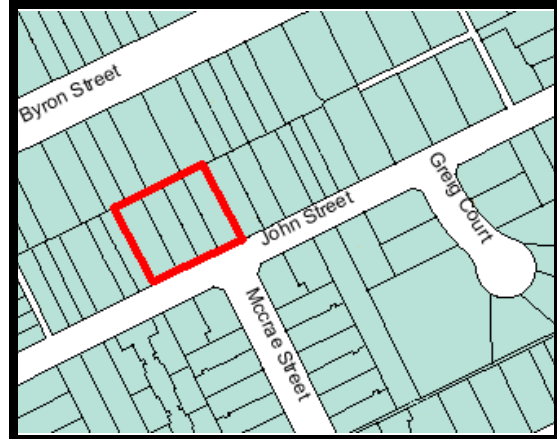


Identifier Houses
Formerly unknown



Not within a HO area

Address 24-30 John Street
ELWOOD

Category Residential: detached

Constructed 1888

Designer Unknown

Significance

What is Significant?

The houses at 24-30 John Street comprise a row of four virtually identical late Victorian detached double-fronted timber villas, with block-fronted symmetrical facades, hipped roofs, canted bay windows and timber-framed verandahs. These houses are the remnants of row of six villas erected during 1889-89 by George Glasscock, builder.

How is it Significant?

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

Why is it Significant?

Historically, the houses at 24-30 John Street provides rare 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 Mitford Street, Clarke Street/Mason Avenue, Brighton Road and Scott Street. As a contiguous row of four virtually identical houses, they demonstrate the speculative nature of Boom-period development in a more cohesive fashion than the generally scattered and isolated individual villas that otherwise remain in the area.

Architecturally, the house are significant as representative and notably intact examples of the double-fronted symmetrical timber villa, which is a relatively rare type amongst the surviving late nineteenth-century building stock in this part of Elwood. Aesthetically, the houses are individually significant for their fine and intact decorative detailing, and, collectively, for their prominent streetscape presence.

Description

The houses at 24-30 John Street comprise a row of four virtually identical late Victorian detached double-fronted timber villas. Each has a block-fronted façade, imitating rusticated stonework but without the vertical joints. Hipped roofs are clad in corrugated galvanized steel, with bracketed eaves, and all houses but No 30 retain a pair of rendered chimneys with moulded caps. Facades are balanced but not actually symmetrical, comprising a central doorway flanked on the left side by a canted bay window, and on the other by a conventional rectangular window. All openings have moulded timber architraves; door cases have highlight and sidelight windows, while Nos 24 and 26 retain original (or sympathetic) four-panel timber doors. All verandahs are hipped, with stop-chamfered timber posts; the house at No 24 has a reproduction cast iron lacework frieze while the others have timber slat friezes with fretwork brackets.

History

This site formed part of an unnamed 63-lot estate bounded by Mitford, Southey, John and Clarke streets, gazetted in June 1885. The first four houses in John Street (later Nos 4-10) had been built by the end of 1887, as recorded in the 1888 rate book (dated 12 December 1887). Within a year, another five houses had been built, described in the 1889 rate book (dated 26 November 1888) as five-roomed wood dwellings (one listed as 'unfinished') each valued at £28, and owned by G Glasscock. All were vacant at the time of the rate assessment, although the barely legible names of occupants were added later, comprising a labourer, draper, carter, compositor and carpenter. The *Sands & McDougall Directory* for 1889 simply listed "six vacant houses" in John Street; the corresponding rate book (dated January 1890) confirms that a sixth house had indeed been built. All six houses were then owned by Dalley, agent, and were valued at £30 each.

The six houses, initially listed in directories as Nos 1 to 6, were occupied gradually over the next few years: the 1891 directory lists William Goodall at No 5, Sydney Penny at No 6, and the remaining four as 'vacant'. The next year, Nos 1 and 4 became occupied, respectively, by E H Wood and Frederick Hancock, with Mrs J Britten, dressmaker, moving into No 6. By 1893, all six houses were occupied, their addresses now designated as 18 to 28 John Street. In the mid 1890s, Nos 22 and 24 (formerly 3 and 4) were again vacant, although Nos 26 (formerly 5) and 28 (formerly 6) still remained occupied by William Goodall and Mrs Britten. John Street was re-numbered again in the 1920s, and Nos 18-28 became Nos 20-30. The two examples at the eastern end, Nos 20 and 22, were demolished in the post-war period for new dwellings.

Comparative Analysis

There are relatively few rows of late nineteenth century detached housing in Elwood. This is not simply due to the fact that such development was not particularly extensive at the time, but also because many of these early houses were subsequently demolished for multi-storey blocks of flats during the twentieth century. The MMBW maps (c.1897) show rows of detached villas along both sides of Hotham Grove, Byron Street, Scott Street and Rainsford Street. Some of these such as the south side of Byron Street, west of Tennyson Street) have entirely vanished, while most of the others have simply lost their cohesion through the infiltration of replacement buildings, leaving only a few isolated (and often much-altered) Victorian villas in a twentieth century streetscape. As a cohesive row, the four symmetrical villas in John Street (itself a remnant of a longer strip of six dwellings) are most comparable to the five asymmetrical timber villas at 20-28 Moore Street (part of a proposed heritage precinct). Individually, the houses can be compared to the relatively few surviving single specimens of symmetrical timber villas in the area, such as 10 John Street, 1 and 17 Clarke Street, 2 and 12 Hotham Grove. These, however, tend to be less distinguished and/or less intact examples.

Recommendations

recommended inclusions:

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

References

Lodged Plan No 788, dated 12 June 1885.

City of St Kilda Rate Books. South Ward.

Sands & McDougall Melbourne Directory.

