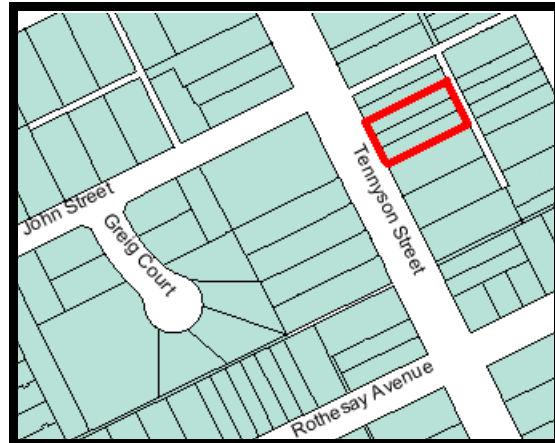


Identifier “Merlin”, “Godiva” and “Vivien”
Formerly unknown



Not within a HO area

Address 104-108 Tennyson Street
 ELWOOD
Category Residential: row

Constructed 1890
Designer Unknown

Significance

What is Significant?

The houses at 104-108 comprise a row of three double-storeyed Boom-style brick terraced dwellings, with their names emblazoned on their ornate parapets: *Merlin* (No 104), *Godiva* (No 106) and *Vivien* (No 108). Erected during 1890 by (or for) a Mr McLeod, the three houses subsequently had a succession of tenants. The central house (No 106) was converted into a pair of flats c.1925, with a new staircase providing separate access to the upper level

How is it Significant?

The houses are of historic and architectural, and aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

Why is it Significant?

Historically, the houses at 104-106 Tennyson Street provide evidence of the dense but somewhat limited phase of residential development that occurred in Elwood during the prosperous Boom period of the 1880s, concentrated in the relatively small area bounded by Brighton Road, Scott Street, Mitford Street and Clarke/Mason streets. The conversion of the central house into two flats during the inter-war period is of historic interest in its own right, demonstrating a different approach to the multi-unit dwellings that proliferated in Elwood at that time.

Architecturally, the houses are significant as a representative and relatively intact example of the double-storeyed terraced house typology. While very common in Melbourne's inner suburbs in the late nineteenth century, this typology was considerably rarer in Elwood, with only three other comparable pairs or rows of terrace housing known to survive. Aesthetically, the houses are significant as a relatively unusual element in the streetscape.

Description

104-106 Tennyson Street comprises an attached row of three single-fronted double-storeyed painted brick terrace houses. Each has a narrow verandah with bullnose-roofed balcony above, enclosed between party walls with vermiculated panels and moulded consoles. Roofs are concealed by ornate rendered parapets comprising a moulded stringcourse, a row of paired brackets with *paterae* and moulded panels between, a heavier moulded cornice, and a balustrade with a central solid panel bearing the name of the house: *Merlin* (No 104) is painted, and *Godiva* (No 106) and *Vivien* (No 108) in raised render. Above these panels are segmental-arched pediments, flanked by moulded consoles and surmounted by an acroterian.

Each facade has a pair of tall rectangular windows at each level, with projecting stone sills and timber-framed double-hung sashes; those windows to the ground floor have receding panels below. All openings have flat-arched lintels and no external architraves. Nos 104 and 108 retain turned timber verandah posts to both levels, with cast iron lace friezes and balcony railings. The house at No 104 has been divided into two flats, and a brick dog-leg staircase built to provide separate access to the upper level. Consequently, the verandah and balcony has been altered, including the removal of the upper level post, the replacement of the lower post with a new reproduction fluted Corinthian column, and the reconfiguration of cast iron lace and railings.

History

The City of St Kilda rate book for 1890 (dated 6 January 1890) records that a Mr McLeod owned vacant land with a frontage of 51 feet (15.5 metres) to Tennyson Street, valued at £15. Within a year, three houses had been built on this site, listed in the 1891 rate book (dated 19 January 1891) as three adjacent six-roomed brick dwellings, each valued at £38. One (now No 108) was owned by a Mr Daysfield (?) and occupied by H J Matchin, and the other two were owned by Miller & Company, agents, and occupied by A Barclay and Henry Jesse. The *Sands & McDougall Directory* confirms Matchin as resident in 1891, with the other two houses listed as vacant. The directory for 1892 lists Matchin on the end, John Barclay in the middle, and the northernmost house still vacant. It was not until 1898 that the house names first appeared in the directory, listing J Young at *Merlin*, S Spark at *Godiva* and Andrew Mackinnon at the remaining house (albeit not yet identified as *Vivien*).

By the 1910s, the three houses had been designated as Nos 92-96 Tennyson Street. Occupants during that time included a Mr Sach at No 96 (who remained there into the 1920s) and William Pollard at No 92 (who was still there in the 1930s). The middle house, conversely, had a succession of relatively short-term tenants before it was finally converted into two flats in the mid-1920s. Described as 'vacant' in 1925, it suddenly had two residents listed the following year: Louis Hart and Mrs V Grass. By 1930, the three houses had been renumbered as 102 to 106.

Comparative Analysis

It has been acknowledged that double-storeyed terrace houses, so common in many of Melbourne's inner suburbs, are relatively rare in Elwood. The earliest recorded example was, in fact, one of the first substantial houses to be built in Elwood: the pair of double-storey terraces that the Reverend Joseph Docker erected at 30-30a Vautier Street (HO274) in 1854-55. But, as Andrew Ward has noted, this attempt to introduce into Elwood the terraced dwelling typology (so common in nearby St Kilda) proved to be unsuccessful, and these two dwellings were converted into a single grand residence in the 1870s, echoing the substantial mansions that had proliferated in the area by that time. Double-storey terraces did not re-appear in Elwood until the Boom period of the late 1880s and, even then, in very small quantities. Apart from the row of three at 104-108 Tennyson Street, a fine and intact row of four survives at 2-8 Milton Street (in HO7) and another pair, less distinguished and less intact, at 15-17 Byron Street.

Recommendations

recommended inclusions:

Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Port Phillip Planning Scheme

References

City of St Kilda Rate Books. South Ward.

Sands & McDougall Directory.

