
Milano

Location

20 Cohuna Street,, BRUNSWICK VIC 3056 - Property No B7363

Municipality

MERRI-BEK CITY

Level of significance

Regional

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 12, 2007

What is significant? Milano was built in 1888 by John Buncle (1822-1889). Buncle was a prominent manufacturer, inventor and public figure in nineteenth century Victoria. He migrated from Scotland in 1852, and soon established his own business in North Melbourne. This developed into the Parkside Iron Works, which among its engineering works supplied the iron-work for several large bridges in Melbourne, including the Johnston Street bridge, and for other parts of Victoria. He was best known for the design and manufacture of agricultural implements. He was also prominent in public life, becoming the Mayor of Hotham (North Melbourne), President of the Chamber of Manufactures, and a commissioner of the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880 and the Centennial Exhibition in 1888. He was described as a prominent member of that extraordinary group of men whose inventions put Australia in a notable place in the history of 'extensive' farming techniques in the nineteenth century. Milano was built as a home for his family, who lived there for several years after his death. The architect and builder are not known. In 1897 the mansion was sold to the Salvation Army, renamed The Harbour, and used as a home for girls and women, initially those rescued from the opium dens of Little Bourke Street and later as a home for unmarried mothers and intellectually disabled girls. The ballroom at the rear (now demolished) was converted into a laundry, to provide an income and rehabilitation for the female occupants. From 1974 to 1986 the property was known as Hillview House, a drug rehabilitation centre and women's refuge. In 1995 it was sold and once again became a private home.

Milano is set centrally on six blocks of land, having a total frontage of 60 m and a depth of 80 m, on an elevated site overlooking the Moonee Ponds Creek and with magnificent views towards the city. The principal frontage and entrance is from Cohuna Street, while the rear fronts Mincha Street. The house is a two storey asymmetrical rendered brick Italianate mansion, originally of eighteen rooms. The house has a projecting faceted bay extending the full height of the building and a tower centrally placed above the entrance. A verandah and balcony extend across the front from the bay and return around the south side. The tower was originally surmounted by a crown of ornamental scrolls, probably of wrought-iron, supporting a flagpole, but this has disappeared. The facade is ornamented with pilasters, corbel tables supported by modillions, cornices, festoons, pendants,

rosettes, brackets, and plain and vermiculated panels. The balconies are decorated with iron balusters of an uncommon design, possibly made at Buncle's foundry. The original service wing of the house has been demolished and unsympathetic alterations made to the rear of the house. The detached hayloft and stables at the rear are of red brick, with roofs of galvanized corrugated iron. Two large Canary Island date palms frame the front entrance, and there is an old 13-14m Schinus molle (peppercorn tree) at the rear.

How is it significant? Milano is significant for historical reasons at a Regional level.

Why is it significant? Milano is historically significant for its association with John Buncle, a prominent nineteenth century inventor, manufacturer and public figure, who made a significant contribution to North Melbourne and to Victoria. Buncle was twice Mayor of Hotham (North Melbourne) and his Parkside Iron Works were one of the major manufacturing enterprises in the northern suburbs in the nineteenth century. Milano is significant as one of relatively few nineteenth century mansions to survive in the northern suburbs of Melbourne with its original block of land intact. Milano is also historically significant for its association with the Salvation Army and its use for almost a century to rehabilitate and to care for young women.

Classified: 29/01/2007

Other Names The Harbour, Hillview House,

Hermes Number 71724

Property Number

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/>