people place heritage

CONTEXT

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

2-6 Blanche and

110-118 Barkly Street, St Kilda

21 December, 2017

Prepared for

City of Port Phillip

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Report Register

This report register documents the development and issue of the report titled *Heritage Assessment 2-6 Blanche and 110-118 Barkly Street, St Kilda, 21 December 2017* which was undertaken by Context Pty Ltd in accordance with our internal quality management system.

Project No.	Issue No.	Notes/description	Issue Date	Issued to
2227	1	Heritage Assessment	21.12.17	Kelly White

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In August 2017, the City of Port Phillip commissioned Context to undertake a preliminary heritage assessment of the small residential precinct at 2-6 Blanche and 110-118 Barkly Street St Kilda. On the basis of information gathered in the preliminary study, a recommendation was made to undertake a full assessment of the precinct. In response to the recommendation, the City of Port Phillip commissioned Context to undertake this full heritage assessment of the precinct.

1.2 Existing Heritage Protection

The properties within the precinct are not currently covered by any statutory heritage protection in the form of a Heritage Overlay or other mechanism.

1.3 Methodology

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Australia ICOMOS *Charter for Place of Cultural Significance*, 2013 (the Burra Charter) and its guidelines. All terminology is consistent with the Burra Charter.

Assessment of the subject precinct has been carried out with reference to the Victorian Planning Practice Note *Applying the Heritage Overlay* (PN001) and complies with the guidance set out in that document, including the assessment of cultural heritage significance using the HERCON criteria.

In assessing the precinct, a desktop review of relevant documents, reports and maps was undertaken. All buildings were inspected from the street/public domain during a site visit in August 2017.

2 HISTORY

2.1 Historical context

St Kilda was established as a seaside village, settled from the 1840s by professional men and their families, mainly pastoralists from the country. With the establishment of the railway in 1857, St Kilda evolved into a commuter suburb. The professional middle-class continued to live in large houses on the high ground, and tourists started to arrive in ever-increasing numbers; to cater for them, hotels, sea baths and entertainment venues were built. Influenced by the wealth generated by Melbourne's property boom of the 1880s and the arrival of trams in 1888, St Kilda resident and visitor numbers increased, with the population of the municipality increasing from 11,654 in 1881 to 19,838 in 1891 (*Victorian Places* 2015).

However investment became increasingly speculative as blocks were subdivided and infrastructure developed well ahead of demand. As the *Encyclopaedia of Melbourne* notes, by the 1890s

> *Melbourne had…become overbuilt, and excess capacity in the housing and public transport sectors, falling wages, cutbacks in government spending and a slower rate of in-migration hit the city's economy hard* (Frost 2008).

The Municipality of St Kilda's population increased only marginally over this time from 19,838 in 1891 to 20,542 in 1901 (*Victorian Places* 2015).

Australia's economic recovery was led by the growth of exports. Accompanying the economic growth, Melbourne's population increased from 478,000 inhabitants in 1901 to 593,000 in 1911, with many finding a home in the suburbs (Frost 2008). Between 1901 and 1911, St Kilda's population rose to 25,334, and between 1911 and 1921, increased to 38,579 (*Victorian Places* 2015). The population increase and improved economic conditions created opportunities for the construction of investment housing.

2.2 Place history

The group of eight houses at 2-6 Blanche Street and 110-118 Barkly Street, St Kilda, were constructed by builder and contractor, James Downie. James Downie lived with his father, builder and contractor John Downie, in High Street, Prahran, in 1881 (MCC registration no. 9020, as cited in AAI, record no. 76857). By 1884, James and his wife, Williamina Downie, both from Gippsland, were living at Orford Villa in St Kilda Road (*Argus* 29 December 1884:1).

When James Downie died at his home, 'Glenview', in Longwarry South in 1926, his obituary noted that he was responsible for the construction of a number of important projects, some undertaken with another contractor, a Mr Pearson:

> *Mr. Downie, who was aged 75 years, was born in Dundee, Scotland, in 1851, and came to Australia when aged two years in the ship Ganges Khan. He was one of the earliest builders and contractors in the colony, and with his father built the Western Market and buildings, the Victoria Homes for the Aged at Royal Park [originally built as an industrial school with contractor Mr Pearson in 1874-75], the Law Courts in Lonsdale street [with contractor Mr Pearson in 1874-84], the Female Penitentiary at Coburg [in 1891-92], the Domain entrance to Government House, additions to Menzies' Hotel, and St. James's Buildings, William street [designed by architects Terry and Oakeden and built in 1885], as well as large railway and bridge works on the Wimmera River [the Natimuk-Noradjua railway line with contractor Mr Barnfield opened in 1877]. He also built the Sydney road from Kilmore to Seymour practically as it stands today. In 1892 he retired from business and lived quietly on his property at Longwarry South. He left a widow, four sons, and a daughter. The burial took place at the Melbourne Cemetery on Tuesday (Argus 7 October 1926:10).*

The land on which the subject residences stand was vacant in 1897 (MMBW Detail Plan no. 1370, 1897) and remained so until 1910 when it was sold to Williamina Downie of Longwarry in Gippsland (CT:V2336 F100; V4353 F527).

Building permits for the subject residences were issued in 1910. A building permit for five brick villas in Barkly Street, to be constructed by James Downie for owner Mrs James (Williamina) Downie, was issued in May 1910, and another permit for three semi-detached brick villas in Blanche Street, to be constructed by James Downie, who was also listed as the owner, was issued in August 1910 (City of St Kilda Building Permits nos. 1033 and 1108, as cited in AAI, record nos. 47009 and 47084). The houses in Barkly Street were built by 1911, and the residences in Blanche Street were constructed by 1912 (S&Mc 1911 and 1912).

In 1915 the cottages were occupied by Alfred H Miller (110 Barkly), John Blake (112 Barkly), Harry Grove (114 Barkly), Elizabeth Timper (116 Barkly), Louis Marks (118 Barkly), Mrs Cath Winter (2 Blanche), Myer Jacobson (4 Blanche) and Barnett Goldstein (6 Blanche) (S&Mc 1915).

In 1920 the land and cottages were sold to Rose, Agatha and Cecily Moran, unmarried sisters, who all lived at the George Hotel in Fitzroy Street, St Kilda (CT:V2336 F100; V4353 F527).

Mary (nee Castles) and Patrick Moran married in 1879 and lived in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, where they were involved in running a general store and brewery. Mary Moran's father was an architect and contractor who owned a number of properties in Melbourne. After Patrick Moran died in 1909, Mary and her four daughters, Rose, Agatha, Gertrude and Cecily,

moved to St Kilda. Mary Moran died in 1931, (*Wagga Wagga Express* 14 November 1931:13), but the Moran sisters continued to live at the George Hotel until the 1970s. The sisters were well-known St Kilda identities.

The subject houses remained in the ownership of the Moran family until 1977 when the last surviving sister, Rose, died. After Rose's death, the land was subdivided and the houses were sold individually (CT:V2336 F100; V4353 F527).

References

Argus, as cited.

Australian Architectural Index (AAI), as cited. Copyright Miles Lewis.

Frost, Lionel 2008, 'Economy' in *eMelbourne*, School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, University of Melbourne, http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00501b.htm, accessed 14 September 2017.

Land Victoria, Certificates of Title (CT), as cited.

Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan, as cited, State Library of Victoria.

Sands and McDougall, *Melbourne and Suburban Directories* (S&MC), as cited.

Victorian Places 2015, 'St Kilda', Monash University and University of Queensland, http://www.victorianplaces.com.au/st-kilda, accessed 14 September 2017.

Wagga Wagga Express, as cited.

3   DESCRIPTION

3.1 Physical Description

The group of eight houses are clustered around the corner of Barkly Street and Blanche Street in St Kilda East. They form a cohesive and distinctive group due to their shared materials, detail, setback and form. Constructed between 1910 and 1912, they are notable for the repetition of gabled roof forms, design idioms, materials and other details.

The group comprises two separate single fronted pairs with slightly different designs and a corner villa in Barkly Street, and three single fronted conjoined houses in Blanche Street. The residences clearly indicate a common provenance, in this case the builder.

The group are unified by their slate roofs and red brick walls (see figure 1). There is a band of two cream brick courses that cuts through the lower window sashes, and a single narrow course of moulded cream brick below the rendered moulded chimney capping of the matching chimneys. The brickwork is tuck-pointed where it is contained by the verandahs. Other common design elements are the striking design of the gables with projecting barge boards, verandah wing walls with rendered cappings, shallow bull-nose verandahs, and the traditional design of the rinceau pattern cast iron friezes, brackets and verandah posts.

Figure 1. Houses at 110-118 Barkly Street and 2-6 Blanche Street, St Kilda. Note that 118 Barkly is the freestanding villa on the corner of Barkly and Blanche streets.

Figure 2. Showing decorative detailing common to 110-112 Barkly Street and 2-6 Blanche Street (oculi and swagged garlands on gable end, verandah posts and cast iron frieze, cream brick banding).

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The distinctive design of 110 and 112 Barkly Street, and 2, 4 and 6 Blanche Street bookend this group (see figures 2 and 3). They have gable end walls decorated with oculi with timber louvres, above highly decorated rendered garland swags. These form a striking feature against the red brick backgrounds. By contrast, the gables of 114 and 116 Barkly Street have a diaper pattern of timber strapwork. 118 Barkly Street has vertical strapwork on the single gable that matches the pitch and height of the other seven houses of the group, and the smaller gablet that projects from the hipped roof that forms the corner with Blanche Street.

Figure 3. 110-112 Barkly Street, showing the paired nature of the dwellings, and intact gable ends and chimneys, unpainted oculi.

The long ownership by an affluent St Kilda family of three unmarried sisters from 1920 to 1977 has resulted in the current largely intact condition of the houses (see figures 4-6). All retain slate roofs in the portion of the dwelling fronting the street, except for the east face of 6 Blanche Street. The rear roofs are all clad in corrugated iron.

All houses in the group retain most of their face brick work in an unpainted state. The only exceptions are the gable ends of 114, 116 and 118, where the background face brickwork of the timber strapwork is painted, and the surrounds of the oculi of 110 and 112 Barkly Street, and 2, 4 and 6 Blanche Street, which have been painted.

The verandah of 116 has been infilled, but is assumed to be intact behind, and window screens have been fitted to 118. All original fences have been replaced with high timber pickets of various designs.

Figure 4. 2-6 Blanche Street showing the identical form and detailing of this conjoined group of three houses, and the high degree of intactness.

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Figure 5. Showing 2-6 Blanche Street - note the painted oculi and high timber picket fences of different design and colours.

Figure 6. 114-118 Barkly Street, showing slate roofs to all, and alternate gable end decoration on 114-116 Barkly Street.

4 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This section brings together all the evidence gathered to provide an assessment of the architectural and historical values associated with the precinct at 2-6 Blanche and 110-118 Barkly Street, St Kilda. A comparative analysis will compare the heritage values of this site, with those of similar precincts in the City of Port Phillip. A Statement of Significance will summarise the heritage values associated with the precinct.

4.1 Assessment against criteria

Historic significance

Importance to the course, or pattern, of the City of Port Phillip's cultural history. (Criterion A)

The houses at 2-6 Blanche Street and 110-118 Barkly Street, St Kilda, are of historical significance for their association with the residential development of St Kilda after the economic depression of the 1890s. Built between 1910 and 1912, at a time of increased population growth and economic recovery, they evidence Edwardian-era speculative investment housing development in St Kilda.

Built by James Downie, a high-profile Melbourne builder, their construction is an excellent example of the speculative building which took place throughout St Kilda in the first decades of the twentieth century as a result of the economic recovery in Victoria, and which has led to the distinctly Edwardian characterisation of many areas within the locality.

Architectural significance

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects. (Criterion D)

The group of houses on the corner of Blanche Street and Barkly Street is an excellent and intact example of the rows and groups of high-end contiguous Edwardian houses speculatively constructed in St Kilda in the first decades of the twentieth century. The houses form a cohesive and distinctive group due to their shared materials, detail, setback and form, and demonstrate the principal characteristics of Edwardian residences in St Kilda during this period, as well as additional decorative detailing. This detailing includes the use of red brick walls with cream brick banding, gabled roof forms clad in slate, moulded chimney capping to tall chimneys, shallow bullnose verandahs with decorative friezes, and decorative detail applied to gable ends, including timber strapwork. The consistency and distinctiveness of the gable design and detailing is unusual in groups of houses such as this within St Kilda.

While there some similar examples of groups of Federation/Edwardian houses constructed by a single builder in St Kilda within the St Kilda Hill precinct (HO5), such as those at 30-44 Acland Street, 3-9 and 4-12 Emilton Street, they are all of a much more conventional Federation/Edwardian design idiom, with terra cotta tile roofs with cresting.

Aesthetic significance

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics. (Criterion E)

Aesthetically, 2-6 Blanche Street and 110-118 Barkly Street are significant as a cohesive and distinctive group of residences due to their shared materials, detail, setback and form. Constructed between 1910 and 1912, they are notable for the repetition of gabled roof forms, design idioms, materials and other details. The group comprises two separate single fronted pairs with slightly different designs and a corner villa in Barkly Street, and three single fronted conjoined houses in Blanche Street. These clearly indicate a common provenance, in this case the builder, James Downie.

Of particular interest is the distinctive decorative design of the gable end walls and verandahs, which are highly intact. 110 and 112 Barkly Street, and 2, 4 and 6 Blanche Street, which form

book-ends to this group, have gable end walls decorated with oculi with timber louvres, above highly decorated rendered garland swags. These form a striking feature against the red brick backgrounds. By contrast, the gables of 114 and 116 Barkly Street have a diaper pattern of timber strapwork, and 118 Barkly Street has vertical strapwork on the single gable that matches the pitch and height of the other seven houses of the group, and a gablet. The verandahs are consistently shallow bull-nose verandahs, with the traditional design of the rinceau pattern cast iron friezes, brackets and verandah posts, not commonly seen in groups of Edwardian housing in this locality.

4.2 Comparative analysis

Federation/Edwardian housing is well represented in the Heritage Overlay in St Kilda, and the City of Port Phillip more generally. The majority of these places are included within precincts as either Significant or Contributory places.

What distinguishes the group on the corner of Barkly Street and Blanche Street, St Kilda, is the consistency and distinctiveness of the gable design and detailing. It can best be compared with the unique 1888 development of Cambridge Street, Armadale, (City of Stonnington HO125), a whole street of almost matching single fronted gabled weatherboard houses with striking gable end designs.

While there are similar examples of groups of Federation/Edwardian houses constructed by a single builder in St Kilda within the St Kilda Hill precinct (HO5), such as those at 30-44 Acland Street (see figure 7), 3-9 and 4-12 Emilton Street (see figure 8), they are all of a much more conventional Federation/Edwardian design idiom, with terra cotta tile roofs with cresting.

Figure 7. Single terrace row of Edwardian houses c.1910 at 30-44 Acland Street, St Kilda, and located in the St Kilda Hill Precinct (HO5). Note the traditional forms and detailing.

Figure 8. 3-9 Emilton Avenue and 4-12 Emilton Avenue, located in St Kilda Hill Precinct (HO5), comprise attached and detached Queen Anne style Federation houses, all with 'standard' detailing and decoration, and built c.1909-1910.

Similarly, most of those in the St Kilda East Precinct (HO6) are fairly conventional in their detailing and design, although intact groupings.

The houses at 1-13 and 2-10 Moodie Place, St Kilda and 68-74 Octavia Street, St Kilda (see figure 9), include attached pairs and one detached house, all of similar/identical design, and most are intact, although the roof materials have been altered in at least three houses in this group. These residences were built c.1907-1910 by local builder Mr P Einsiedel, who also constructed others close by, including those in Charlotte Place (see figure 10), Chapel Street, Lambeth Place, Cintra Avenue and Robertson Avenue.

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Figure 9. 68-74 Octavia Street, showing two pairs of houses (constructed along with several pairs and one freestanding house in adjacent Moodie Place [around the corner]).

Figure 10. Houses in the row at 1-15 Charlotte Place, St Kilda, constructed c.1905-1907 in the St Kilda East Precinct (HO5).

Only the row of attached houses 10-36 Lambeth Place, St Kilda, (HO6) (see figures 11 and 12) have a similar form of repetitive gables, but in a much more typically 'Federation' style; none have the distinctive oculi and garland swag motifs of the Blanche Street and Barkly Street

houses. These houses in Lambeth Place were all built c.1909 for the owner Mr Sleep. P Einsiedel is once again recorded as the builder of some of these houses, which are very similar to the Moodie Place cottages.

Figure 11. Houses at 10-36 Lambeth Place. Note the high degree of intactness and similarity of design and detailing. This detailing is more typical of the period when compared to that of Barkly and Blanche streets group.

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Figure 12. Detail of houses in Lambeth Place.

4.3 Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The group of eight houses, including two duplexes, one set of three co-joined house and a single free standing house at 2-6 Blanche Street, at 110-118 Barkly Street St Kilda, constructed by builder James Downie, is significant.

The high timber picket fences on each property are not significant. The modern timber carport at 2a Blanche Street is not significant.

How is it significant?

2-6 Blanche Street and 110-118 Barkly Street St Kilda are of local historic, architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

Why is it significant?

The houses at 2-6 Blanche Street and 110-118 Barkly Street, St Kilda, are of historical significance for their association with the residential development of St Kilda after the economic depression of the 1890s. Built between 1910 and 1912, at a time of increased population growth and economic recovery, they evidence Edwardian-era speculative housing development in St Kilda. (Criterion A)

The group of houses on the corner of Blanche and Barkly streets is an excellent and intact example of high-end contiguous Edwardian houses speculatively constructed in St Kilda in the first decades of the twentieth century. Compared to other similar groups, this group stands out due to the quality and detailing of its construction and materials. While exhibiting the typical forms and expressions of Edwardian architecture, the use of red brick walls with cream brick banding, gabled roof forms clad in slate, moulded chimney capping to tall chimneys, shallow

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bullnose verandahs with decorative frieze, and decorative detail applied to gable ends, including timber strapwork, is unusual. The consistency and distinctiveness of the gable design and detailing is unusual in groups of houses such as this within St. Kilda. (Criterion D)

Aesthetically, 2-6 Blanche Street and 110-118 Barkly Street are significant as a cohesive and distinctive group due to their shared materials, detail, setback and form. Constructed between 1910 and 1912, they are notable for the repetition of gabled roof forms, design idioms, materials and other details. Of particular interest is the distinctive decorative design of the gable end walls and verandahs, which are highly intact. 110 and 112 Barkly Street, and 2, 4 and 6 Blanche Street, which form book-ends to this group, have gable end walls decorated with oculi with timber louvres, above highly decorated rendered garland swags. These form a striking feature against the red brick backgrounds. By contrast, the gables of 114 and 116 Barkly Street have a diaper pattern of timber strapwork, and 118 Barkly Street has vertical strapwork on the single gable that matches the pitch and height of the other seven houses of the group, and a gablet. The verandahs are consistently shallow bull-nose verandahs, with the traditional design of the rinceau pattern cast iron friezes, brackets and verandah posts, not commonly seen in groups of Edwardian housing in this locality. (Criterion E)

5   RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Proposed Additional Controls in Schedule to Heritage Overlay

None to be applied

5.2 Proposed curtilage of Heritage Overlay

All of the land included in the curtilage shown below (red line). This includes the land at numbers 110, 112, 114, 116, 118 Barkly Street, St. Kilda and all of the land included in numbers 2, 2a, 4, 6 Blanche Street, St Kilda and any other land within the curtilage shown.
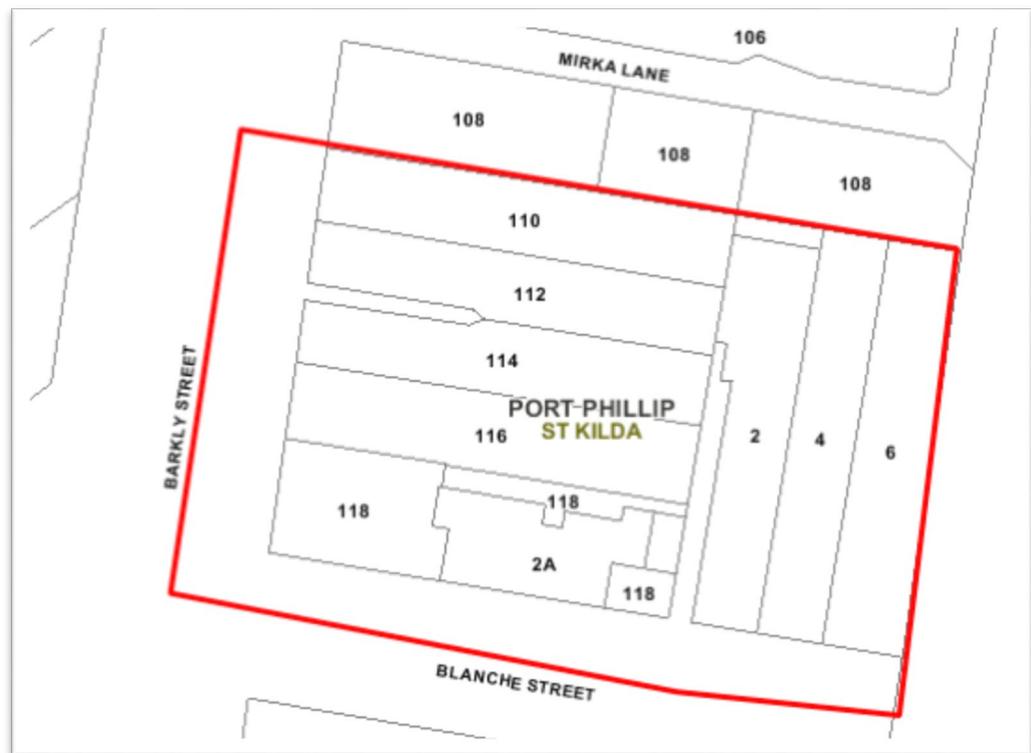
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Figure 13 Proposed curtilage of HO for the group of houses. The Heritage Overlay should be applied to all of the land within the red line.

Figure 14 Proposed HO curtilage overlaid on aerial image (source: LandChannel (accessed 12/09/2017)

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