

'Rotherhithe'

58 Andrew Street, Windsor

Place type: Residential Buildings (private), House

Significance level: Local



Recommended protection: Planning Scheme

Architectural style: Victorian Period (1851-1901) Italianate

Locality history

Windsor lies in the south-west corner of the former City of Prahran, bounded by Punt Road, High Street, Dandenong Road and Williams Road. Windsor developed as a distinctive pocket of smaller, more affordable housing for the working-class (servants, labourers, skilled tradespeople) and the lower middle class (shopkeepers, mechanics, salesmen). Following the first land sales in the 1840s and 1850s, small timber and brick cottages were erected along either side of narrow streets. In 1855 there was not a single large house within the bounds of Windsor (Kearney, 1855). An early suburban railway station was opened in Windsor in 1859, as part of the private Hobsons Bay line, which encouraged housing development in the immediate vicinity.

The small houses of the working-class in Windsor were rudimentary, and families lived cheek by jowl in narrow streets. Cottages had minimal land and there was little public open space. Community life was lived on the streets, as well as in the churches, schools and other places of learning. Local men and women (and children over 14) were employed in local shops and

factories and in service positions for the big houses, as well as all manner of occupations, for example with the railways, as labourers in construction work, and as carters and delivery men. Many women and girls were employed as outworkers in the textile industry and as off-site whiteworkers (laundress who wash white clothes and manchester) for the big houses. Women with little financial support often took in boarders to help make ends meet.

The busy commercial strip of Chapel Street provided a focal point for Windsor, though the quality of commercial buildings at the Windsor end were somewhat inferior to the South Yarra end. All manner of traders operated along Chapel Street and a tramline was constructed in 1888, which brought more shoppers. There were also a number of hotels, both on Chapel Street and in small side-streets.

Unlike other areas of the City of Stonnington, Windsor contains a predominance of working-class housing. Examples can be seen in the small narrow streets on the east side of Chapel Street such as McIlwrick Street (formerly Hanover Street, but renamed during World War I), and the block of streets between Chapel Street and Punt Road. A handful of early cottages from the 1850s and 1860s survive. Housing development continued through the boom years of Melbourne in the 1880s and early 1890s, with many small cottages improved and replaced by larger dwellings.

Place history

John W. Clapham, coachbuilder, was rated £30 in 1888 for a 4-roomed timber house on this site. The following year, he was rated £40 for a 7-roomed brick and timber house, for which he was the owner-occupier (RB). It is likely that some of the timber house was incorporated at the rear of the new dwelling. In the 1880s, the house was no. 44 Andrew Street. In 1900 the house was referred to as 'Rotherhithe' (*Argus* 25 August 1900).

In 1954, a real estate advertisement for 58 Andrew Street described the house as a 'well-situated D.F. BK and W.B. Villa, 3 Bedrooms, lounge, diningroom, mod. Kit., S.S.S., Eating alcove, Mod. Bathrm. ...' (*Age* 1 May 1954).

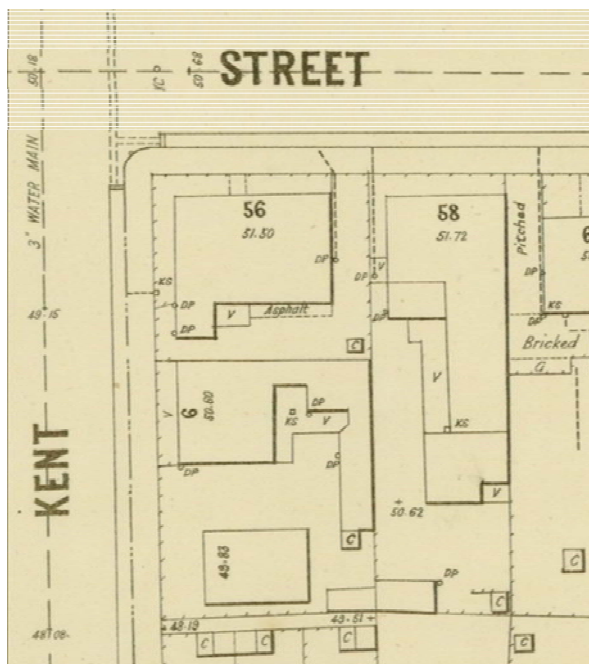


Figure 1. MMBW detail plan no. 963, dated 1898. Note the long rear wing of no. 58, in two parts, which may have encompassed the earlier timber house (since demolished). (source: SLV).

Sources

Argus 25 August 1900 (wedding notice; refers to the house as 'Rotherhithe').

Age 1 May 1954 (auction notice).

Brown-May, Andrew and Shurlee Swain (eds) 2005, *Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, www.emelbourne.net.au, accessed 26 June 2016.

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Kearney, James 1855, *Plan of Melbourne and Suburbs*, Melbourne.

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Sands & McDougall. *Melbourne and Suburban Directories* (S&McD).

Whitworth, Robert P. 1879, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer and Road Guide*, Baillieres, Melbourne.

Wilde, Sally 1993, *The History of Prahran Volume II, 1925-1890*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton.

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Physical description

'Rotherhithe', at 58 Andrew Street, Windsor, is a diminutive single-storey Italianate house. Walls are of brown Hawthorn brick with cream and red brick dressings, below a rendered parapet to the front and west elevations. The little house sits behind a very shallow front garden. The house is built to the boundary on the east side, with a resultant blank wall (without a parapet). There is a small setback on the west side, allowing for a path to the side entrance.

The façade is dominated by two oversized windows with cream brick quoins and a red and cream brick flat arch. The windows are double-hung sashes divided from sidelights by barley twist colonnettes. There are also cream brick quoins to the corners of the house.

The rendered parapet sits above a simple moulded cornice, and wraps around the west side of the house. It is divided horizontally in two by a moulded beltcourse, and vertically by six small piers to the façade. Between the central piers is a semi-circular pediment. The bases for orb or urns survive at the corners. The cornice details are echoed by the two rendered chimneys with moulded cornices.

The house is highly intact apart from the replacement of the front entrance hood (set well back to the west side), and the construction of a recessive single-storey extension behind it. There has been some repointing to the façade with hard cement mortar, which is causing deterioration to the soft cream bricks.

The house sits behind a very sympathetic metal palisade fence, which is recent in date.

Comparative analysis

The prevalence of attached housing types is very clearly related to the subdivision and settlement patterns of the different suburbs. For example, all terrace rows assessed in the Victorian Houses Heritage Study are located in Windsor. As noted by the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context, 2009) in the first land sales in the 1840s:

At Windsor on the south-west corner of the study area, the blocks were smaller and brought the highest price per acre, presumably because of their proximity to the already developing suburb of St Kilda, from which settlement was expected to flow. This corner was soon subdivided for working-class housing and small shops.

This early subdivision pattern has had a lasting impact on Windsor, with small allotment sizes leading to development of denser dwelling types than elsewhere in Stonnington. Both early examples of terrace rows with unbroken roofs and eaves are seen in Windsor, as well as later examples with expressed party walls.

While Windsor had by far the densest 19th-century development in Stonnington, inner-suburban South Yarra also had a number of semi-detached terrace house pairs, which was an intermediate density. Further to the east, in Armadale and Malvern, as well as Windsor and

South Yarra, we see large single terrace houses on wider blocks with space between them. While not attached, they were often built in rows.

Almost all Victorian terraces could be described as Italianate in style, though some lean toward the more substantial Renaissance Revival. There are also a very small number of Gothic Revival examples.

The Italianate style had its origins in the landscape paintings of Nicholas Poussin and Claude Lorrain over a century earlier. These two French artists were enamoured with the landscapes and architecture of rural Italy, depicting it as a vision of Arcadia. Their efforts inspired a broader pursuit of 'the Picturesque' in architecture (Statham 2008).

Through the first half of the nineteenth century, the Italianate style spread widely in Britain fuelled by the works of architects such as John Nash and Charles Barry and through designs promoted in pattern books such as Charles Parker's *Villa Rustica* (1832). In 1845, the style received Royal endorsement when Prince Albert, working with architect Thomas Cubitt, designed 'Osbourne' on the Isle of Wight as a retreat for Queen Victoria and the Royal family. 'Osbourne' with its plain stuccoed expression and tall balustraded tower would become the model for many large residences throughout the Empire including Government House in Melbourne.

The style, which emerged as the preferred expression for Melbourne's grandest mansions of the mid-century, was quickly adapted to suit more modest suburban villas and terraces. As Hubbard (2012:357) notes:

Flexibility and adaptability were the secrets to the success of the Italianate style. It could range from the simplest of buildings to the grandest. It was not a precise style and could accommodate different levels of architectural sophistication. It could be formally symmetrical or informally asymmetrical. While towers were standard, they might be reduced to just a porch. The style was easy to copy and could be used by speculative builders buying stock items for decoration. Most importantly, the Italianate style used the vocabulary of classical architecture freely but sparingly, generally with relatively plain expanses of wall and hipped roofs with bracketed eaves.

As the style evolved to accommodate less substantial residential types, the deliberate asymmetry and rambling form inspired by the Picturesque massing of wings and towers of buildings such as Osbourne became less central to the mode. So much so that the Italianate terrace forms of the 1880s were not substantially different to their forebears of a generation earlier apart from an appliqué of 'Italian' detailing.

The Italianate house is so common in the Melbourne area that this is the standard image people hold of the 'Victorian house'. Condensed to its key features, they would be a hipped roof with an M-profile (i.e. having a central valley to the rear half, which allows a low ridgeline), bracketed eaves, chimneys with a cornice at the top (a run cement-render moulding), and a timber or iron-framed verandah with cast-iron ornament to all but the grandest houses. Common extras included a faceted (canted) bay used to create an asymmetric composition (or occasionally used symmetrically), and windows that had a round or segmental arched opening, some of which were embellished with run cement-render mouldings or delicate hood moulds.

The development of the former City of Prahran and the western part of the former City of Malvern coincides with the emergence of the Italianate forms of expression in Victoria. Consequently, the City of Stonnington retains a disproportionate number of Melbourne's better examples of the mode. A number of these, typically the grandest and most elaborate mansions or those associated with Victoria's most notable families, have been added to the Victorian Heritage Register. These include: 'Toorak House', 'Greenwich House' and 'Mandeville Hall', in Toorak; 'Stonington' in Malvern; and 'Malvern House' in Glen Iris.

There are a number of small to medium-sized Italianate houses that are individually significant in the Stonnington Heritage Overlay, most of them in the western side of the municipality. Most of them are the asymmetrical type, with a projecting bay to one side of the façade creating additional visual interest. A smaller number of the Significant houses are the symmetrical type, with a double-fronted flat façade. Examples of this type include the restrained polychrome brick 36 Gladstone Street, Windsor (in HO134), the polychrome brick

35 McIlwrick, Windsor (in HO138), the timber 29 Donald Street, Prahran (in HO456), and the row of bichrome brick houses at 12-20 Greville Street, Prahran (in HO456).



Figure 2. A typical polychrome brick Italianate house at 35 McIlwrick Street, Windsor (Significant in HO138). (source: Google Streetview).

'Rotherhithe' is quite typical in its polychrome brickwork, with brown Hawthorn bricks for the walls and cream brick quoining at building corners and around window and door openings, with a restrained use of red bricks for banded flat arches over the windows. The double-hung sash windows with sidelights are more prestigious than the standard double-hung windows but not especially unusual, though in this case they are much larger than usual, dominating the front façade.

All of the above Italianate villas have exposed eaves, unlike the parapeted walls of 'Rotherhithe'. In this aspect, it is more like the terrace houses of the late 1880s and 1890s, of which most have cement rendered walls and parapet. A few examples combine face brickwork with a rendered parapet, the most comparable example being the single-storey terrace row at 39-49 Chatsworth Road, Prahran (in HO127).



Figure 3. Terrace house at 39 Chatsworth Road, Prahran. Part of a long terrace (Significant in HO127). (source: Google Streetview)

In comparison with this example, as well as the majority of parapeted terrace houses of the late 1880s and early 1890s, 'Rotherhithe' adopts similar forms such as the arched pediment with a panel below, but uses a simpler solid balustrade instead of the urn balusters typically used.

This simplified parapet, as well as the oversized front windows, create a rather naïve composition, suggesting the efforts of a local builder to make a modest-sized house smart and up to date. 'Rotherhithe' also stands out from other modest houses of the 1880s due to its unusual massing – with the parapet returning along the entrance side elevation – and the (original) lack of a verandah. In summary, it is a very unusual version of the single-fronted Italianate brick house.

Thematic context

This place illustrates the following themes, as identified in the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, rev. 2009):

8.5.1 'Struggletown' - working-class housing in the nineteenth & early twentieth century

Assessment against criteria

Assessment of this place was carried out in relation to the HERCON model criteria as set out in the VPP Practice Note 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' (2015).

Statement of significance

What is significant?

'Rotherhithe', at 58 Andrew Street, Windsor, is significant. The brick house was constructed in 1888-89 for owner-occupier John Clapham, a coachbuilder.

This small single-storey Italianate house has walls of polychrome brick, a cement-rendered parapet and corniced chimneys.

The metal palisade front fence, though a sympathetic restoration, and the contemporary rear extension which sits behind the original hipped roof section are not significant.

How is it significant?

'Rotherhithe' is of local aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

Aesthetically, 'Rotherhithe' is distinguished for its unusual composition incorporating oversized details to the front façade, particularly the large sash windows with sidelights and barley-twist colonnettes, as well as the comparatively grand panelled parapet wall with a semicircular central pediment. Unlike most small-scale parapeted houses, the parapet returns around the side elevation, and it was designed without a front verandah with the entrance set back to one side. While the design is a naïve interpretation of fashionable houses of the late 1880s, it is a successful and attractive design. (Criterion E)

Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay to the extent of the whole property as defined by the title boundaries.

HO Schedule controls: None



Figure 4: Recommended extent of heritage overlay for 58 Andrew Street, Windsor (source: www.land.vic.gov.au).

Recommended grading: A2