

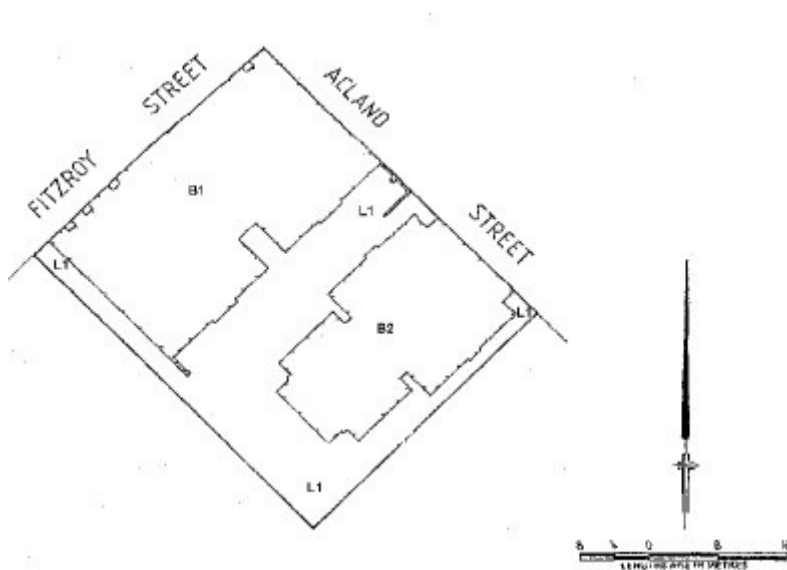
# SUMMERLAND MANSIONS



SUMMERLAND MANSIONS  
SOHE 2008



h01808 1 summerland  
mansions fitzroy st st kilda  
front elevation ac2 nov1999



h01808 summerland mansions fitzroy st st kilda plan

## Location

17-27 FITZROY STREET ST KILDA, PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Municipality

PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1808

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO345

## VHR Registration

November 4, 1999

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 29, 1999

What is significant?

The land where Summerland Mansions stands was sold in the first Crown Land sales in St Kilda in 1842. ER and GHC Crespin acquired the land and the mansion known as Summerland House in 1919. They appointed the architect Christopher Cowper to redevelop the site with a block of mansion flats and shops. The flats were built in two stages with the first section fronting Fitzroy Street constructed in 1920. This comprised six shops and a communal dining room on the ground floor and eight flats above. While these were being built another permit was granted for the construction of four more flats along Acland Street which were completed in 1921.

Summerland Mansions presents imposing facades to both Acland and Fitzroy Streets. The ground floor is composed of exposed brick while the upper storeys are roughcast render. The hipped rooves are terracotta tiled. The building along Fitzroy Street has triple bayed windows and deep balconies. Under the awning along Fitzroy Street there is a mix of shops and restaurants with large plate glass windows. The style of the buildings is a sophisticated combination of Inter-War Stripped Classical, Inter-War Mediterranean and late Arts and Crafts.

How is it significant?

Summerland Mansions is of architectural and historical significance to the state of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Summerland Mansions is architecturally significant as a rare combination of mansion flats and shops on a large scale. The significance is enhanced by the highly distinctive design addressing the commercial nature of Fitzroy Street and the more domestic Acland Street. It is a significant work of the architect Christopher Cowper. Its sophisticated mix of Inter-War Stripped Classical, Inter-War Mediterranean and Arts and Crafts sets it apart from the Queen Anne style for which he was known. The interiors of the flats show ingenuity in design with rooms of generous proportions imbued with a sense of privacy and views ranging from glimpses of the sea to garden outlooks. The Fitzroy Street flats have spacious timber detailed lobbies with panelled and glazed walls lit by lantern roofs. Other noteworthy features include use of balconies and glazed sleep-outs, a large communal rooftop area of the Acland Streets flats and the restaurant centrally located on Fitzroy Street, originally a common dining room for residents. The buildings also include significant original elements such as leadlight windows, hall cupboards, built-in dressers between kitchens and dining rooms, milk and bread hatches, serveries, tiled fireplaces, letter boxes and door mats emblazoned with the name, Summerland Mansions. The majority of the mansion flat interiors are in relatively original condition.

Summerland Mansions is historically significant for its associations with St Kilda, an early seaside resort and prestigious residential location in Melbourne and, after World War I, a popular location for flat development. The spacious mansion flats originally aimed at a wealthy clientele represent the heyday of apartment living in St Kilda and the inclusion of shops into the design typifies the non-residential aspect of St Kilda.

## 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.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations 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 alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

#### Exterior of flats, shops and restaurants

- \* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \* Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.
- \* Installation or repair of damp proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.
- \* Regular garden maintenance.
- \* Painting of the exterior in appropriate heritage colours.
- \* Construction of a sound proof wall and roof over the walkway between the commercial buildings and the residential apartments in accordance with the planning permit issued by the City of Port Phillip on 24 May 1999, application number 547/99/O. A copy of the planning report, planning permit and endorsed plan are held by the Executive Director in Heritage Victoria File Number 605326.

#### Interior of Body Corporate areas (roof space, lobbies, landings, stairwells)

- \* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \* Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence

of the original paint or other decorative scheme.

- \* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.

- \* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.

- \* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.

- \* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.

- \* Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.

- \* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.

Interior of individual flats and shops

- \* All interior alterations are permit exempt, excluding structural alterations, provided such work has no effect on the exterior of the buildings.

|                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Construction dates      | 1920,                |
| Architect/Designer      | Cowper, Christopher, |
| Heritage Act Categories | Registered place,    |
| Hermes Number           | 3779                 |
| Property Number         |                      |

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## History

Contextual History:

The opening of the Melbourne and St Kilda Railway in 1857 enhanced St Kilda's development as a fashionable seaside resort and as a residential suburb. It was considered one of the most prestigious locations in Melbourne with many fine mansions built on St Kilda Hill. The 1890s financial crash saw an exodus of St Kilda's wealthier residents to suburbs such as Toorak and many mansions were converted to boarding houses.

The early twentieth century saw St Kilda become increasingly popular as a seaside resort for day-trippers. People flocked to the beach and amusements such as the bandstands, dancing halls, open-air theatres, and roller skating rinks. Luna Park, the Palais Theatre and the pavilion refreshment rooms on St Kilda Pier date from this period. The establishment of the St Kilda Foreshore Committee in 1906 with representatives from both local and state government level reflected the importance of St Kilda to Melbourne as a whole. The committee was concerned with the reclamation and beautification of the St Kilda foreshore. The creation of Catani Gardens and the sea reclamation were the Foreshore Committee's greatest works. Catani Gardens, with their open lawns, pathways, vistas, specimen planting, walls, and monuments, cast St Kilda as a cosmopolitan and fashionable seaside resort in the Continental manner.

After World War I, St Kilda became a popular area for flat development. This trend accelerated in the 1930s and led to St Kilda having the highest density of flat development in Melbourne and during one year in the early 1930s one third of all flat development in Melbourne.

History of Place:

The land where Summerland Mansions stands was the first block of land sold in the first crown land sales in St Kilda. Elsie Rowe Crespín and her husband G.H.C. Crespín acquired the property with a mansion called Summerland in 1919. They appointed the architect Christopher Cowper to redevelop the site with a block of mansion flats and shops.

The flats were built in two stages with the first section fronting Fitzroy Street constructed in 1920. This comprised six shops and a dining room on the ground floor and eight flats above. While these were being built another permit was granted for the construction of four more flats along Acland Street.

The original dining room (now a restaurant) was a large communal space for residents. Accordingly, the flats were fitted with smaller kitchenettes. The flats seemed to have been designed for clients who had moved from a house with maid and butler and still required some of that service.

Summerland Mansions declined in prestige after the 1930s. Patricia Counihan visited the flats in 1943 where 12 families were living and noted:

"A big block of flats in three linked up buildings. No laundry in any of three buildings. Once an opulent block of expensive flats - now a little run to seed. Rents once 6 guineas now - average £2-10-0 - several flats are subdivided - contain lodgers or boarders. "

The flats have been strata titled in recent years.

Associated People: Christopher Cowper, architect. ER & GHC Crespín, original owners.

## **Assessment Against Criteria**

### **Criterion A**

The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.

Summerland Mansions has historical associations with St Kilda, an early seaside resort in Melbourne. The spacious mansion flats designed for a wealthy clientele represent the heyday of apartment living in St Kilda and the inclusion of shops into the design typifies the non-residential aspect of St Kilda.

### **Criterion B**

The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.

### **Criterion C**

The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

### **Criterion D**

The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.

### **Criterion E**

The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

Summerland Mansions is significant for its sophisticated design addressing the commercial nature of Fitzroy Street and the domestic Acland Street and as an unusual combination of mansion flats and shops on a large scale. The interior shows ingenuity in its design with rooms of generous proportions, a sense of privacy and views ranging from glimpses of the sea to garden outlooks. The Fitzroy Street flats have spacious timber panelled lobbies with lantern roofs. Its sophisticated mix of contemporary Mediterranean, stripped back Classicism and Arts and Crafts sets it apart from the Queen Anne style for which the architect Christopher Cowper was known.

### **Criterion F**

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.

### **Criterion G**

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.

### **Criterion H**

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

## **Extent of Registration**

### **NOTICE OF REGISTRATION**

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1808 in the category described as a Heritage place:

Summerland Mansions, 17-27 Fitzroy Street, St Kilda, Port Phillip City Council

### **EXTENT:**

1. All the buildings marked B1 and B2 on Diagram 1808 held by the Executive Director.

2. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 1808 held by the Executive Director being all the land described in Certificate of Title Vol. 9989 Folios 932-957.

Dated 22 October 1999

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 44 4 November 1999 p.2373]

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*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/>*