
HATFIELD FLATS



Riversdale Road, 576
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Location

576 Riversdale Road CAMBERWELL, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO723

Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 19, 2018

What is Significant?

Hatfield Flats, at 576 Riversdale Road, Camberwell, is significant.

The flats complex was designed by architect F. Scott Mackay for owner Lilian Cassidy. It was constructed in stages with the main, three-storey, wing on the east side of the site built in 1935-36. Mackay also designed the western wing of 1939. While the original plans show a three-storey extension, it was built as just two storeys,

creating a symmetrical composition with the two-storey eastern wing.

The flats building, constructed in the 1930s, is significant. The associated front fence, and garages are contributory.

How is it significant?

Hatfield Flats is of local historical, architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

Hatfield Flats illustrates the slow penetration of flats into the City of Camberwell during the interwar period, development which was resisted by planning laws which sought to preserve its expansive suburban character. There were very few flats built in the area in the 1920s, but the depression of the 1930s resulted in a need for higher density living, and flats were introduced to Camberwell, mainly along the main thoroughfares such as Riversdale Road. While many flats buildings of the 1930s were quite small and designed to appear like single-family homes, Hatfield Flats represents a fully-fledged flats design which is clearly recognisable as such, but which seeks in its stepped design to minimise its visual impact on the surrounding streetscape as well as provide a high level of amenity to the occupants. (Criterion A)

Hatfield Flats is a highly intact and well-detailed example of an interwar flats building in an eclectic mixture of the Moderne and Georgian Revival styles. The 1935 eastern and central wings demonstrate typical features of the Moderne, including the use of contrasting clinker brick and render to the walls, horizontal speed lines to solid balconies and horizontal glazing bars to windows, which is balanced by a number of vertical elements such as the parapeted stair tower. (Criterion D)

Hatfield Flats is distinguished by its skilful planning and massing, and by its idiosyncratic design elements typical of F. Scott Mackay's designs. In plan, the flats comprise five linked pavilions that form an irregular 'V' in plan, with the higher three-storey pavilions set deep into the centre of the site to diminish their impact on the streetscape. There are numerous setbacks to the facade which provided a sense of privacy to each balcony and access to light and air for each flat. The design is enlivened by Mackay's idiosyncratic vertical projecting bays and towers. The retention of the original dwarf brick front fence and rear garages enhance the setting of the flats building. (Criterion E)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study: Vol. 2 Camberwell, Context, 2018;
Construction dates	1935, 1940,
Architect/Designer	Mackay, FS,
Hermes Number	202097
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

Hatfield Flats is located on the south side of Riversdale Road, just east of the commercial development around Camberwell Junction, and adjacent to a tram line. The flats occupy a wide block of land, comprising three suburban house blocks, which slopes up to the east. The flats complex is set behind a dwarf clinker brick front fence. There is a circular driveway across the eastern part of the site. The western driveway entrance also leads straight back to the rear garages, via an archway beneath the flats. The flats have a generous front setback landscaped with lawns and semi-mature trees.

As noted in the history, the flats were built in two stages. While the complex reads as a whole, with its consistent palette of materials and hipped roof form, closer inspection shows the earlier eastern and central wings to be more decoratively embellished, while the later wing reflects the greater aesthetic austerity of the late interwar period. The earlier section (flats 1-8) comprises three hipped-roof envelopes that successively step back from the front boundary with the deepest setback at the centre of the site. It is linked to the later wing (flats 9-12) by the arched passage to the rear yard with a single room above it. The remainder of this wing is in two hipped-roof envelopes that step outward toward the west side boundary; the whole forming an irregular 'V' in plan. The eastern-most section and the 1939 extension are two-storeys in height, while the central two envelopes are three-storeys. The original 1939 plans show that the western wing was going to be three storeys, but the change to two storeys creates a more symmetrical composition. The stepped setbacks and massing demonstrate a skilful response to integrating a very large building into a residential streetscape, and also allow privacy to the many balconies.

For all parts of the flats building, the roofs are clad in terracotta tiles, and the upper floor is finished in smooth render with brick lintels and sills, while the lower floor or floors are finished in clinker face brick. All balconies are solid, finished in render and ornamented with three projecting 'speed lines'. Ground-floor porches have solid balustrades of half-bricks. All windows are timber sashes with horizontal glazing bars, continuing the horizontal emphasis of the Moderne style. Flat doors are flush panelled with three narrow lights stepping up at the top.

As noted, the earlier wing is more decoratively expressed. The two-storey section at the east side has a hipped roof projecting bay at its centre, with pairs of narrow windows and decorative brickwork between the floors. The next, three-storey, section has a semi-hexagonal bay projecting at its centre, with the same vertical line of decorative brickwork between floors. Set at the junction between this and the next three-storey section is a stair tower that projects above the roofline with a stepped parapet suggesting crenelation.

The garages are partially visible from the street and have brick walls and have both hipped and tiled roofs, with some roofs hidden behind a parapet. The caretaker's residence is not visible at all, as it is located behind the garages. The building permit plans for the extension and remodelling of 1957 show that it is three or four-bedroom brick single storey house with a tiled cross-gabled roof. The entrance porch sits below the eastern gable. Windows are timber double-hung sashes in a variety of configurations.

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/>