

## RATHGAEL - THE WILLOWS



RATHGAEL - THE WILLOWS  
SOHE 2008



1 rathgael former estella now  
the willow 462 stkilda rd melb  
external front view

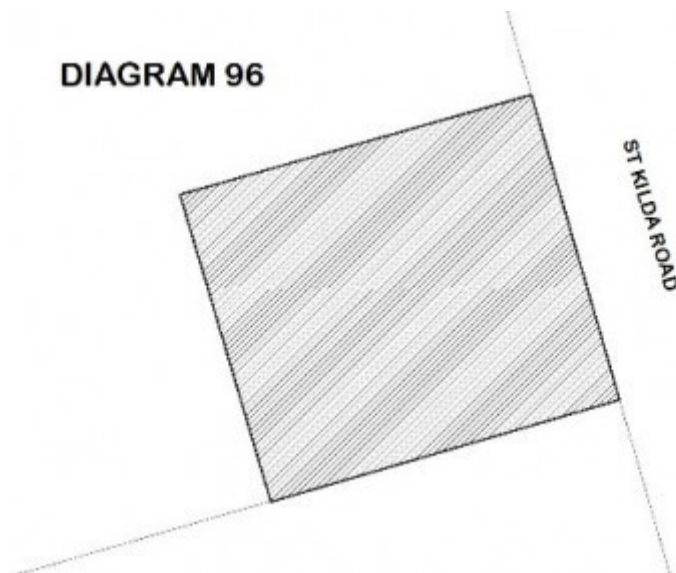


Diagram 96.jpg

### Location

462 ST KILDA ROAD MELBOURNE, PORT PHILLIP CITY

### Municipality

PORT PHILLIP CITY

### Level of significance

Registered

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0096

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO254

## **VHR Registration**

October 9, 1974

## **Amendment to Registration**

April 16, 2020

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

---

## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - November 29, 1996

### **What is significant?**

The mansion, Rathgael (formerly Estella) was built in St Kilda Road, South Melbourne for Leon Cohen in 1890, at a time when this boulevard was a highly prestigious address in Melbourne. A Lands Act in 1862 reserved large areas of land along this main thoroughfare south from the City of Melbourne, for public parks and specific institutions. Allotments were designated for benevolent institutions, the Homeopathic Hospital, Victoria Barracks and the Immigrant's Depot. A controversial land subdivision in 1875, on land alienated from parkland on the western side of St Kilda Road, made frontages available for sale as residential properties, and numerous mansions were erected on substantial allotments of land.

The size of these allotments and their proximity to the city, resulted firstly in the conversion of many of these large residences to flats and guest houses in the 1920s and 1930s, and secondly in the replacement of many of them in the 1960s with multi-storey office buildings. As a result a very small number of the mansions survived demolition.

The land on which Rathgael stands was bought by the Melbourne solicitor, J. G. Duffett in the 1875 land sales, and retained by him until sold to a builder, James Dowie by 1889. In the following year, a sixteen-roomed, single storey rendered brick house, named Estella, was constructed for Leon Cohen, a bookmaker.

Designed in a late classical boom style, there is some dispute as to the architect of the mansion. Tenders were called by William George Wolf, however it has been suggested that Walter Scott Law was more likely to be the architect, as he designed terraces in Nicholson Street, Fitzroy for Leon Cohen in 1888, and the style employed in St Kilda shows similarities to Law's work. The front facade of the single storey building incorporates two tall porches flanking the entrance, in an overall symmetrical composition. The oversized entablatures of these porches contain low relief sculptures depicting classical scenes, and are adorned with parapet urns. Doric columns and pilasters support a frieze of triglyphs and metopes, and unusual circular openings are contained within this Doric framework. The parapet of the central entrance bay contains festoons, a central sculpted panel and a sculpted figure above. As is evident in a photograph of 1900, a bullnose verandah was originally located between the two porches and also around the sides of the front of the building, terminating in polygonal side bays. This has since been removed.

The four principal rooms of Rathgael are all that remain of this sixteen-roomed house, which is now used as a restaurant, known as The Willows.

### How is it significant?

Rathgael is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

### Why is it significant?

Rathgael is of historical significance as an important surviving mansion, illustrative of the many erected along St Kilda Road, one of Melbourne's grandest boulevards in the late nineteenth century. It is one of very few mansions which remain to show the former prestige of this main thoroughfare south from the City of Melbourne.

Rathgael is of architectural significance as a highly elaborate boom style mansion, which illustrates the wealth and extravagance of the 1880s and early 1890s in Melbourne. It is a highly original composition, with porches which incorporate unusual detailing, such as large low relief sculpture panels and circular openings. The four principal rooms of the building remain to present an original front to St Kilda Road, except for the verandah which has been removed.

Rathgael is also of architectural significance as an important work of architect, Walter Scott Law, who designed many fine boom style buildings in Melbourne, including Benvenuta (1892) in Drummond Street, Carlton.

*[Online Data Upgrade Project 2004]*

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

**Places of worship:** In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

**Subdivision/consolidation:** Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

**General Conditions:** 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. **General Conditions:** 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible.

**General Conditions:** 3. All works should ideally be informed by a Conservation Management Plan prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan, and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

**General Conditions:** 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding

all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable.

#### Specific Permit Exemptions:

##### General exemptions for external works

- . Minor repair and maintenance which replaces like with like. Repairs and maintenance must maximise protection and retention of existing fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements. Any repairs and maintenance must not exacerbate the decay of existing fabric due to chemical incompatibility of new materials, obscure existing fabric or limit access to such fabric for future maintenance.??
- . Works or activities, including emergency stabilisation, necessary to secure safety in an emergency where a structure or part of a structure has been irreparably damaged or destabilised and poses a safety risk to its users or the public. The Executive Director, Heritage Victoria, must be notified within seven days of the commencement of these works or activities.
- . Cleaning including the removal of surface deposits, organic growths or graffiti by the use of low pressure water (less than 100 psi at the surface being cleaned) and neutral detergents and mild brushing and scrubbing.

##### Landscape elements

- . The processes of gardening including mowing, pruning, mulching, bedding displays, removal of dead shrubs, planting and replanting of garden beds, disease and weed control and maintenance to care for existing plants and replacement with similar species.
- . Subsurface works involving the removal or replacement of existing watering and drainage systems or other services provided there are no visible above ground elements. Existing hard landscaping, including paving and garden edging is to be returned to its original configuration on the completion of works.
- . Management and maintenance of trees including formative and remedial pruning, removal of deadwood, pest and disease control, cabling and similar supportive works by a qualified arborist.
- . Installation of physical barriers or traps to enable vegetation protection and management of possums and other vermin.
- . Maintenance and repair of existing paving and other hard landscaping elements, like for like.

##### Buildings

##### Rathgael

##### Exterior

- . Removal of items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae and aerials.
- . Painting of previously painted surfaces in the same colour, finish and type provided that preparation or painting does not remove earlier paint finishes. Note: This exemption does not apply to decorative schemes or unpainted surfaces.

##### Interior

- . Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings in the same colour, type and finish provided that preparation or painting does not remove earlier paint finishes. Note: This exemption does not apply to decorative schemes or unpainted surfaces.
- . Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled surfaces including ceilings, joinery, doors, architraves and skirtings by non-abrasive methods.
- . Repair of door and window furniture including hinges, locks, knob sets and sash lifts.

- . Installation of new electrical wiring and removal or replacement of existing electrical and IT wiring provided that such works do not require chasing or cutting into building fabric and provided that any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of smoke and fire detectors, alarms and the like, of the same size and in existing locations.
- . Repair, removal or replacement of existing ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the central plant is concealed, and that the work is done in a manner which does not alter building fabric.
- . Installation of plant within the roof space, providing that it does not impact on the external appearance of the building or involve structural changes.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.

Marquee extension and brick garage

- . Removal/demolition of the marquee and brick garage located at the south of the building.
- . All internal works within the footprint of the existing garage which do not alter the external appearance.

Construction dates	1890,
Architect/Designer	Law, Walter Scott,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	ESTELLA,
Hermes Number	1068
Property Number	

## History

The mansion, Rathgael (formerly Estella) was built in St Kilda Road, South Melbourne for Leon Cohen in 1890, at a time when this boulevard was a highly prestigious address in Melbourne. A Lands Act in 1862 reserved large areas of land along this main thoroughfare south from the City of Melbourne, for public parks and specific institutions. Allotments were designated for benevolent institutions, the Homeopathic Hospital, Victoria Barracks and the Immigrant's Depot. A controversial land subdivision in 1875, on land alienated from parkland on the western side of St Kilda Road, made frontages available for sale as residential properties, and numerous mansions were erected on substantial allotments of land.

The size of these allotments and their proximity to the city, resulted firstly in the conversion of many of these large residences to flats and guest houses in the 1920s and 1930s, and secondly in the replacement of many of them in the 1960s with multi-storey office buildings. As a result a very small number of the mansions survived demolition.

The land on which Rathgael stands was bought by the Melbourne solicitor, J. G. Duffett in the 1875 land sales, and retained by him until sold to a builder, James Dowie by 1889. In the following year, a sixteen-roomed, single storey rendered brick house, named Estella, was constructed for Leon Cohen, a bookmaker.

**The draft statement of significance and the above history were produced as part of an Online Data Upgrade Project 2004. Sources were as follows:**

J. Buckrich. *Melbourne's Grand Boulevard: the Story of St Kilda Road*. Melbourne 1996

J. & P. Murphy. *An architectural and historical study of mansion houses in St Kilda Road and Queen's Road*. Hawthorn 1976?

Allom Lovell Sanderson *South Melbourne Urban Conservation Study*. 1987

## Extent of Registration

Heritage Act 2017

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 2017**, I give notice under section 53 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by modifying a place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H0096

Category: Registered Place

Place: Rathgael - The Willows

Location: 462 St Kilda Road Melbourne,

Municipality: Port Phillip City

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 96 encompassing all of Lot 1 on Lodged Plan 126816.

16 April 2020

STEVEN AVERY

Executive Director

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*