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# CASA DE RIO

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## Location

95 Alexandra Avenue SOUTH YARRA, Stonnington City

## Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO300

## Heritage Listing

Stonnington City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

Casa de Rio, 95 Alexandra Avenue, and Casa Panzo, 89 Alexandra Avenue, are of regional significance as two prominent, finely designed and detailed and substantially externally intact examples of small flat development constructed upon the opening up of frontages to the Alexandra Avenue extension in the early 1930s. They exemplify the influence of various Spanish Revival and Mediterranean modes in Melbourne, modes that had gained popularity in the architect designed domestic work of the 1920s but had been consolidated as a builders mode popular for flats and houses alike by the 1930s.

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|---------------------------|--|
| Heritage Study/Consultant | Stonnington - City of Stonnington Heritage Overlay Report (Stages 1-5) 1998, Bryce Raworth P/L, 1998; Stonnington - Conservation Review City of Prahran Volume 4: A2 Buildings, Context Pty Ltd, 1993; |
| Construction dates        | 1934,  |
| Other Names               | Flats,   |
| Hermes Number             | 31304  |
| Property Number           |  |

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## Physical Description 1

The flats at 95 Alexandra Avenue, otherwise known as the Casa de Rio, are located on a busy tree-lined thoroughfare overlooking the Yarra River. They occupy an elevated position and face the road at an angle allowing views from the house to nearby Herring Island. The building is simple in form and draws inspiration from the various Spanish Revival modes which became popular throughout South Yarra during the 1920s and 1930s. [1] While built as a pair of flats, great care has been taken to give the appearance of a single, substantial home in a manner which was practised widely throughout South Yarra and Toorak during the inter-war period.

The influence of the Spanish Revival is evident in details and finishes throughout the house. The roof is composed of two steeply pitched gables, the Cordoba tiles of which are clearly visible from the road.

Cordoba tiles also appear as a capping to the end piers of the front fence. The walls are finished in a parged render recalling traditional Spanish construction techniques. Bold timber shutters, decorated with small diamond-shaped openings, flank many of the building's windows and arches have been incorporated into some of the house's fenestration and into the loggia at the front entrance. Decorative wrought iron detailing, found in both the loggia and a small elevated balcony at the front of the house has been painted black in the manner characteristic of the Spanish Mission and Spanish Colonial Revival styles.

Casa de Rio was built for Montague M. Grover in 1934-35. It belongs to a family of Spanish influenced houses and flats apparently built in this block by the Grover family immediately after the construction of Alexandra Avenue during the Depression. The allotment upon which it is found originally fronted 9 Copelen Street and this frontage is still occupied by a Spanish Revival house of very similar character which was also built and occupied by the Grover family, Casa Nino. The overall allotment was subdivided into two at or after construction of 95 Alexandra Avenue. Casa Panzo, a striking two storey pair of flats at the corner of River Street and Alexandra Avenue is so similar to Casa del Rio in many of its details, as to suggest it was built at the same time and designed by the same architect. It was also developed by the Grover family. [2] The land fronting Alexandra Avenue between the two remained undeveloped in the mid-1930s. [3] An examination of building permit records revealed no major alterations and it is likely that the building remains substantially original to its pre-war state. [4]

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## References

[1] *City of Prahran Rate Books, Toorak Ward, 1935-36; Context Pty Ltd, City of Prahran Conservation Review, Vol 3, p 1.*

[2] *City of Prahran Rate Books, Toorak Ward, 1935-36.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Prahran Council Building Permits.*

## Local Historical Themes

### 8.6.2 Developing apartment living

*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.*

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