Amendment: TBA

Comment: Revised citation

Significance

What is significant?

The house designed by Lewis Levy in 1920 at 311 Orrong Road, St Kilda East is significant. The front fence also contributes to the significance of the place.

Alterations and additions to the house are not significant.

How is it significant?

The house at 311 Orrong Road, St Kilda East is of local aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

Why is it significant?

It is significant as a fine and well-detailed example of an Arts and Crafts influenced Californian Bungalow with roughcast walls and a terracotta tiled roof with a vented gablet. It is distinguished by its tapered river stone pillars, angled chimney at the main gable apex flanked by slotted gable end vents, flat roofed porch extended across the face of the gable end, a fretted valance and double hung windows with glazing bars in the upper sashes strongly suggestive of Japanese influence. The significance of the place is enhanced by the high degree of integrity, and it is complemented by an original rendered front fence with capped piers and scalloped balustrades. (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.

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. The estates were in four distinct clusters: St Kilda Hill; the semi-rural estates occupying the high ground on the south side of Dandenong Road from the Nepean Road (now St Kilda Road) to Orrong Road; those surrounding the St Kilda Botanical Gardens and along Brighton Road; and the remote 'sea-side' estates along Ormond Esplanade. Kearney's 1855 map of the area shows the contrast between dense residential development in St Kilda, and the large mansion estates to the east of the Nepean Road including Charnwood and Marlton, south of Carlisle Street (then known as Beach Road), and on both sides of Brighton Road, including Erindale and Chiverton, and Bramshaw, Osborne House and Wiltonia further south.

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.

Significant population growth after World War I created a demand for housing, leading to the subdivision (or re-subdivision) of the remaining pockets of vacant or underdeveloped land in the City of Port Phillip. This included vacant land previously thought to be unsuitable for housing, such as in Fishermans Bend, as well as the re-development of the remaining mansion estates. Apart from the mansion estate subdivisions, there were two major interwar subdivisions at either end of the City of Port Phillip: The Garden City estates in Port Melbourne and the Brunnings Estate subdivision in Ripponlea.

House, 311 Orrong Road

In the late nineteenth century, the land on the west side of Orrong Road between Alma Road and Inkerman Street was occupied by three large mansion estates: Fernacres (Fern Acres) in the north, Great Hill (which faced Pine Hill Grove, now the southern section of Lansdowne Road) and Keroongola, which occupied a ten-acre site at the northwest corner of Inkerman Street (MMBW). Fernacres was a five-acre

property between Lansdowne and Orrong roads, which was owned by Judge, Sir Edward Holroyd. It contained a brick mansion of 16 rooms designed by prominent architect Lloyd Tayler set in landscaped grounds.

In the early twentieth century, all three estates were progressively subdivided to create the street network that exists today as well as new allotments facing to the main roads. Suburban development of the area commenced during the 1920s and continued into the post-war period.

This property was created by the c.1915-18 subdivision of Fernacres resulting in the formation of Holroyd and Dean Avenues and the creation of building lots between these two avenues on the west side of Orrong Road. Lot 44, with a frontage of 51 feet, was purchased by J.C. Machin in 1917. Machin sold the land to Lewis Levy in 1918. Levy in turn sold it to Mrs. Lilian Rubens in 1919. At the time, the land was vacant and had a Net Annual Value of 15 pounds. It was, however, Levy who obtained the building permit for the six-roomed brick house that was built for Mrs Rubens in 1920. Levy, who was an architect and builder, likely designed and constructed the house (BP, RB).

Mrs. Ruben initially leased to Douglas Reid, a gentleman. However, by 1926, Oswald Benjamin, a public accountant, had acquired the property for his residence. It was described as brick, six rooms, NAV 90 pounds, population 4. The street number at the time was 60 (RB).

By 1936, the property had again changed hands. Mrs. Mary Aujard was the owner and Reginald Aujard, an accountant, was listed as the occupant. By that time, the street number was 311 and the house was described as having seven rooms and a NAV of 100 pounds (RB).

References

Apperly, R., Irving, P & Reynolds, P., *A pictorial guide to identifying Australian architecture. Styles and terms from 1788 to the present*, 1994

Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW Plan No. 1418, dated 1901

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

St Kilda Council building permits (BP) nos. 3926, 6 August 1919; 4113, 25 March 1920

St. Kilda Rate Books (RB) 1915-21, 1925-26, 1935-36. VPRS 8816/PI, PROV.

Sands & McDougall Directory (SM) 1925, 1930

Description

This is a picturesque Arts and Crafts influenced Californian Bungalow with a low pitch transverse terracotta-tile gable roof and a projecting gable. It is distinguished by its tapered river stone pillars, angled chimney at the main gable apex, flat roofed porch extended across the face of the gable end, fretted timber valance and double hung windows with glazing bars in the upper sashes strongly suggestive of Japanese influence. The vented gablet, rough cast walls and slotted gable end vents are contributory stylistic elements. The house is complemented by an original rendered front fence with capped piers and scalloped balustrades.

The house has a high degree of external integrity. The iron balustrade and gates to the front fence are later additions.

Comparative analysis

This is fine and well-detailed Californian Bungalow demonstrating both Arts and Crafts and Japanese influence in a distinctive way. It is very similar to the house at 217 Alma Road, St. Kilda East, which was constructed in 1918-19 (see PPHR citation 22).

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

Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan, *St Kilda 20th century architectural study*, Volume 3, 1992

Other images

