

‘Westbourne Terrace’

20-30 Duke Street, Windsor

Place type: Residential Buildings (private), Terrace

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. 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 whites) 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. The suburb was reduced in area in the 1960s when the new road Queensway was built in the 1960s and a slice of south-west Windsor was taken off; and the area on the south side of Queensway became part of St Kilda (Wilde 1993:142).

Place history

A row of six single-storey terrace houses was constructed here in 1879. The site was vacant in 1878, when it was owned by John Earl, dealer, according to rate books. In 1879 the brick houses of 4 rooms each had been erected (numbered 12-22 Duke Street at that time). The owners William Nicholls and John Stewart were charged rates of £24 per house (RB). Margaret Harwod became the owner in 1891 (RB).

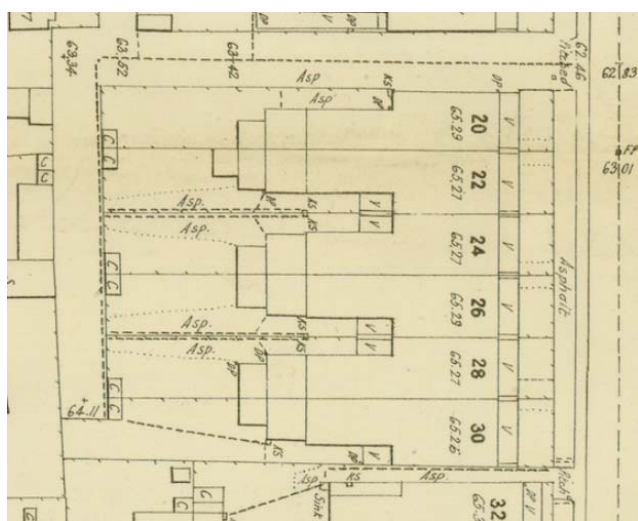


Figure 1. MMBW detail plan no. 965, dated 1896 (source: SLV).

The MMBW detail plan of 1896 shows the terrace row with each of the three pairs of adjacent houses sharing an extended party wall through to the rear wings. Each house has a small front verandah and a smaller enclosed verandah on the side.

These dwellings were largely tenanted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. A real estate advertisement of 1953 described the houses as 6 brick terraces with brick laundries (Age, 1 July 1953).

Sources

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Physical description

'Westbourne Terrace', at 20-30 Duke Street, Windsor, is a terrace row of single-fronted, single storey brick houses. They share a transverse gable roof, unbroken by party walls, which indicates their relatively early date. Walls are of brown Hawthorn bricks with cream brick dressings. Front verandahs are divided by wing walls and have shallow concave roofs. On the west side is a bluestone pitched laneway.

The most distinctive features of the terrace row is its parapet and chimneys. The parapet sits above a bracketed cornice (both brackets and cornice of moulded cream bricks, on a background of red brick). It is divided at each party wall by a cream brick pier with diaper patterns in Hawthorn brick. There may have been urn or orbs on each pier originally. Between the piers is a band of plain Hawthorn brick at the base, above which is an intricate balustrade of moulded cream bricks. There are openings in the balustrade in the form of elongated quatrefoils, which gives the impression of masonry balusters. Over the central two dwellings (nos. 24-26) is a semi-circular pediment defined by moulded cream bricks with a cement render tympanum emblazoned with 'Westbourne Terrace' in raised lettering. The chimneys are of Hawthorn brick with a corbelled top resting on cream brick brackets. On each side of the shaft is a flat panel of cement render, with scalloped corners, giving a very distinctive appearance.



Figure 2. Detail of the parapet balustrade and chimney to 26 Duke Street (source: Context 2016).

Each house has a single double-hung sash window with a bluestone sill and cream brick quoining, as does the front door, with a four-panelled door and highlight window. The front walls are primarily of Hawthorn brick, with three cream brick bands and a simple cream and red brick diaper pattern below the window.

Only one house retains its original verandah cast-iron: a heavy frieze with a leaf motif and no brackets, at no. 22 (though the cast-iron post to this verandah appears to be a later insertion).



Figure 3. Detail of the intact façade of no. 22, with the later cast-iron verandah columns (source: Context 2016).

The parapet and chimneys are all highly intact, but there are more alterations below verandah level. These include overpainting either of the whole wall below verandah level (nos. 20 & 30) or just to the cream brick dressings (no. 28), rendering of the bricks below the verandah (no. 26); replacement of the front door (nos. 20 & 24); sandblasting of the brick (nos. 22 & 24); and all have lost their original cast-iron verandah frieze apart from no. 22. There are two-storey rear extensions to 28 and 30 Duke Street (constructed in 2009 and 1996, respectively), as well as at no. 20 (which is the only one visible, from the side lane).

There is a bluestone pitched laneway that runs behind the terrace row and along the west side of no. 20, at the west end. It is surviving street infrastructure from the nineteenth century and provides an appropriate setting to the row.

Comparative analysis

The terraced house form was introduced from Britain and characterises inner suburban development from the 1850s to the 1890s in Australia's capital cities. A terrace house is defined as a dwelling with blind boundary walls, designed to fit on a narrow building block. While the most common type of terrace house in Melbourne is the terrace row, of three or more houses sharing party walls, the terrace house was also built in pairs (semi-detached) and even singly where more space was available (Tibbits & Goad 2012:695).

Terrace houses typically have a full-width front section two rooms deep, with a narrower rear wing with a cut-back to one side allowing windows along it. The privy was located at the rear of the site, often built in pairs. Early examples (generally up to the mid-1880s in Melbourne's suburbs) of terrace rows and semi-detached pairs often have a continuous roof, eaves and

verandahs unbroken by party walls. Later in the century, suburban building regulations dictated visible party walls extending out and up to divide verandahs and roofs, as well as parapet walls. These regulations dictated the form of what is now considered a 'typical' terrace house: single or two-storey dwelling with a strong vertical line defining the extent of each dwelling and the parapet used as the focus for cast-cement and cement-render ornament.

The very earliest terrace houses, in early suburbs such as Fitzroy, followed the British model and did not have a front verandah. As this form was adapted to the hotter Australian climate, timber-framed verandahs were added at ground floor level (even for two and three-storey houses). From the 1860s to the 1890s, a distinctive Australian terrace idiom emerged, embellished with cement decoration and full-height verandahs employing cast-iron posts, balustrades, and decorative brackets and frieze (Tibbits & Goad 2012:695-7). Some of the more prestigious examples used masonry arcading (usually rendered brick) instead of the mass-produced cast-iron verandah construction.

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 2006) 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 nineteenth-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.

There were three general types of cladding for Italianate houses. The most modest were clad in timber weatherboards or blocked boards emulating expensive ashlar. The two most common types were finished in cement render or face brick. Rendered houses could obtain a high level of run and cast ornament at an affordable price, leading to some highly embellished examples. All, even the most modest, had ruled render with incised lines to emulate the more expensive stone construction. Face brickwork was also common, usually dark brown Hawthorn bricks with cream brick dressings (bichrome) from the late 1860s, and later in the century with red brick accents as well (polychrome). Some architects and designer-builders created bold patterns with the coloured bricks. As good building stone was not common in Victoria, very few houses were built of stone. Early examples were of bluestone, such as the grand 'Bishopscourt' in East Melbourne.

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.

Examples of Italianate terrace houses that are of individual significance in Stonnington's Heritage Overlay can be divided into a number of groups according to the number of dwellings (attached or detached), their size, ornament and level of architectural sophistication.

Examples built in the 1870s until about 1885 have exposed eaves to the front (and sometimes to the sides of end walls), and the walls are usually of bichrome or polychrome face brick. Examples include modest single-storey examples such as the semi-detached double-fronted pair at 4-6 Frederick Street, Windsor (in HO138); the terrace rows at 13-17 McIlwrick Street, Windsor (in HO138); 69-77 Hornby Street, Windsor (in HO129); 21-25 Portland Place, South Yarra (in HO145); and 15-27 Greville Street, Prahran (in HO456); the semi-detached pairs at 16-18 Donald Street, Prahran (in HO456); and the terrace row of two-storey double-fronted houses at 58-68 Caroline Street, South Yarra (in HO355).

Larger houses with exposed eaves and face brick are two-storey detached houses at 10 McIlwrick Street, Windsor (in HO138); 85 Rose Street, Armadale (in HO130), 118 Williams Road, Prahran (in HO155); 36 Hawksburn Road, South Yarra (in HO137); and 8 Cromwell Crescent, South Yarra (in HO147); and two-storey semi-detached houses at 21-23, 29-31 & 38-40 Hawksburn Road, South Yarra (in HO137). Less common are examples with walls finished in cement render include the two-storey terrace row at 200-210 Williams Road, Toorak (in HO380); the two-storey semi-detached pair at 52-54 Chatsworth Road, Prahran (in HO127); and the very grand detached two-storey house at 80 Williams Road, Prahran (in HO155).

By the late 1880s, all terrace houses had a front parapet, almost always finished in cement render. The walls below were usually rendered as well. Early examples of this type, which have a low, solid parapet with a cornice along it, include 66-74 Wilson Street, South Yarra (in HO379); and 1-11 Elm Place, Windsor (in HO138). This second example also has a semi-circular name pediment over the central house – a motif that would become ubiquitous by 1890.

‘Westbourne Terrace’, at 20-30 Duke Street, built in 1879, is a very simple example of a parapet-fronted terrace row. The other pre-1885 examples discussed above, which have continuous roofs unbroken by party walls, all have exposed eaves. A rather late exception, with a shared skillion roof, is the two-storey polychrome brick Hopetoun Terrace at 1-11 Elm Place, Windsor of 1889. Like ‘Westbourne Terrace’, it has a central semi-circular pediment displaying its name (made of cement render). Its parapet is very plain, with the only interest created by the moulded cream brick cornice and brackets below it. The cornice and brackets are nearly identical to those at ‘Westbourne Terrace’. It is of a more substantial scale than ‘Westbourne Terrace’, and more intact, but does not have any details comparable in uniqueness or visual interest to its brick parapet.



Figure 4. Hopetoun Terrace, 1-11 Elm Place, Windsor, of 1889 (Significant in HO138) (source: Google Streetview).

In its scale, ‘Westbourne Terrace’ is comparable to single-fronted, single-storey working-class terraces such as 13-17 McIlwrick Street, Windsor (in HO138). This is another early terrace with an undivided transverse gabled roof and bichrome brick walls. It is of a similar level of intactness as ‘Westbourne Terrace’, with a missing chimney and overpainted bricks, loss of verandah detail and twentieth century doors.

Another terrace row of working-class cottages that is distinguished by brickwork details (the piers between the windows) as well as its length is 15-27 Greville Street, Prahran (graded A2). As at ‘Westbourne Terrace’, there are some alterations, particularly the overpainting of the cream brick dressings as well as the conversion of a window into French doors, but all but one house retains its cast-iron frieze. It is marginally more intact than ‘Westbourne Terrace’, but its detailing is not nearly as unusual.



Figure 5. 15-27 Greville Street, Prubran (Significant in HO456) (source: Google Streetview).

In conclusion, there are other terraces of a similar, modest scale that are Significant in the Stonnington Heritage Overlay.

Thematic context

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

8.4.2 *Functional, eccentric & theatrical - experimentation & innovation in architecture*

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?

'Westbourne Terrace', at 20-30 Duke Street, Windsor, is significant. This terrace row was constructed in 1879 as rental properties.

The single-fronted, single-storey Italianate dwellings are constructed of Hawthorn bricks with cream brick dressings. The transverse gable roof is unbroken by party walls, though the verandahs have wing walls. The most distinctive features of the terrace row is its brick parapet and panelled polychrome brick chimneys. Over the central two dwellings (nos. 24-26) is a semi-circular pediment defined by moulded cream bricks with a cement render tympanum emblazoned with 'Westbourne Terrace' in raised lettering. Number 22 has the highest level of intactness, retaining its cast-iron frieze.

The laneway to the west of and behind the terrace row is paved with bluestone pitches and provides an appropriate nineteenth century setting.

Later alterations, including new windows and doors, rear extensions and overpainting of brickwork, are not significant.

How is it significant?

'Westbourne Terrace' is of local aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

Aesthetically for the distinctive parapet design of the terrace, which displays a high level of creativity despite the modest means of these working-class houses. It is an early example of a parapet-fronted terrace for Stonnington with a balustrade constructed of moulded cream bricks that mimic balusters in profile. At the centre is a semi-circular pediment bearing the terrace's name. Another effective, though inexpensive, detail is that of the chimneys. They are of Hawthorn brick with a corbelled top resting on cream brick brackets, and flat rendered panels with scalloped corners on each side, giving a very distinctive appearance. (Criterion E)

Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay to the extent of the whole properties at 20-30 Duke Street as defined by the title boundaries, as well as the laneway along the west and south boundaries of these properties.

HO Schedule controls: None



Figure 6. Recommended extent of heritage overlay for 20-30 Duke Street, Windsor (source: www.land.vic.gov.au)

Recommended grading: A2