
Ilfracombe



40 Murphy Street, South Yarra



40 Murphy Street, South Yarra

Location

40 Murphy Street SOUTH YARRA, STONNINGTON CITY

Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO562

Heritage Listing

Stonnington City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 25, 2016

What is significant?

'Ilfracombe', at 40 Murphy Street, South Yarra, is significant. The house was built in 1889-90 for pioneer of the Australian accounting profession, Joseph Henry Flack, and his wife Marion. The Flacks resided there until their deaths in 1918 and 1924, respectively.

The house is two-storeys in height and built of red face brick with cement-rendered dressings. The main roof is a high hipped roof covered in slate. The facade is dominated by a wide two-storey projecting polygonal bay on one side, and a single-storey projecting room with a parapet on the other. The projecting room was an early addition. The house is entered via a small porch structure on the north side.

The front brick fence, side garage and glass hood over the front door are not significant.

How is it significant?

'Ilfracombe' is of local architectural significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

Architecturally, 'Ilfracombe' is a striking example of the major changes in architectural design in the late 1880s, completely rejecting the applied cement and cast-iron ornament that typified Victorian Italianate houses and moving to a very modern, sculptural and stripped back form without even a verandah. The two-storey polygonal bay on the facade is the main decorative feature, as are the contrasting red face brick and render dressings. The design approach can be seen as a free form interpretation of the Queen Anne Revival from Britain, and is reflected in the geometric leadlight highlights. The use of louvered shutters (removed) and stripped-back detail also suggests an early Georgian Revival influence. (Criterion D)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Stonnington - City of Stonnington Victorian Houses Study, City of Stonnington, 2016;
Construction dates	1889,
Other Names	40 Murphy Street, South Yarra,
Hermes Number	200149
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

'Ilfracombe', at 40 Murphy Street, South Yarra, stands on the east side of the street near the crest of the hill. It has a modest front garden setback typical of this inner suburban street. Also typical of this street, the side setbacks are small (though the garden once occupied the block that is now 42 Murphy Street).

The house is two-storeys in height and is constructed of red face brick with cement render dressings and a slate-clad roof. The roof has a high hip with a ridge perpendicular to the street indicating its rejection of the Victorian Italianate style and adherence to the newer trends from England. On the north side of the facade the high hip intersects with the semi-hexagonal roof of the broad two-storey canted bay window. The apex of the main roof and the semi-hexagonal roof terminate with a large finial, possibly of lead. There are tiny dormer windows on the front and side slopes of the roof with simple bargeboards, with a pierced circle in the lobes and simple timber brackets below the barge.

The two-storey bay window stretches across half of the facade, making it a dominant and sculptural feature. On the north side of the house, set back from this bay window, is the entrance porch, which has a parapeted roof. The top of the parapet is finished with a run cement-render cornice, which continues across the rest of the facade as a beltcourse. There are also narrow moulded stringcourses at the window lintel level to both floor, and heavy rendered or concrete lintels to the windows and doors. All of the windows and the front door retain geometric leadlight highlights, and have bold rendered lintels which contrast with the brick. The front door also has leadlights to the top four panels and the sidelights. The windows to the canted bay window are double-hung sashes with a top sash divided into two vertical panes. The windows to the projecting front room are in a bank of three, with a shared rendered lintel.

Apart from the leadlight windows, the house is nearly devoid of the applied ornament typically seen on Victorian houses, such as eaves brackets and cast-iron verandah detail. Instead it has a stripped back and sculptural form that was innovative for its time and related to the freer forms of the Queen Anne Revival introduced from Britain.

There was an early change to the facade of the house. The 1895 MMBW plan shows a small rectangular bay window on the south side of the front facade. This has been replaced with the current single-storey parapeted projecting room, providing a large balcony to the first floor. The brickwork and run render mouldings of this later section match seamlessly those of the original house and the pattern of the cast-iron air bricks match as well, suggesting a late 1890s date for this alteration. Rate book records from the 1890s through the 1920s have been checked, but do not indicate when this minor enlargement was made.

Views to the ground-floor are partially obscured by a high brick fence, which is modern but sympathetic in its adoption of the materials palette of the house. Minor alterations were made to the house and site in 1999 (Stonnington Planning Permit 753/99). These include the addition of a glass canopy over the front door, and the extension of a raised deck to the rear of the house (not visible from the front). A glass-roofed carport may have also been built on the south side of the house at this time, but it is not visible from the street. It is likely that the tops of the chimneys have been altered (shortened) as the plain rectangular shaft is very unusual for the nineteenth century. Most likely the chimneys were originally corbelled at the top. In addition, the house retains hardware to the first floor windows, indicating that they once had external shutters (probably louvered timber shutters as seen at the similar 20 Hawksburn Road). Finally, the tiny roof dormers with their Gothic Revival influence seen in the bargeboards are an unlikely element of this Queen Anne Free Style building. This may mean that they are a later addition.

Local Historical Themes

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

8.4.1 Houses as a symbol of wealth, status and fashion

8.6.1 Sharing houses

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/>