

'KELVIN MANSIONS'

325 Dandenong Road, Pranran



Recommendations It is recommended that this building be added to the Register of Historic Buildings, Register of the National Estate and be protected using the provisions of Clause 8 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Third Schedule).

History and Description 'Kelvin Mansions' was erected c. 1922 in Dandenong Road, Armadale as a block of four high quality flats and was fully occupied in the following year. The block was probably designed by Edwin J. Ruck who had designed 'Mayfair', an influential residential block of flats (now demolished) in Marne Street, South Yarra in 1919. 'Kelvin Mansions' proved popular and an additional storey was added in 1932 to the existing two-storey building. The tenants of the block remained in residence during the whole of the re-building process. The two additional five room flats with private balconies and porches have extensive views over St. Kilda to the bay.

The three-storey red brick and stucco building has a terracotta tile roof with elaborate terracotta ridge tiling and finials. Bay windows and balconies flank the central curved, stuccoed balconies about which the front elevation is symmetrical. The upper two stories are identical, while the ground floor has porthole windows in place of the balconies above. Although the symmetrical front is a common design for flats of this period, 'Kelvin Mansions' is unusual in that the entrances to the flats was from the side, rather than the more common front entrances. While the building presents a facade to Dandenong Road, it imparts a domestic character through the use of the multiple hipped and gabled roof and the elegantly detailed canopies to the curved bay windows and balconies.

Significance 'Kelvin Mansions' is a fine surviving example of early mansion blocks which were developed after World War I along the major public transport routes. The large flats originally in the block were characteristic of the better quality units built along prestigious roads, such as St. Kilda and Dandenong Roads.

Intactness The exterior of the block is substantially intact as partially rebuilt in 1932, but the interior now houses twelve flats in place of the six as built in 1932. The design of the front elevation is stylistically consistent with its appearance as a two-storey building as originally built in c. 1922.

References

Terry Sawyer, 'Residential Flats in Melbourne', unpublished research report, University of Melbourne, 1982.

Australian Home Beautiful, 1 August 1932, p.25

Sands and McDougall Directories, various dates.