

'Antiope' and 'Cassiope'

30 & 32 Lewisham Road, Windsor

Place type: Residential Buildings (private), Houses

Significance level: Local



'Antiope', 30 Lewisham Road (source: Domain.com.au, nd.)



'Cassiope', 32 Lewisham Road (source: City of Stonnington, 2004)

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. 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; the area on the south side of Queensway became part of St Kilda (Wilde 1993:142).

Place history

The two brick villas at 30 & 32 Lewisham Road, Windsor, were under construction in 1888 according to the City of Prahran rate books. Edward Vail was the owner of the properties. Vail was a London-born solicitor who had arrived in Melbourne in 1852, and it was claimed on his death that Vail erected the first tent in 'Canvas Town' in July 1852. Vail was an early landowner in the Gardiner district and was an early member of the Gardiner Roads Board (subsequently the Shire of Malvern). Later, he also served as a councillor for the City of Prahran (1863-1873). Vail acquired several properties in the area (SHC).

The two villas in Lewisham Road were presumably nearing completion in 1888 with rates charged to Vail of £50 (RB). The architect or builder of the houses is not known. Both houses were leased out by the following year. In 1893 Vail was rated for two brick houses at Lewisham Road of 8 rooms at £60 each. Through the 1890s, both houses in Lewisham Road were leased out. No 32 was leased to Louis Mason, and then Edward Mason from the 1890s to after 1917. Vail remained the owner of both houses until his death in 1917 (RB).

The MMBW detail plan of 1898 shows a pair of matching villa residences, each with a bay window and front verandah. The two dwellings shared a central right of way.

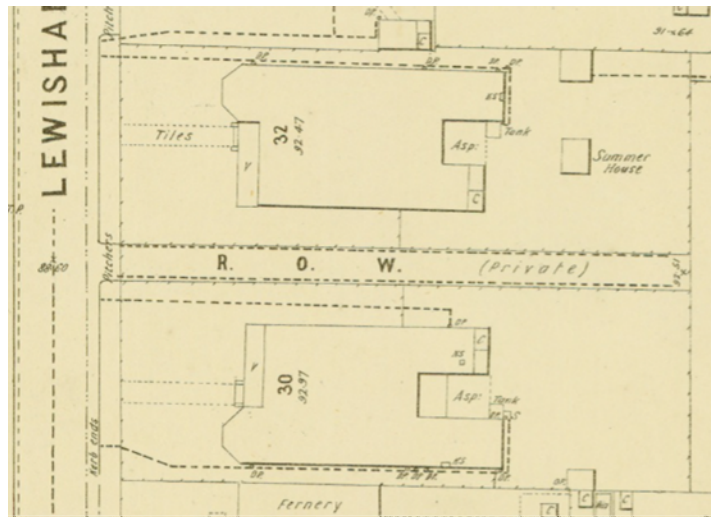


Figure 1. MMBW Detail Plan no. 1005, dated 1898 (SLV).

Edward Vail moved into 30 Lewisham Road sometime after 1900. In 1917, he was residing at 'Antiope', 30 Lewisham Road, Windsor, when he passed away. The flag at the Prahran Town Hall was flown at half-mast out of respect to him as a significant early councillor (*Prahran Telegraph*, 19 May 1917). The following month, the two brick villas were advertised for sale by auction as Lot 1 'Antiope', 30 Lewisham Road and Lot 2 'Cassiope', 32 Lewisham Road. The dwellings were described as follows (*Argus*, 27 June 1917):

Lot 1 – "Antiope" No 30 Lewisham Rd – A well-built BRICK VILLA, slate roof, 6 rooms, kitchen, maid's room, bathroom, pantry, front tiled verandah and enclosed back verandah, detached iron, coal, wood, and tool house; ... front and back garden, lawn &c. ...

Lot 2 – "Cassiope" No. 32 Lewisham Rd – A similar BRICK VILLA, of 6 rooms, bathroom, kitchen, pantry, scullery, and wash-house, front tiled verandah, and enclosed back verandah, wood and coal shed; let to Mr Edward George Mason, on a monthly tenancy...

An auction sale of the contents of 'Antiope' at 30 Lewisham Rd followed in late July. Subsequent occupants of 30 Lewisham Road include Mr Bartoli, Consul-General for the Argentine Republic (1926).

Sources

Argus, 30 July 1889 (advertisement for servant: 30 Lewisham Road).

Argus, 27 June 1917 (sale of two villas).

Argus, 14 July 1917 (sale of furniture: 30 Lewisham Road).

Argus, 12 January 1927 (30 Lewisham Road).

Argus, 7 September 1932 (30 Lewisham Road).

Argus, 15 July 1935 (30 Lewisham Road).

Argus, 30 January 1940 (30 Lewisham Road).

Argus, 15 December 1944 (30 Lewisham Road).

Australasian, 19 June 1926 (30 Lewisham Road).

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

City of Prahran, Rate Books (RB).

Context Pty Ltd 2006, *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History*, City of Stonnington, Prahran.

Hubbard, Timothy 'Italianate Style' in Goad, Philip & Willis, Julie (eds.) 2012, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press.

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

MMBW Detail Plan no. 1005, dated 1898, State Library of Victoria (SLV).

Malvern Standard, 19 May 1917 (obituary Edward Luke Vail).

Prabran Telegraph, 26 May 1917 (obituary Edward Luke Vail).

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

Statham, John 2008, 'HO367 Montrose House Heritage Assessment', City of Stonnington [‘The Italianate mode’ quoted and paraphrased at length].

Vail, Edward Luke. Stonnington History Centre (SHC) digital files PH 18272 & PH 18273.

Weekly Times, 16 June 1917 (Will and estate of Edward Vail).

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

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

Victorian Places, www.victorianplaces.com.au, accessed 29 July 2016.

Physical description

The two houses at 30 and 32 Lewisham Road, Windsor, are free-standing, single-storey Italianate villas which are mirror images of each other. They sit behind generous front gardens.

Both houses have rendered walls and a slate-covered hipped roof. No.30 has two rendered chimneys with bracketed cornices, typical of the Italianate style. Eaves brackets to both houses have an acanthus leaf on the face and alternate with a rectangular bas-relief flower. The façades are asymmetrical, with a very large canted projecting bay beneath a semi-hexagonal hipped roof (on the south side at no. 30, and the north side at no. 32, making them mirror images). The walls of both are finished in ruled render with barley twist colonnettes framing the sides of the round-arched windows. At impost level is a cornice of acanthus leaves, which runs across the entire façades. The windows beneath the verandah are full length. The front door of no. 30 retains ruby flashed glass sidelights and highlights. Neither of the front doors were visible.



Figure 2. 30 Lewisham Road, Windsor, while undergoing work in 2016. (source: Context 2016).

The verandahs are accessed by bluestone steps, and are supported by cast-iron Corinthian columns. Both retain a cast-iron frieze and brackets, as well as a dentilated verandah beam. The

verandah roofs may be slightly convex in profile. The most unusual decorative detail of these two houses is a separate concave verandah hood that wraps around the projecting bay. It is supported on simple timber brackets.

Views to the two houses are obscured by high brick front fences. The chimneys to No. 32 have been shortened.

Comparative analysis

As discussed in the Stonnington Thematic Environmental History, section 8.2.2, the suburban house on a garden allotment was an aspiration of many middle-class Victorians:

Davison (1978:145) describes the Victorian cult of the home in the fresh air and tranquillity of the suburbs as a haven from the noise and dirt of the city - the ideal of rus in urbe (country in the city) which, through Victoria's prosperity and the growth of the public transport system, became possible for many working people. For most suburbanites this home was a single-storey detached house surrounded by its own garden. On a visit to Australia in the 1880s, Twopeny (1883:37) noted that this was the almost universal preference of Australians. During the boom of the 1880s many people found their ideal piece of rus in urbe in the Malvern municipality. Here streets of Victorian villas rapidly began to replace market gardens, especially in the vicinity of the railway lines.

The detached house was the typical Victorian house form in the middle-ring suburbs, in areas where the new tram and train lines facilitated travel and allowed lower density development. In this spacious suburban environment, they could be set in large gardens with side setbacks allowing for a return verandah on one or two sides. They were also built in inner suburban areas for better-off residents, but were usually restricted in form with a front verandah only and side walls near the boundaries.

The architectural expression of these small to medium sized houses ranges from quite simple to those lushly embellished on par with much grander houses. In keeping with the dominant style of the Victorian era, most of small to medium detached houses in Stonnington are Italianate in style. The simplest ones have a symmetrical façade with the front door in the centre. Many have added visual interest created by a projecting bay to one side of the façade, and a cast-iron verandah to the other, creating the classic asymmetrical Italianate suburban form. The more pretentious in this group might even have a small tower or suggestion of one.

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.

Examples of Italianate houses that are of individual significance in Stonnington's Heritage Overlay (both in individual HOs and HO precincts) 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.

'Antiope' and 'Cassiope', at 30 & 32 Lewisham Road, Windsor, can be compared to other medium-sized villas, particularly those that adopt the asymmetrical plan form. Examples include more modest houses set on small to medium suburban allotments, including: 11 Avondale Road, Armadale (in HO123), 34 Northcote Road, Armadale (in HO130), 59 Northcote Road, Armadale (in HO130), 103 Kooyong Road, Armadale (in HO130), 14 Donald Street, Prahran (in HO456), 22 Donald Street, Prahran (in HO456), 5 Fawkner Street, South Yarra (in HO131), 71 Tivoli Road, South Yarra (in HO149), 48 Davis Avenue, South Yarra (in HO150), and 46, 50 & 56 The Avenue, Windsor (in HO148).



Figure 3. 59 Northcote Road, Armadale (Significant in HO130). (source: Google Streetview)

In its scale, it compares closely with 59 Northcote Road, which is also a rendered house with a semi-hexagonal bay and front verandah. The level of detail – both to the rendered walls and the unusual verandah hood – is higher than usual when compared to many larger houses with return verandahs, including 11 Avondale Road and 46 The Avenue.



Figure 4. 56 The Avenue, Windsor (Significant in HO148). (source: Google Streetview)

While it is a more sophisticated example, the parapeted rendered villa at 56 The Avenue has a similar level of lively detail.

In summary, the two mirror-image houses at 30 & 32 Lewisham Road are fine examples of modest-scale asymmetrical Italianate villas, with intactness comparable to other examples in the Stonnington Heritage Overlay. They are also distinguished by the high level of moulded

cement detail to their facades, and particularly by the unusual and picturesque verandahs which continue around in a cantilevered form around the projecting canted bay.

Thematic context

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

3.3.3 Speculators and land boomers

8.2 Middle-class suburbs and the suburban ideal

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?

The houses 'Antiope' and 'Cassiope' at 30 & 32 Lewisham Road, Windsor, are significant. They were built in 1888 as rental properties for Edward Vail, an early member of the Gardiner Roads Board (subsequently the Shire of Malvern) who later served as a councillor for the City of Prahran (1863-1873).

The two double-fronted rendered masonry houses are mirror images of each other, clearly constructed by the same builder.

The masonry front fences and contemporary rear extensions are not significant.

How is it significant?

The houses are of local architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

Architecturally, the two houses are fine and intact examples of modest-scale asymmetrical Italianate villas, with typical features including the slate-clad M-profile hipped roof, corniced chimneys (to no. 30), canted projecting bay with a semi-hexagonal hipped roof, front verandah with cast-iron detail, and round-arched windows. (Criterion D)

Aesthetically, they are distinguished by the high level of moulded cement detail to their facades, including bracketed chimney cornices, acanthus-leaf brackets to the eaves interspersed with relief flowers, barley-twist colonnettes at the corners of windows, and an acanthus leaf cornice at impost level. They are also notable for the unusual and picturesque verandah which continues in a cantilevered form around the projecting canted bay. This same verandah form was built elsewhere in the area and these two are the best surviving examples. (Criterion E)

Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay to the extent of the whole properties at 30 & 32 Lewisham Road as defined by the title boundaries.

HO Schedule controls: None

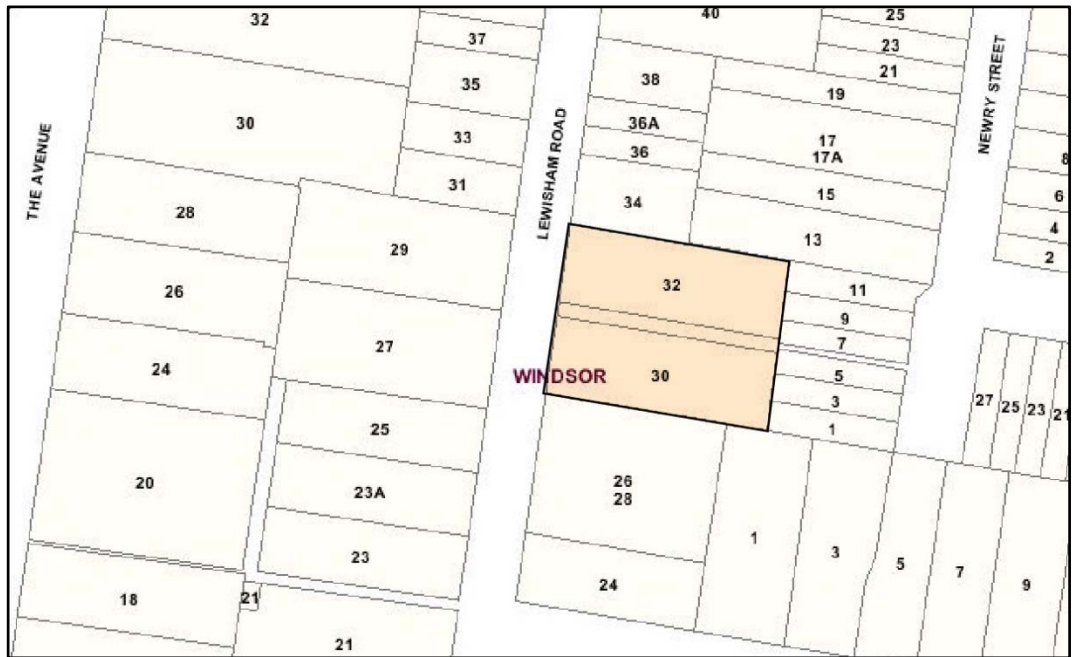


Figure 5. Recommended extent of heritage overlay for the pair at 30 and 32 Lewisisham Road, Windsor (source: www.land.vic.gov.au).

Recommended grading: A2