City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

Place name: **Glenmore Court**	**Citation No:**
Other names: **Flats, Glenmore**	**453**
	Citation map TBA

Address:	**60 Carlisle Street, St Kilda**
Category:	**Residential: Flats**
Style:	**Victorian & Interwar**
Constructed:	**c.1859, 1932-33**
Designer:	**Alan L. Fildes (1932-33)**
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?

Glenmore Court at 60 Carlisle Street, St Kilda is significant. The fabric associated with the Victorian villa, built c.1859, and the alterations and additions designed by Alan L. Fildes in 1932-33 contributes to the significance of the place.

Alterations and additions made after 1945 are not significant.

How is it significant?

Glenmore Court at 60 Carlisle Street, St Kilda is of local historic, representative, and aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

Why is it significant?

Glenmore Court is historically significant as evidence of two distinct phases in the residential development of St Kilda. It is notable for incorporating a pre-1860s house, which is associated with the first phase of development of Carlisle Street, originally Beach Road, which was one of the first streets in St Kilda. The transformation of the building into the Glenmore Court flats in the early 1930s is associated with the boom in flat building in St Kilda when many early buildings were converted into flats, a process that was encouraged by improvements to public transport. (Criterion A)

Glenmore Court is of representative significance as example of an evolved complex of interwar flats that incorporates an early Victorian villa, which is a distinctive St Kilda building type. (Criterion D)

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)

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.

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. 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 (*Prahran Telegraph,* 18 October 1919, p.4)

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 and by 1947 St Kilda contained 5,500 purpose-built flats, a quarter of all flats in Melbourne (TEH).

Place history

The development of St Kilda began following the first land sales in 1842 and by 1854 there were over two hundred houses. Carlisle Street was one of the first named streets in St. Kilda, having been officially proclaimed in July 1857. Before this time the western section was known as Beach Road, and the eastern section Balaclava Road.

The Kearney maps, prepared in 1855, provide a snapshot of development in St Kilda and Figure 1 shows the extent of development on the north side of Beach Road between Barkly Street (where it terminated) and St Kilda/Brighton roads, which included a building on this property.
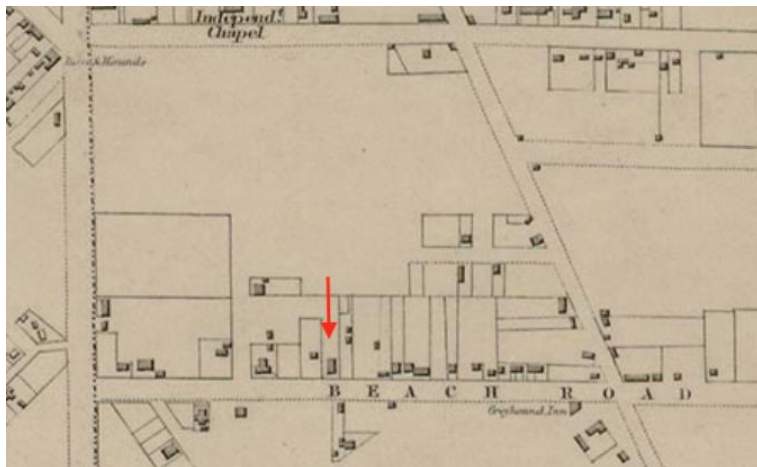

Figure 1: Extract from the 1855 Kearney Plan, showing a building on this property indicated by the red arrow (Source: St Kilda Historical Society map collection)

It is likely the building shown in the Kearney map on this property is the one described in the first St Kilda rate book, prepared in 1859, as a 10-room brick house (with a substantial Net Annual Value of 250 pounds), by then listed under 'Carlisle Street West'. Kenrick (or Henrick) Brobribb was the owner and Stephen Hamilton the occupier. Brobribb was a solicitor, whose address in the early 1860s was St Kilda, but by 1866 had moved to England (RB).

The first St Kilda rate book also lists the other houses in this section of Carlisle Street West, which included a four-room brick room house occupied by Frederick Hayward, an eight-room iron house owned by John H. Patterson, two brick houses owned by David Jones, a bricklayer (one four rooms 'unfinished' and another of five rooms), a seven-room brick house owned by Henry Wedge and several two room wooden cottages. (RB 1656-1666).

The 1873 Vardy plan shows the house contained a masonry section, with a small timber wing at the northwest corner (Figure 2).
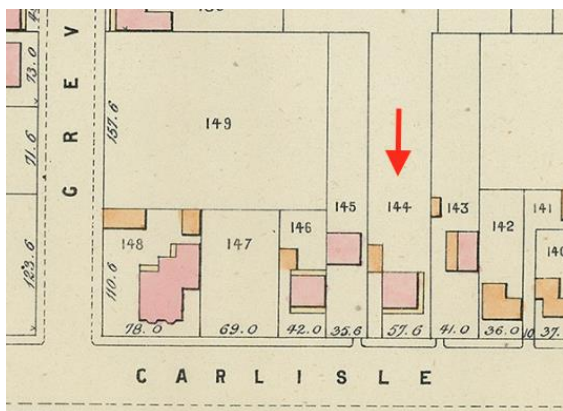

Figure 2: Extract of Vardy plan showing the house, which was of masonry construction (indicated by the pink colour) with a timber return verandah and a rear timber wing (yellow/buff colour)

By 1870 Bernard Hegethoff was the owner and occupier of the house, still described as containing 10 rooms. Hegethoff was a teacher, and he briefly conducted a school in the building (RB, SM). Hegethoff was succeeded in 1875 by Edward Woods (RB) and he was to remain in residence until his death at the age of 80 in 1905. Woods had worked at the Victoria Life and General Insurance Company for a period of 46 years, 38 as actuary and secretary, and for eight years occupying a seat on the board (*Weekly Times*, 27 May 1905, p.19). In 1884 Woods placed a newspaper notice for a lost fox terrier pup, which referred to the name of his house as 'Glenmore' (*The Age*, 9 February 1884, p.5).

Figure 3 shows the house in 1897, when it had a wing along the south boundary and an extensive rear garden with stables. The plans also show a cellar and a tank. Until 1899 the house had been described as containing nine or 10 rooms, but in 1900 this had reduced to seven (RB).
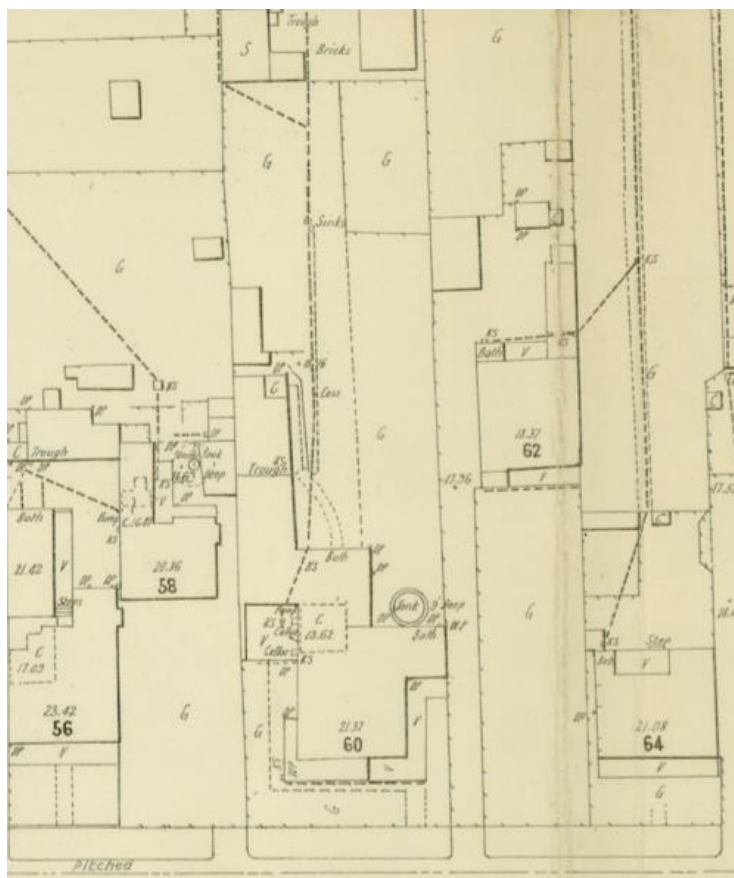

Figure 3: Extract of MMBW Detail Plan 1372 showing the house, by then numbered 60, and rear garden in 1897.

The opening by the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust of the Hawthorn Road to St Kilda Esplanade electric tramway in April 1913, via Balaclava Road and Carlisle Street paved the way for more intensive residential subdivision and development along Carlisle Street including the building of flats, which began to appear by the end of World War I. Between 1915 and 1941 at least 20 blocks were constructed between The Esplanade and Hotham Street with many more in the adjoining streets.

Following Woods' death Glenmore passed through a succession of owners, before it was purchased in the late 1920s by Mrs. F.A. Graham, and by 1930 it was listed in the directories as 'Glenmore Flats'. Mrs Graham undertook some minor alterations in 1930 before embarking on a more ambitious project carried out from mid-1932 to early 1933 which transformed the building into the present apartment complex. The work was carried out in four stages, all designed by architect Alan L. Fildes, who was then a resident of Elwood, living at 34 Meredith Street. The first stage was a two-storey addition to the rear of the house, which contained six one-bedroom flats. The floor plans were compact to say the least, with the bedrooms only being 7 feet by 9 feet and some of the living areas having only borrowed light off porches, hallways or very narrow lightwells (BP).

The second stage was a small, hipped roof 'sleep out' at the rear. This was followed by additions to the front and sides of the building, which closed in the original verandah and added projecting bays at either end. While the floor plans of alterations to the front are incomplete, the layouts also seem compromised with some flats appearing to have shared facilities or bedrooms that are accessed via common areas. Finally, garages were constructed to the rear in early 1933. G.C. Dickson & Yorsten was the builder for the first two stages of work, while R. Owen was responsible for the third and fourth stages (BP). Figure 5 includes some extracts of the original building plans.

The explanation for the compact layouts may have been that Mrs. Graham offered the flats for short term holiday or tourist accommodation in addition to long term rentals. In late 1933 the flats were offered for let as 'Bachelor apartments' (*The Argus*, 16 December 1933, p.28) and in 1934 Mrs. Graham placed an advertisement in the promotional booklet 'St Kilda the Beautiful' which described Glenmore Court as follows:

Surrounded by lawns and garden. Within 3 minutes of the sea and Picture Theatres. Self-contained Suites, Modern Furnishings, and every Convenience. Hot Water Service and Garages. Terms Moderate ('St Kilda the Beautiful', facing p.35).

In the early 1980s alterations and additions were carried out to enable the flats to be strata-subdivided. These alterations were mostly internal and aimed at making the flats truly self-contained and fixing some, but not all, of the amenity and layout issues of the original design.

Figure 4: Glenmore Court c.1934 (Source: St Kilda the Beautiful).

Alan L. Fildes

Alan Fildes (1909-56) studied modelling, architecture, construction, and carpentry at Brighton Technical College and received his certificate of architectural registration while working for Oakley and Parkes in 1933. By 1936 he had entered practice with Norman Seabrook, with Seabrook as the main designer, Fildes managing the projects and running the office. Alan Fildes died in 1956 at the age of 47 (Goad 2002).

Norman Seabrook rose to prominence following his 1933 Modernist design for the MacRobertson Girls' High School, which was the first Australian example of the modern functionalist style of architecture developed by the Dutch architect Willem Dudok and was later claimed by Robin Boyd to have heralded the '1934 Revolution' of modern architecture in Victoria (Goad 2002)

Seabrook engaged the more experienced Fildes to execute the project, and this led to their formal partnership in 1936. By applying and adapting European modernist design principles to a broad range of civic, industrial, commercial, and residential buildings, Seabrook and Fildes played a primary role in the dissemination of modernist architecture in Victoria in their relatively short-lived period of greatest creative output between 1934 and 1940 (Goad 2002).
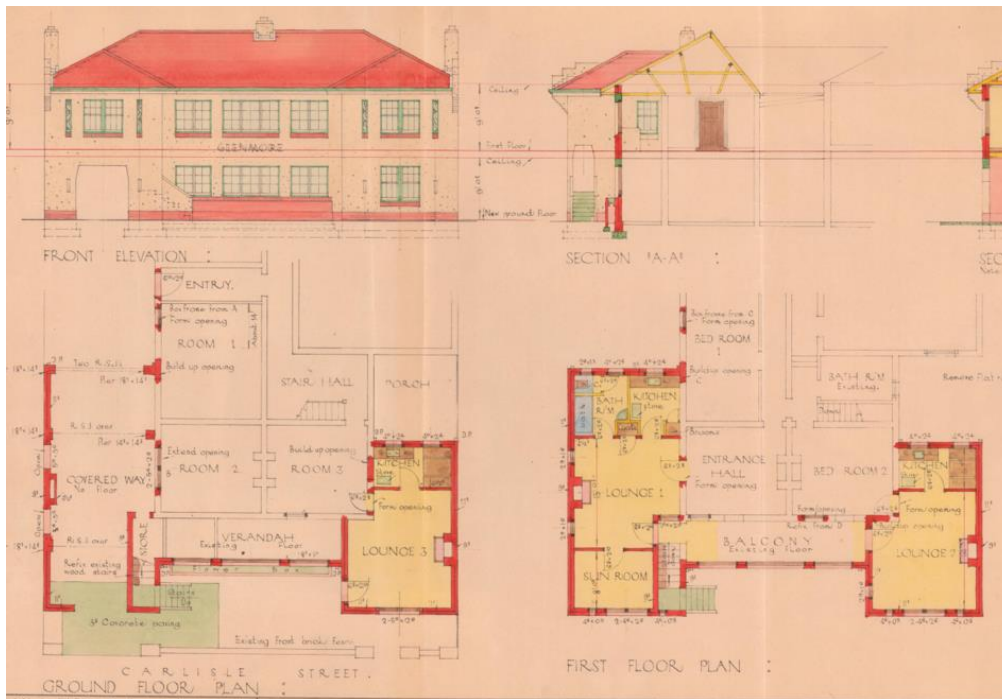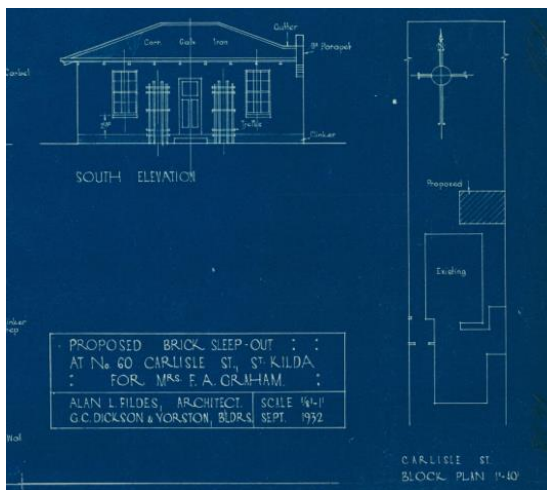
Figure 5: Top: Stage 1 (rear addition); Stage 2 ('sleep out') and Stage 3 (Front additions).

References

Goad, Phillip, 'Seabrook, Norman Hugh' in Australian Dictionary of Biography: https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/seabrook-norman-hugh-11645 (viewed 29 May 2022)

J.E.S. Vardy, 'Plan of the Borough of St Kilda. Surveyed and compiled under direction of the Borough Council', Hamel & Ferguson, Melbourne 1873 (Vardy plan)

'Melbourne and its suburbs' (1855) compiled by James Kearney, draughtsman; engraved by David Tulloch and James D. Brown. [Melbourne]: Andrew Clarke, Surveyor General (Kearney plan)

O'Hanlon, Seamus, 'Home together, Home apart: Boarding house, hostel and flat life in Melbourne c.1900-1940', PhD Thesis, History Department, Monash University

Port Phillip Thematic Environmental History (TEH) <mark>Version 1, July 2020</mark>

Real estate websites: Domain.com.au and Realestate.com.au, webpages for apartments for sale at 60 Carlisle Street, viewed 29 May 2022

St Kilda Council building permits (BP): 7784, 11 July 1930 (minor alterations); 8039, 20 April 1932 (rear two storey addition); 8121, 8 September 1932 (sleep out); 8182, 3 December 1932 (front addition); 8216, 13 February 1933 (garage)

St Kilda Shore Publicity Committee, 'St Kilda the Beautiful', c.1933

St Kilda rate books (RB): 1859 (no. in rate 1662), 1862-63 (892); February 1865 (875); November 1870 (963); December 1875 (1145); 1894 (1733); 1900 (1757)

Sands & McDougall Directories (SM) 1935, 1940, 1945

Sawyer, Terry, (1982) 'Residential flats in Melbourne: the development of a building type to 1950', Honours thesis, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, The University of Melbourne

Description

Glenmore Court is an interwar apartment complex, which incorporates an early Victorian house. Figure 6 shows the approximate stages of building:

- The early Victorian house comprises the middle section. This includes a slightly hipped separate hipped roof wing, which retains an early six over six timber sash window and a corbelled brick chimney.

- Across the front and to the sides of the early Victorian house has been overlaid the final stage of the 1932-33 scheme which has created a symmetrical appearance in a U-plan with projecting hipped roof bays built to the boundary on either side of a recessed central bay. The west bay includes a porte cochere leading to the vehicle driveway along the west boundary. Each bay at first floor level has paired multi-pane (six over three) timber sash windows flanked by narrow slot windows with leadlight glass (another leadlight window is in the west wall of the east bay), and there is another pair of windows in the ground floor of the east bay. The recessed central bay has paired sliding multi pane casements with textured glass on either side of a single multi-pane window above 'Glenmore Court' in smooth render. On the west side there is a staircase with rendered balustrade and brick coping. The end walls are in face brick with corbelling, the roofs have deep flat boxed eaves, and the rendered chimneys are plain.

- To the rear is a two-storey wing with a hipped roof and two brick chimneys. This has multi-pane windows (not original), and an entrance door with an original arched fanlight and sidelights with leadlight glass. Internally, the staircase has the original timber balustrade.

- At the rear of the building is the 'sleep out', which is now a separate apartment. This has a hipped roof and render walls and has been altered and extended.

- Behind the 'sleep out' is a series of outbuildings and garages along the east and north boundaries.

Figure 6: Glenmore Court approximate building stages: Red is nineteenth century and yellow is 1932-33.

Internally, most of the decorative features reflect the 1930s renovation, which include some distinctive Arts & Crafts style fireplaces with timber mantles with tall, paired brackets and coloured tile surrounds in the rear apartments, strapped or plaster ceiling decoration with Art Deco motifs. However, there are some remnants of the original house including surviving Victorian era timber fire surrounds. Of note is the marble fire surround within the living area of apartment 3, which is likely to be original to the c.1859 house as it has a mid-Victorian appearance and is located on the ground floor of the section with a separate and higher hipped roof described above. Apartment 2 has a basement bedroom within the original cellar.

The buildings are in good condition and have a moderate degree of external integrity to the 1930s renovation. The key external change has been the replacement (or narrowing) of the central windows in the front recessed bay, the widening of the porte cochere entry, the replacement of windows to the west elevation of the rear two storey wing, and additions to the rear sleep out. A high fence has been constructed across the frontage.

Comparative analysis

St Kilda contains a diverse collection of houses dating from the 1870s and earlier, which include mansions, villas, and terrace houses. Not surprisingly given their age, the buildings have varying degrees of intactness and integrity and broadly speaking fall into two groups. The first group includes the more intact examples such as the former Rondesbosch, 27 Chapel Street, and Marlton, Marlton Crescent, both large mansions that now form part of St Michael's Grammar School, as well as Linden, 26 Acland Street, and several houses and terrace rows in Acland Street, Dalgety Street and Princes Street.

Glenmore Court on the other hand is part of the second group, which comprises early houses that have been altered during the interwar and postwar periods, often as a result of conversion to flats.

As a nineteenth century house converted to flats in the early twentieth century, Glenmore Court is representative of a distinctive St Kilda building type. 'Conversions' were among the earliest flat types to emerge in Port Phillip and according to Sawyer (1982:61) the poor quality of some brought flats 'into disrepute'. Sawyer cites a 1923 *Australian Home Builder* article that was highly critical of the practice:

> *Take any old house, dress up the front with a coat of roughcast and an outside staircase; insert a bathroom and lavatory somewhere on the upper floors, also a stove and a sink. If there is room at the back, add a back verandah – platform rather – to the upper floor…*

However, at the other end of the scale there were also several conversions of exceptional quality such as the 1911 transformation of the former *Cliveden* in East Melbourne into *Cliveden Mansion Flats*. Many of these transformative conversions were designed by architects.

Port Phillip has examples of both types of conversions. One of the earliest examples of a terrace row conversion is Marli Place, 3-7 The Esplanade, St Kilda, which was converted to flats around 1911. This is an example of a basic conversion with prominent external staircases being the most visible change. Otherwise, the terrace largely retains its mid-Victorian character. Another example is Himalaya at 10 Tennyson Street (Citation 932), where a two-level verandah/balcony with external staircases has replaced the original cast iron verandah of the 1878 mansion.

Examples of more transformative architect-designed conversions include Grosvenor Mansions (1919, designed by Howard R. Lawson) at 74-88 William Street, Balaclava (Citation 910) and Carnong Courts (1926, designed by A & K Henderson) at 29-33 Robe Street, St Kilda (Citation 794). Both have Arts & Crafts detailing, and Carnong Court is notable for the arrangement of semi-enclosed stairwell towers at the front of the building as an integral and distinctive part of the design.

Perhaps the most pertinent comparisons to Glenmore Court include Hampden at 74 Barkly Street, St Kilda (Citation 405) and Sur-La-Mer (Citation 943). In both examples, very early houses (c.1860s or earlier) have been incorporated into apartment blocks, which have completely transformed the outward appearance, while leaving traces of the original house at the rear. At Hampden, this includes parts of the rear wings, which have hipped roofs and Victorian chimneys, while at Sur-La-Mer there the rear elevations retain original Picturesque Gothic bargeboards and detailing, and some original chimneys.

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 as a Significant place within the St Kilda Botanical Gardens & Environs precinct.

Primary source

City of Port Phillip, *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

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

Other images

Entry to rear two-storey wing with arched leadlight fan light and sidelights, and original staircase