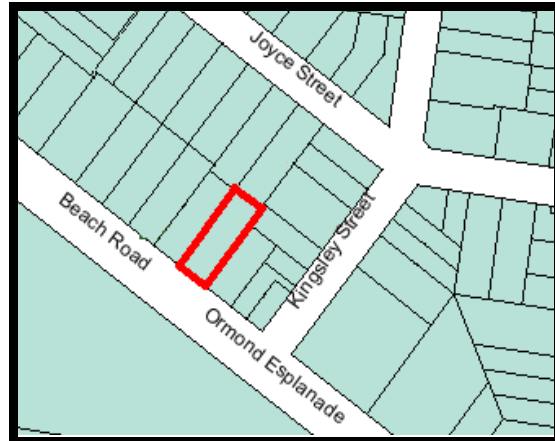


Identifier House
Formerly unknown



Not within a HO area

Address 123 Ormond Esplanade
ELWOOD
Category Residential: detached
Constructed c.1927
Designer Unknown

Significance

What is Significant?

The house at 123 Ormond Esplanade is a single-storey roughcast-rendered brick house in a highly unusual and distinctive Mexican hacienda style, with round arched doorways and *faux* projecting timber roof beams. It has a second storey addition, set well back to form a roof terrace, with a fully-glazed façade. The house was erected c.1927 for William Bleazby, a commercial traveller, whose family remained living there for almost forty years.

How is it Significant?

The house is of aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

Why is it Significant?

Aesthetically, the house is significant as a rare and relatively intact example of an inter-war house reminiscent of a traditional Mexican hacienda, related stylistically to the far more common Spanish Mission style that became ubiquitous in many parts of Melbourne (most notably the seaside suburbs) in the 1920s. With its volumetric composition, stark mass walling, plain archways and unusual projecting timber beams, the house stands out amongst the countless more ornate and embellished Spanish Mission houses and flats that otherwise proliferated in Elwood and St Kilda during that time. The second storey addition, although designed in a contrasting Functionalist style, is set well back and does substantially detract from the highly unusual aesthetic qualities of the original house.

Description

The house at 123 Ormond Esplanade was originally a single-storey brick inter-war house, which has been altered by a second storey addition, apparently in the post-war period. The original portion is a roughcast-rendered, flat-roofed villa in an unusual Spanish Mission style, reminiscent of a hacienda. Its double-fronted façade comprises a projecting porch to the left, with round-arched entry and side window, and a wide arched doorway within, with a pair of timber doors. Alongside is a pair of rectangular windows with multi-paned timber-framed double-hung sashes and splayed sills. The parapet line is delineated by a row of projecting timber members, intended to evoke roof beams. The side elevation has a separate entrance, set back in a recessed porch. The skillion-roofed first floor addition, set back to form a roof terrace, has a fully glazed street façade, with full-height windows and glazed doors. The side elevation, roughcast rendered to match the original house, has rectangular windows with metal framed sliding windows.

The driveway is marked by single roughcast rendered gatepost; a matching brick fence along the property line has been demolished relatively recently.

History

This house was evidently erected during 1927, as it first appears in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* in 1928. It was originally occupied by William Charles Noble Bleazby, described in electoral rolls as a commercial traveller, and his wife, Marie. Bleazby occupied the house until his relatively early death in 1945 at the age of sixty, whereupon his widow, Marie, remained there until her own death in 1964.

Comparative Analysis

While there are a considerable number of houses in Elwood (and in St Kilda) in the Spanish Mission style, these are invariably in the more ornate manifestation of that idiom, characterised by hipped rooves of Cordoba tiles, solomonic (barley-twist) columns, shaped parapets and corbels, arcaded loggias, and the use of decorative wrought iron and ceramic tiling. The house at 123 Ormond Esplanade demonstrates a more understated interpretation of the style, evocative of a traditional Mexican hacienda. This is most evident in its cubic form, stark mass walling, plain arched openings, and projecting timber roof beams. This is much less common, not only in Elwood and St Kilda but also in Melbourne's inter-war suburbs in general.

There are a few houses in East St Kilda, located at 151 Alma Road and 14 Mooltan Street, that are somewhat similar in their use of round arches and the unusual projecting roof beams, but these are otherwise more embellished than the particularly stark example at Elwood. As such, both should be considered as simplified versions of the conventional Spanish Mission idiom, rather than the extremely atypical and distinctive Mexican hacienda style that is exhibited at 123 Ormond Esplanade.

Recommendations

recommended inclusions:

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

References

Sands & McDougall Directory, various.