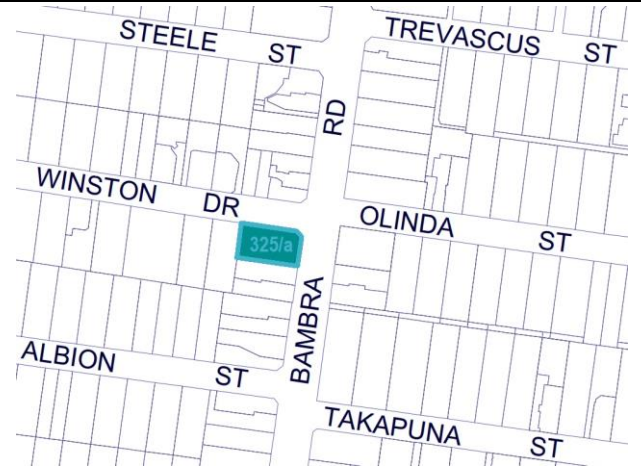


IDENTIFIER	DUPLEX	Citation No	HG01
Other name/s		Melway ref	68 B7
Address	325/325A Bambra Road CAULFIELD SOUTH	Date/s	1939
Designer/s	Charles Ring?	Builder/s	Charles Ring



Photographs by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, October 2019



Location map and extent of HO

Heritage Group	Residential building (private)	Condition	Excellent
Heritage Category	Flat	Intactness	Excellent

Thematic context	6.7 Making homes for Victorians
-------------------------	---------------------------------

Recommendation	Include on heritage overlay schedule as an individual heritage place		
Controls	<input type="checkbox"/> External Paint	<input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration	<input type="checkbox"/> Trees

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The building at 325/325a Bambra Road, Caulfield South, is a two-storey cream brick duplex in the Streamlined Moderne style. Occupying a corner site, it has parapeted hipped roof and a stepped quadruple-fronted façade with curving corners and rendered panels with horizontal and vertical fluting and a row of porthole windows. It was erected in 1939 by local builder Charles Ring, as a speculative project, and he may have designed it himself.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the original 1939 building and the matching dwarf wall that extends along each of the two street boundaries. The single-storey studio apartment at the north end of the building, added in the 1960s, is not considered to be significant.

How is it significant?

The duplex satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Glen Eira planning scheme:

- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

Why is it significant?

The duplex at 325/325a Bambra Road, Caulfield South, is aesthetically significant as an excellent example of the Streamlined Moderne style. The work of an as yet unconfirmed designer (and perhaps even designed by the builder himself, Charles Ring), the building has a simple utilitarian expression to its west (rear) and south (side) elevations that contrast markedly with the far more confident articulation of its two street elevations, to the east and north. These are deftly expressed as a stepping quadruple-fronted façade with parapeted roofline, alternating curved and right-angled corners, corner windows and rendered panels with plain mouldings, vertical and horizontal fluting and a row of porthole windows, with the entrances to each flat marked by a flat-roofed porch. With a matching brick wall along both street boundaries the house remains a highly distinctive element in the residential streetscape. (*Criterion E*)

History

Note: Identifying details of property owners and their families have been deleted as per Council direction

The building at 325/325a Bambra Road, Caulfield South, was erected in 1939 by Charles Ring, a local developer/builder who was responsible for several other residential buildings in the area. Little is known of the background of Charles Alfred Ring (1892-1979), who settled in Caulfield South after his marriage in the early 1920s. Electoral rolls show that he and his wife lived in Moore Street during the 1920s and in Sycamore Street for most of the 1930s. During this time, Ring's profession was variously listed as bricklayer and plasterer. One of the first sources to identify him as a builder was the City of Caulfield Rate Book for 1938-39, dated 8 December 1938, in which he is recorded as owner of several properties in Caulfield South that included a five-roomed brick house at 4 Remuera Road, two adjacent vacant blocks at 266-268 Bambra Road, and another site further up the street at No 325, on the south corner of Winston Drive.

The land that Charles Ring owned at 325 Bambra Road formed part of a subdivision created from eight acres bounded by Bambra Road, Sussex Road and Steele Street. In September 1935, this land was acquired by another building contractor, who subdivided it in several stages over the next few years. The Bambra Road frontage, which was carved up into five allotments, represented the first stage. According to the 1938-39 Rate Book, the vacant block on the south corner of Bambra Road and newly-formed Winston Drive (designated as Lot 41) was then owned by a businessman from Yarraville. However, a handwritten amendment to the rate entry, dated 4 May 1939, shows that the site had since been acquired by Charles Ring (of Remuera Road, Caulfield South) and was now occupied by a seven-roomed brick house and garage, worth £700.

As it turned out, Ring retained the new duplex for only a short time. In August 1941, the land title was transferred to a married couple from Sydney, who took up residence in one of the two flats and, the following year, sought a tenant for the neighbouring one, which was advertised as a six-roomed "ultra-modern maisonette", with electric hot water service and "every convenience" (*Argus* 18/07/1942:8). In 1942, the duplex appeared for the first time in the *Sands & McDougall Directory*, recording the building's owner at No 325 and a tenant at No 325a. While various other tenants followed, the owners remained living there until they returned to New South Wales towards the end of the decade.

In 1946, ownership of the duplex was transferred to a Polish-born lingerie manufacturer and his wife, who lived in Elwood and subsequently rented out the Bambra Road property. For a time, one of the flats was occupied by their son, a barrister. The next owners of the duplex, who acquired it in 1963, engaged a building firm, Wedgewood Homes Pty Ltd, to prepare plans to enlarge Flat 2 with a small single-storey skillion-roofed brick addition at the north end, containing a rumpus room and vestibule. By the time that the duplex was offered for sale again in 1971, the playroom had been converted into a stand-alone bedsit, advertised as a "studio flatette" (*Age* 21/08/1971:38).

Charles Ring, who built the duplex, went on to develop the two blocks of vacant land that he owned on the opposite side of Bambra Road. During 1940-41, he erected a large house for himself at what is now No 266, and a two-storey block of three flats next door, at No 268. He and his wife remained living at No 266 until the late 1950s, when they moved to a smaller house on Glenhuntly Road, Caulfield, and thence to Carnegie in the late 1960s.

Description

The building at 325/325a Bambra Road, Caulfield South, is a two-storeyed brick duplex (ie, attached pair of self-contained dwellings) in the Streamlined Moderne style, with a hipped roof concealed by a parapet. Occupying a corner site, the building is double-storey, with a single storey wing along the Winston Drive side. It otherwise presents an asymmetrical quadruple-fronted façade to both streets, with alternating curved and right-angled corners. The plain cream brickwork is relieved by a contrasting manganese brick plinth, a recessed header-brick stringcourse along the stepped parapet line, and feature rendered panels. On the two rectilinear bays, these rendered panels forms are horizontally fluted and form spandrels between large rectangular windows at each level. The rendered portions of the two curved bays incorporate moulded banding, vertical fluting and a row of three porthole windows. The two curved bays also incorporate the front entrances to each dwelling; these have timber doors with vertical lights (enlivened by circular motifs), a brick paved porch and a projecting concrete slab roof.

The side (south) elevation is simpler in detailing, with a plain cream brick wall giving way to an even more utilitarian expression of face red brickwork, exposed skillion roof and small rectangular windows. The single-storey rear wing to Winston Drive (originally playroom; later a studio apartment) is double fronted, with a separate entry set into the recessed wall, a small canopy roof, and a wide window to the projecting bay.

A low wall, in matching cream brick with a manganese brick plinth course, extends along both street boundaries, with pairs of posts making pedestrian gateways for each entrance, and driveways at the far end of each frontage (leading to simple skillion-roofed carports).

Comparisons

As already mentioned, little is known of the extent of Charles Ring's work as a builder in the Caulfield South area. To date, the only other confirmed examples of his work that can be cited as direct comparators are his own house at 266 Bambra Road (c1940) and the adjacent block of flats at Nos 268-70 (c1940-41). Conceived to exploit their elevated sites with views over Princes Park, the two buildings have much in common. They are both double-storeyed buildings with exposed hipped roofs clad in terracotta tiles, and clinker brickwork relieved by contrasting cream brick stringcourses. Both have asymmetrical frontages: Ring's own house incorporates a projecting curved bay to one side, while the adjacent flats have a triple-fronted façade with a rendered bay towards the rear, marking the entrance. When compared to the duplex at 325/325a Bambra Road, these other two examples of Ring's must be considered as rather less confident manifestations of the Streamlined Moderne style, lacking the boldness and rigour that is evident in the façade of the earlier building, with its parapeted roofline, porthole windows and more assured use of rendered panels, with contrasting vertical and horizontal fluting.

Considered more broadly among residential buildings of similar date and style, the duplex has a number of comparators in what is now the City of Glen Eira. In its expression of a stepped façade with curving rendered bays and horizontal ornament, it can be compared with large two-storey houses such as 3 Grimwade Court, Caulfield North (c1935) and 4 Linlithgow Road, Caulfield (1938) [HO41], as well as a block of flats at 237 Glen Eira Road, Caulfield North (c1939). All three of these buildings, however, have fully exposed hipped roofs and more conventional fenestration with traditional double-hung sashes.

There are many other examples that are even more stylistically hybrid, such as the *Elster Court* flats at 83 Orrong Road, Elsternwick (c1937) and *Toolangi Court* flats at 500-506 Glenhuntly Road, Elsternwick (1936), where the trademark Moderne motif of the curving rendered bay, relieved by horizontal banding, has been applied almost tokenistically. As a more assured manifestation, the duplex at Bambra Road is most pertinently comparable to the *Olgita* flats at 440 Dandenong Road, Caulfield North (1940), where a confident articulation of Streamlined Moderne characteristics dominates one entire frontage of the building, visually discrete from a more conservative expression to the side and rear elevations.

References

Lodged Plan No 15,759, declared 12 May 1941.

Certificate of Title, Volume 6494, Folio 749, created 13 August 1941.

Wedgewood Homes Pty Ltd, "Proposed additions to existing flats, 325 Bambra Road, Caulfield, for Mr & Mrs [redacted]", working drawings undated [c1963]. City of Caulfield Permit No 33,196.

Identified by

City of Glen Eira