
Cairo Flats



Cairo Bachelor Flats



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Fence of former Uxbridge House



Former Uxbridge House



Image held by Fitzroy Library.
Taken from Fitzroy Municipal
Rating Study - 1948

Location

98 NICHOLSON STREET AND 14 HANOVER FITZROY 3065, YARRA CITY

Municipality

YARRA CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1005

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO185

Heritage Listing

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 3, 2023

What is significant?

Cairo Flats, built in 1936 and designed by the architect Acheson Best Overend, is a two-storey, U-shaped building, comprising 28 bachelor flats. The flats were constructed of blue clinker brick with projecting, curved balconies and were designed to provide maximum amenity in minimum space for minimum rent. The flats were complemented by a communal dining room, an in-house meal and laundry service, central heating, garages at the rear and a communal flat roof space.

How is it significant?

Cairo Flats is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Cairo Flats established a major break with the Maisonette model of flat block, the predominant form of early flats in Melbourne and is significant for introducing the flat to the modernist programme in Australia and for its acknowledgement of the existence of an new, modern way of living.

Cairo Flats is of architectural significance as an early example of the minimal flat type in Victoria. The building is an important example of the International Modern style and established a major break with conventional maisonette flat design. Cairo Flats is significant for Overend's daring use of concrete, especially in the unusual cantilevered stairs. The flats retain their original layout and feature original polished floor boards, timber front doors with small edged portal windows and the original 'D' shaped aluminium internal door handles, possibly the first use of such handles in Australia.

Cairo Flats is of historical significance for the insight it provides into changing lifestyles for single people in inter-war Melbourne. At the time of its construction it provided an uncommon type of accommodation in Melbourne, and was important in the development of flats in Victoria. Best Overend's vision for a 'minimal flat with maximum comfort' was manifested in the innovative use of labour-saving devices such as service hatchways, dustbin hatchways, service telephones and the provision of a dining room (now milk bar) and meal service.

Cairo Flats succinctly encompassed the concerns of a new generation of architects in Australia. It is significant for the efficiency and modernity achieved in the planning and detailing of its units, for the progressive nature of its housing program and for Overend's heroic use of concrete structure.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Yarra - South Fitzroy Conservation Study, Jacobs Lewis Vines, 1979; Yarra - Fitzroy Urban Conservation Study, Allom Lovell & Associates, 1992; Yarra - City of Yarra Heritage Review, Allom Lovell & Associates, 1998; Yarra - City of Yarra Review of Heritage Overlay Areas, Graeme Butler & Associates, 2007;
Construction dates	1936,
Architect/Designer	Overend, Best,
Hermes Number	103638
Property Number	

Physical Description 2

significant earlier fence

Integrity

Good

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/>