

64-74 Upton Road, Windsor

Place type: Residential Buildings (private), Terrace

Significance level: Local



64 & 66 Upton Road



68-72 Upton Road

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. The Prahran Mechanics Institute, which encouraged self-improvement (of the mind) among working-class men, opened in High Street in 1856. As was often the case in poorer urban areas, there was a stronger representation of the smaller Nonconformist and independent Protestant denominations in Windsor than elsewhere in Stonnington. For example, the first Salvation Army citadel in Victoria was opened in Windsor in the 1860s (Context 2006:183). The social demographic of Windsor encouraged church and charitable groups to make provision for the poor and the ill. A Catholic order of nuns established Presentation Convent on Dandenong Road in 1873 with a mission to teach girls from poorer Catholic families (Wilde 1993:234). The first school for deaf people in Victoria was opened in Windsor in 1860 (Context 2006:189).

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

The row of terrace houses at 64-74 Upton Road, Windsor, had a different street address in the 1890s, which was 48-58 Hotham Street. Hotham Street was renamed Upton Street around 1907 (RB).

This property was owned by Malcolm McDiarmid in 1889/90 when he was rated for vacant land. In 1890/91 McDiarmid was rated for a terrace of 6 brick dwellings, each containing 4 rooms (RB). There are two party walls between nos. 66 and 68, indicating that the houses were constructed in two groups (64 & 66 and 68-74). This difference is also clearly expressed in the different verandah cast iron and the use of parapets for nos. 64 and 66 only. There is no

indication in Rate Books, however, that any of the terrace houses were completed earlier than the others. They all first appeared in Rate Books, completed and tenanted, the same year, in 1891 (RB). So it appears that one part of this row was begun well before the other, but that they were both completed at around the same time.

In 1893 Malcolm McDiarmid sold numbers 64-70 to August Hefter. There were subsequently many changes in ownership and residency from 1901. The houses were almost always tenanted (RB).

The MMBW Detail Plan no. 1005, dated 1898, shows the houses numbered 48-58 Hotham Street. They are modest, narrow dwellings, each with a front verandah. Each house has a fitted inside bath which was a sign of comfort and sophistication for working-class homes in 1898.

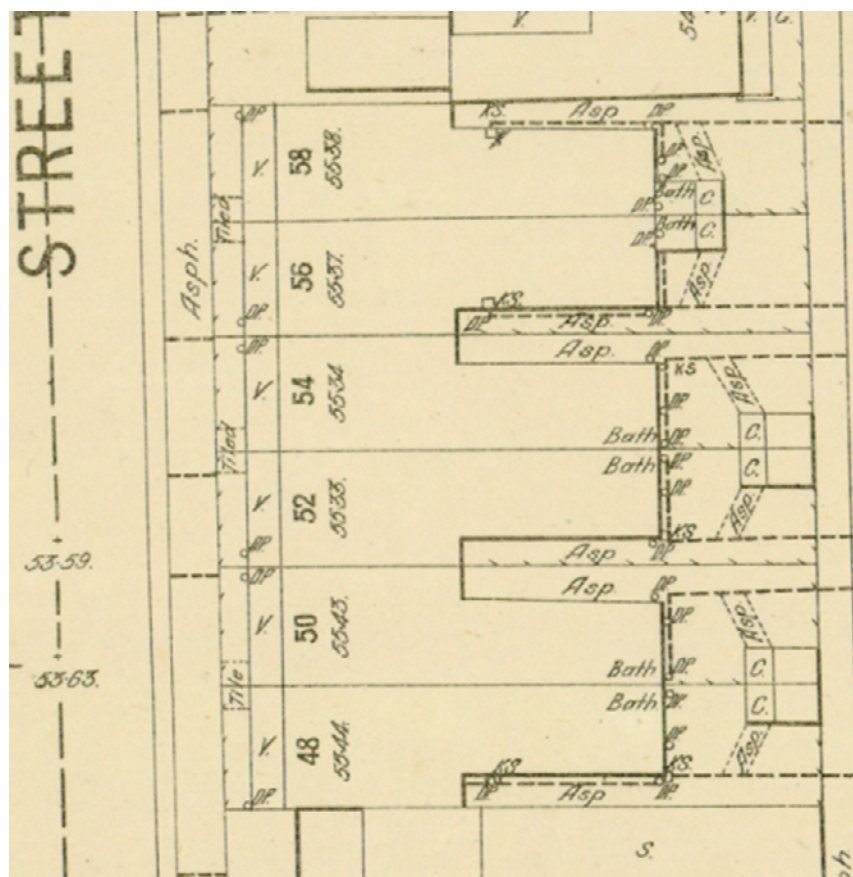


Figure 1. MMBW Detail Plan no. 964, dated 1896 (source: SLV).

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Physical description

The six houses at 64-74 Upton Road, Windsor, comprise a terrace row built in two stages, as indicated by a double party wall between nos. 66 and 68. While the two groups differ in some important details, they share other details that indicate their joint authorship.

Each house has a separate roof, clad in corrugated iron (probably original at nos. 72 and 74), and divided by a valley gutter. The roofs of nos. 64 and 66 are gabled at the front, where they meet the parapet, and hipped at the back, while those at nos. 68-74 are fully hipped with eaves at the front. All have a narrower rear wing, which share one party wall with a neighbour.

All of the houses have front walls of tuckpointed Hawthorn brick with cream brick dressings in lively patterns, as well as red bricks to the blind arches of the verandah wing walls. The cream bricks are used as zigzag quoins around windows, doors and corners, banded segmental arches to openings, and diaper patterns below the front window (a single motif at nos. 64 & 66; a band of them at nos. 68-74). The houses at nos. 68-74 also have a diaper pattern alternating with paired brackets to the eaves. All houses have a large sash window with sidelights set off by barley twist colonnettes with a boss at the centre. The window sills of nos. 64 & 66 are squared bluestone, while those at nos. 68-74 are of moulded cement. The front doors have four fielded panels and a highlight, with sidelights as well at nos. 64 & 66. The houses also share the same distinctive chimney form: a rendered Italianate form with a cornice, ornamented by vermiculated panels on each face. The houses at nos. 64 & 68 retain their original cream and terracotta biscuit tile floor.



Figure 2. Detail of the parapet of no. 64 (and part no. 66), showing the ochre-yellow limewash to the render. (source: Context 2016)

The most striking differences between the two groups are the contrasting use of parapet or eaves, and in the verandah detail. Numbers 64 & 66 have parapeted fronts, while the remaining houses have bracketed eaves. The parapets of nos. 64 & 66 have ornate classical detail with a dentilated cornice and rows of balusters flanking a dentilated round-arched pediment. The pediment is open at its centre, framing an elegant and fluidly modelled shell motif. The pediment was flanked by cast-concrete orbs (only one survives at no. 64), with cast-concrete urns at the ends of the parapet. The parapets retain traces of an original or early ochre limewash, seen best below the cornice and on the shell, as well as on the verandah end walls. It is rare for nineteenth-century houses to retain their original painted finish.

The verandahs all have slightly concave roofs (generally replaced with straight iron). All have stop-chamfered verandah beams resting on a single Corinthian column. The frieze and bracket pattern seen at nos. 64 & 66 is a popular design featuring a vase with three flowers and a quarter-round bracket. The cast iron used for nos. 68-74 is a heavier and less common pattern featuring fern fronds in a fleur-de-lys motif.

Alterations include an attic-storey extension at the very rear of no. 66 (of 2005), the replacement of front doors c1910 at nos. 68 & 70, the removal of the kitchen (rear) chimneys at nos. 64-70, overpainting of cream bricks at no. 74, and the replacement of the front door with a sympathetic reproduction at no. 70.

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.

As Melbourne's land boom reached its height in the late 1880s and early 1890s, both grand and small houses in the Italianate mode were covered with increasingly florid and extravagant ornament, some of it straying beyond Italianate's traditional classical vocabulary. These houses are often referred to as 'Boom Style', particularly small terrace houses with enormous showy parapets. While the most common type of 'Boom Style' house is related to the Italianate, it can also be applied to other types of buildings of that era, including the Gothic Revival Olderfleet Buildings and the Renaissance Revival Block Arcade, both in Melbourne. Kohan and Willis (2012:97) note that "Boom Style" is not a definable style but instead a compositional approach with richly adorned facades.

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 (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. Examples of terrace houses with a fully-fledged parapet, often with cast-concrete balustrades and a pediment at the centre of the row or above each house include the single-storey house at 1 Northcote Road, Armadale (in HO130); two-storey rows at 45-55 Greville Street, Prahran (in HO456); 167-179 Williams Road, South Yarra (in HO142); 74-80 Sutherland Road, Armadale (in HO397); 167-179 Williams Road, South Yarra (in HO142); 6-18 Avoca Street, South Yarra (in HO150); and 286-292 Williams Road, Toorak (in HO155); two-storey detached houses at 906 Malvern Road, Armadale (in HO130); and two-storey semi-detached houses at 17-19 Hawksburn Road, South Yarra (in HO137); 1-1A Evelina Road, Toorak (in HO380); and the particularly ornate 11-13 Cromwell Road, South Yarra (HO228). The most ornate of these houses are considered Boom-style examples of the Italianate.

Most of the parapeted examples have a render finish to both the parapet and walls, but there are a few examples that pair face brick with a rendered parapet. Examples are the group of free-standing terrace houses in Stanhope Street, Malvern (44-52, 88 & 92 Stanhope Street, various HO numbers), and the single-storey row at 39-49 Chatsworth Road, Prahran (in

HO127). An extremely fine example is the row at 131-135 Williams Road, Prahran (in HO155), which has a parapet to the central dwelling but eaves and a witch's hat roof to the sides, as well as generous return verandahs. The two-storey semi-detached pair at 31-33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra (in HO137) is also very fine, with face brick and pinnacles used in its unusual parapet. The detached house at 62 Tivoli Road, South Yarra (in HO149) has exuberant polychrome brickwork and a parapet incorporating face brick and render.

The houses at 39-49 Chatsworth Road, Prahran, are a typical example of a small Boom-style terrace row. Walls are of polychrome brick in a simple pattern (all but one house is overpainted), rendered and corniced chimneys, and parapets with a central segmental arched pediment set between balustrades. The houses retain their heavy cast-iron friezes. In comparison, the row at 64-74 Upton Road is somewhat more intact, and the design of the parapets is far more sophisticated.



Figure 3. 39-43 Chatsworth Road, Prahran (Significant in HO127) (source: Google Streetview).

The quality of the polychrome brickwork of the houses, particularly of 68-74 Upton Road, is of equal or greater interest to that of any of the modest terraces, including 69-77 Hornby Street, Windsor; 1-11 Elm Place, Windsor; 15-27 Greville Street, Prahran; and 16-18 Donald Street, Prahran. The intactness of the terrace row compares very well with all examples, retaining all verandah cast-iron, the biscuit tiles to two verandah floors, and even the yellow colourwash to rendered elements.

Thematic context

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

3.3.3 Speculators and land boomers

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?

The terrace row at 64-74 Upton Road, Windsor, is significant. It was built as a speculative development in 1890. The houses were built in two groups, which are separated by an additional party wall.

All six of the houses have a separate roof form, and the walls are of tuckpointed Hawthorn brick with cream brick dressings in lively quoining and diaper patterns, as well as red bricks to the blind arches of the verandah wing walls. The patterning differs slightly between the two

groups. All have the same distinctive chimney form: rendered with a cornice, ornamented by vermiculated panels on each face. Overall they can be described as Italianate in style, with a Boom-style influence to nos. 64 & 66.

The pair of houses at nos. 64 & 66 each have a pedimented parapet at the front, with balusters and a fine cast-cement half-shell. Unusually, they retain an early or original yellow ochre colourwash on rendered elements such as consoles on the verandah wing walls and the parapets. The four houses at nos. 68-74 have bracketed eaves instead of a pediment, and heavier cast-iron verandah friezes with a fern and fleur-de-lys pattern.

The rear extension to no. 66, overpainting to brickwork, and replacement front doors are not significant.

How is it significant?

The terrace row is of local architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

Architecturally, as the terrace row is a highly intact representative example of the brick terrace houses built in the late Victorian period in working-class Windsor. The two parts of the row are illustrative of the evolution of a single builder's approach to terrace houses; both those with bracketed eaves and those with parapet fronts. Typical features include polychrome brickwork, corniced chimneys, and cast-iron detail to the verandah. Its post-1885 construction date is indicated by the presence of separated roof forms for each dwelling. (Criterion D)

Aesthetically, the houses at nos. 64 & 66 are distinguished by details such as the elaborate rendered parapets with sculptural detail including balusters and free-standing shell motif beneath the semicircular arched parapet which also retains its urns and orbs. They are also distinguished by the very rare retention of the early or original ochre limewash to the rendered elements (parapets and end walls). The variation on the standard Italianate chimney, with a vermiculated panel on each faced, distinguishes the entire row and helps to make their shared origins legible. (Criteria B & E)

Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay to the extent of the whole properties at 64-74 Upton Road as defined by the title boundaries.

HO Schedule controls: External Paint Controls (for 64 & 66 Upton Road, which retain early or original ochre limewash to their rendered parapets and end walls)



Figure 4. Recommended extent of heritage overlay for 49-59 Upton Road, Windsor (source: www.land.vic.gov.au)

Recommended grading: A2