

Kelvin Mansions, 325 Dandenong Road, Prahran



History and Description

Kelvin Mansions was completed in 1922,⁴⁸ a two-storeyed block of four flats rated first in April 1923.⁴⁹ The property was owned by Vernon Hurt, commission agent and bookmaker, who occupied one of the five-roomed brick flats.⁵⁰ The three other tenants in 1928 were Jane Bartlett, Alexander Mullin and John Gibson, director.⁵¹ The designing architects in 1919 were Edward J. Ruck and C. L. Ruck, who also in 1919 designed Mayfair, an important residential block of flats (now demolished) in Marne Street, St. Kilda.⁵²

An additional storey was added to Hurt's property in 1932, comprising two more five-roomed flats. The additional flats with private balconies and porches have extensive views over St. Kilda to the bay. The tenants in 1932 were John Bartlett, John Mercer (manager), John L. Mended (motor salesman), William Taylor (civil servant) and Donald McMillan (gentleman). Hurt still occupied one of the original four flats.⁵³

The three-storey red brick and stucco building has a terracotta tile roof with elaborate terracotta ridge tiling and finials. Curved bay windows and square balconies (now enclosed with glazing) flank the central curved stuccoed balconies forming a

48. MMBW House Cover No.119261.

49. City of Prahran Rate Book 1922-23 Windsor Ward Nos. 13707, 13708, 13709, 13710. NAVs of 160 pounds each.

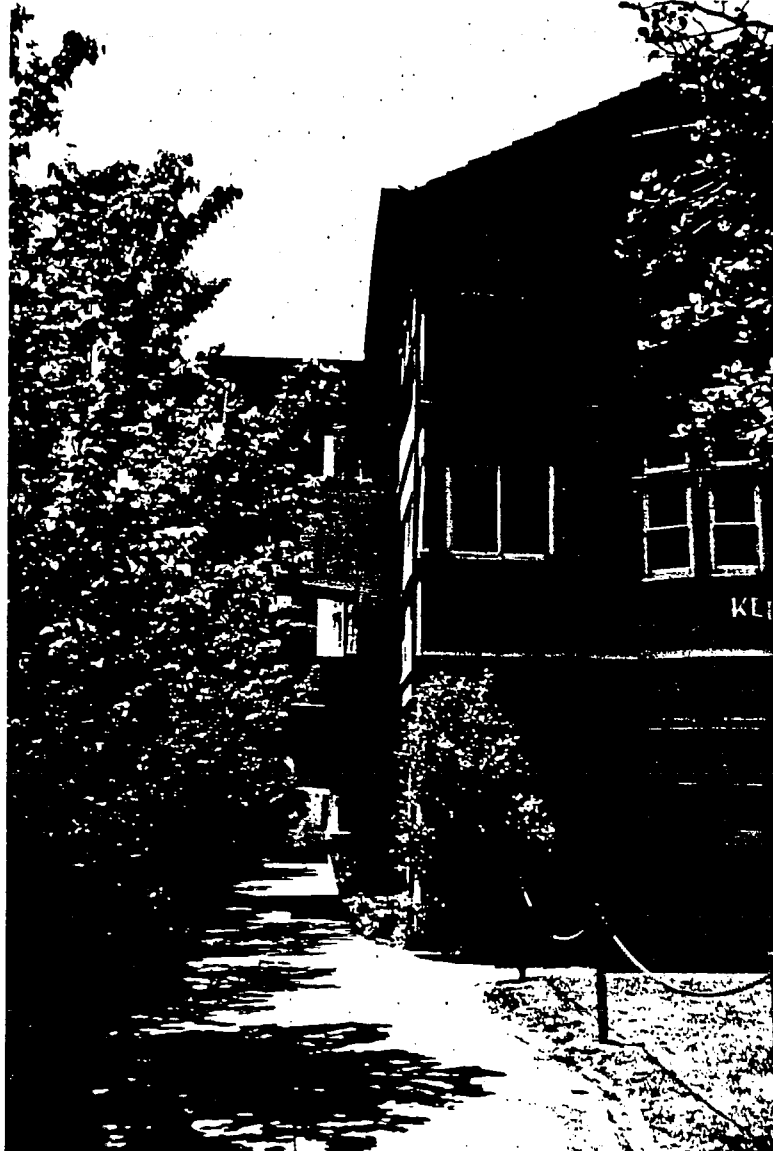
50. City of Prahran Rate Book 1922-23 Windsor Ward No 13710.

51. City of Prahran Rate Book 1928-29 Windsor Ward Nos. 14730,14731, 14732,14733.

52. Terry Sawyer, 'Residential Flats in Melbourne,' p.109.

53. City of Prahran Rate Book 1932-33 Windsor Ward Nos.14757-14762.

symmetrical front elevation with brick panels dividing the bays and forming buttresses at ground level. The upper two stories are identical while the ground floor has porthole windows in place of the balconies above. An unusual feature for the time is the side staircase with landings overhanging the driveway. The fence is an integral part of the original design with the balcony motif echoed in the brick section.



Significance

Kelvin Mansions has state significance as an example of the flat development which became a notable feature of residential development in the City of Prahran from the 1920s. Built by 1923 with additions in 1932, Kelvin Mansions has architectural significance as an example of the application of a combination of styles in this novel building type. This building has some unusual design features including the side entrances to the flats, and the fence, an integral part of the original design.

Sources

Australian Home Beautiful, 1 August 1932, p.25.

City of Prahran Rate Books, Windsor Ward.

MMBW House Cover No. 119261.

Sawyer, Terry, 'Residential Flats in Melbourne,' Research Report, Univ. of Melbourne, 1982.

Analysis & Recommendations

It is recommended that this property be retained at A1 level.