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# FORMER CAMBERWELL FIRE STATION AND FLATS



Camberwell Road, 575  
Former Camberwell Fire  
Station and Flats

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## Location

575 Camberwell Road CAMBERWELL, BOROONDARA CITY

## Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO713

## Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 29, 2018

What is Significant?

The former Camberwell Fire Station, 575 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, built in 1938 by L.J. Owen to a design by Seabrook and Fildes, consisting of the fire engine hall with first floor flats, separate senior officers' residences, separate laundry building and front boundary fence to Camberwell Road. The rear extension added in the 1990s

is not contributory.

How is it significant?

The former Camberwell Fire Station is of local historical and architectural significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

The former Camberwell Fire Station was constructed to replace an existing aged facility constructed in Riversdale Road in 1899. Its construction occurred at a time of significant expansion by the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB), following the implementation of the Fire Brigades Act of 1890, into the developing south-east suburbs during the early 20th century. Constructed in 1938, on land purchased in 1937 by the MFB, the new station represents a small residential precinct within the suburban context, being a direct result of the number of engines and associated crews required to service the growing suburbs. (Criterion A)

The former fire station, the extant buildings constituting those originally constructed in 1938, is significant as a fine and relatively intact example of Modernist architecture adapted for the suburban context, thereby reflecting the development of the City and its response to the need to provide adequate emergency service facilities for residents. The complex is an important example of the work of the architectural practice Seabrook and Fildes, a firm well regarded for their Modernist design across their oeuvre of architectural work. (Criteria D and E)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study: Vol. 2 Camberwell, Context, 2018;
Construction dates	1938,
Architect/Designer	Seabrook & Fildes,
Hermes Number	202139
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

### Description & Integrity

The former Camberwell Fire Station, 575 Camberwell Road is in that part of Camberwell bordered by Tyrone Street to the north, Collings Street to the east and Camberwell Road to the south and west (refer Figure 9). The former fire station complex fronts Camberwell Road, to the south-west, and detached dwellings to the north and north-west, at 4 and 6 Tyrone Street and 573 Camberwell Road respectively. The remainder of the property is bordered to the south-east by Fordham Gardens, a municipal park.

Completed in 1938, the complex today retains the three buildings detailed in Seabrook and Fildes documentation: the fire engine hall and associated flats above, senior officer's residences and the laundry building that remains as a free-standing building immediately behind the officers' residences (refer Figure 159). The two main buildings are separated by a garden that extends along the front setback of the senior officer's flats. Early concrete pathways extend through the garden, connecting the various front entrances of the buildings with the footpath to Camberwell Road. The grounds of the complex are separated from the footpath by a low cyclone wire fence constructed from painted circular steel piping. Evident in early images of the building, the fence is no doubt that constructed in 1938 (refer Figure 10). Bitumen car parking and driveways extend the perimeter of the buildings and their immediate landscaping. A modern carport exists in the north most corner of the property.

The engine hall and flats are in a two-storey expressed orange brick building, with red corrugated Colorbond roofs, consisting of two distinct split-level built forms. The front section, addressing Camberwell Road, possesses

a rectilinear built form concealing a gable roof and two chimneys behind a continuous parapet to three elevations; a vertical stair riser with parapet elevations forms a separate built form on the south-east elevation. The rear section possesses projecting gables, with two dominant chimneys, along the side elevations with a gabled elevation at the rear (refer Figure 10). Architectural elements are picked out in a variety of orange brickwork to the body of the building and manganese glazed Roman bricks to decorative features. Sections of orange brickwork are extruded along the body of the building, creating stringcourses that break up the building's mass. On the east elevation, the height of the stair well this is accentuated by a central recessed section that incorporates steel-framed windows with courses of glazed Roman bricks. Roman brickwork is utilised, in a tapering effect, as a separation between the vehicle entrances and as a divider between the steel framed windows to the side elevations (refer Figure 10). To the principal facade, additional architectural features included former white-painted, cast-cement signage once reading 'Metropolitan Fire Brigade' and the white-painted cast-cement heraldry of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB), and its motto 'Audax et Promptus', overhead. While later alterations are evident, notably the removal of all original timber window joinery and replacement of the entrance door at the base of the stair riser, the building retains its fenestration pattern intact (albeit for alterations to a single first-floor window at the rear of the building) and many original features, including the timber vehicle entrance doors to the engine hall and operable and fixed steel-framed windows at ground and first-floor level; all these extant elements appear to retain original wire-enforced safety glass. The removal of windows, and their replacement with anodized aluminium framed units, at the front of the building appears to have happened in the 1960s-70s. The remainder of buildings possess powder-coated aluminium framed units and appear contemporary with the construction of, what appears a c. 1990s, single-storey orange brick addition, with hipped red tile roof with projecting eaves at the rear (refer Figure 9). Additional fixtures and fittings added to the building during this period include new downpipes and guttering and solar panel units, which are located on the roof of both the 1938 Seabrook and Fildes and later 1990s sections of the building.

The former senior officer's residences is a two-storey gabled building, constructed from expressed orange brick with a gabled red Colorbond roof with projecting eaves (refer Figure 10 and Figure 159). On the north-west elevation, the principal entrances open off recessed porches which are denoted by the same vertical brickwork detail as that to the stairwell of the fire engine hall and flats; the extruded brick work stringcourse detail of the engine hall building is also incorporated within this building. The building retains its original fenestration pattern; however, all original timber windows have been removed and replaced with powder-coated aluminium framed units. In addition to roofing and guttering, new guttering and downpipes form part of alterations to the building. The original laundry building, located at the rear of the officer's flats, apart from re-roofing works in red Colorbond corrugated metal sheet and the application of later pipework to the walls, appears to largely retain its original appearance, including original steel-framed windows.

*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/>*