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# METROPOLITAN FIRE BRIGADE - PRESTON (FORMER)



378 High Street



378 High St - Metropolitan  
Fire Brigade

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## Location

378 HIGH STREET, PRESTON, DAREBIN CITY

## Municipality

DAREBIN CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO224

## Heritage Listing

Darebin City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

### *What is significant?*

The former Metropolitan Fire Brigade station at Preston, designed by Cedric Ballantyne and constructed by 1912 is significant. The station comprises two, two-storey brick early twentieth century buildings. The elevations of the former station-house at the corner of High Street and Roseberry Avenue are asymmetrically composed in a Free

Classical-style of restrained use of Classical motifs and elements. Its walls are faced in red brickwork, with render used for architectural embellishment including around doors and window openings, creating a blood and bandage effect. At the rear and facing Roseberry Avenue is a two storey brick building with a hip roof, which is built to the front and east side boundary. It has a tall chimney with a rendered cap and terracotta pots. There is a wide bank of white rendered cement under the eaves, which has small brackets. There is a tall double hung sash window with highlight in the ground floor adjacent to a recessed doorway. At the first floor level there is a large rectangular opening framing the balcony, which has centrally placed tall French windows (or doors). This building is connected to the main building by a single storey brick section set back from the street.

Later alterations and/or additions are not significant.

*How is it significant?*

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade station at Preston is of local historic and aesthetic significance to Darebin City.

*Why is it significant?*

Historically, the former Metropolitan Fire Brigade station at Preston is significant as an intact example of a suburban fire station, which demonstrates the way of life, accommodation and methods of work in fire stations in the early twentieth century. It is also significant as one of a number of civic/community buildings erected in this area in the early twentieth century, which demonstrate the development of Preston as it progressed toward becoming a city. (AHC criteria A.4, D.2, H.1)

Aesthetically, the former Metropolitan Fire Brigade station at Preston is significant as a fine example of an suburban fire station, and as a design by the noted architect Cedric Ballantyne of the firm Oakden and Ballantyne. (AHC criterion F.1)

Heritage Study/Consultant Darebin - Darebin Heritage Study, Context P/L, 2011;

Construction dates 1912,

Architect/Designer Ballantyne, Cedric H,

Hermes Number 26742

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

A two-storey brick early twentieth century former Metropolitan Fire Brigade Station (MFB), situated on the northeast corner of High Street and Roseberry Avenue. With the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, on the opposite corner, and the Preston Police Station and Preston Magistrates' Court in Roseberry Avenue, and the Preston Post Office and the City Hall and Municipal offices in High Street, it is part of a precinct of Commonwealth, State and Local Government buildings.

The station comprises two, two-storey brick early twentieth century buildings. The elevations of the former station-house at the corner of High Street and Roseberry Avenue are asymmetrically composed in a Free Classical-style of restrained use of Classical motifs and elements. Its walls are faced in red brickwork, with render used for architectural embellishment including around doors and window openings, creating a blood and bandage effect.

The west elevation has a plain brick parapet and below this is a cornice with a cement render frieze. A bay projects out slightly towards the centre of the elevation, which has two double-hung sash windows, with a smaller glazed panel above. The upper level of this projecting bay has rendered quoining at its corners. The bay closest to the Roseberry Avenue corner, on its upper level, has a similar double-hung sash window and it has an Ionic-inspired rendered cement pilaster at the street corner. A cornice, with a deep frieze, divides most of the upper

level from the lower level of the building. The projecting bay on the ground floor has two pairs of double-hung sash windows, in a similar arrangement to the windows on the upper level, and on the ground floor in the bay closest to Roseberry Avenue is a pair of timber entrance doors with multi-paned glass panels on its upper portion. The bay to the left (north) of the projecting bay has a circular multi-paned window on the upper level, and on the ground floor is an entrance with a timber framed door with a fixed glazed panel (not original). Between this entrance and the upper level circular window is a pair of small double-hung sash windows. Unsympathetic signage has been fixed and painted on this elevation, and there is an unsympathetic retractable awning above the door at the north end of this elevation.

The south elevation is asymmetrically composed and has similar detailing as the west elevation. A bay projects forward, slightly, towards the east end of this elevation. This bay, on the ground floor, contains two entrances to the former fire station garage. The garage entrance is divided into two bays and has Ionic-inspired pilasters/pillar flank the entrances. The original doors of this garage entrance have been replaced in the Post-war years with metal-framed fixed glazed bi-fold doors. The former garage is now used as a cafe. A deep rendered cornice projects out above this entrance. Above the cornice is rendered signage that reads 'Metropolitan Fire Brigade'. The upper level of this projecting bay has two double-hung sash windows, with a smaller glazed panel above each, which flank a circular rendered panel with the MFB emblem. The bay at the High Street corner has a single double-hung sash window on its upper level, and a pair of double-hung sash windows on its lower level, similar in detail to the other sash windows on the building. At the High Street corner, on the upper level is a rendered cement Ionic-inspired pilaster.

At the rear and facing Roseberry Avenue is a two storey brick building with a hip roof, which is built to the front and east side boundary. It has a tall chimney with a rendered cap and terracotta pots. There is a wide bank of white rendered cement under the eaves, which has small brackets. There is a tall double hung sash window with highlight in the ground floor adjacent to a recessed doorway. At the first floor level there is a large rectangular opening framing the balcony, which has centrally placed tall French windows (or doors). This building is connected to the main building by a single storey brick section set back from the street.

*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/>*