

Lygon Street Precinct A



500 & 502 Lygon Street
Brunswick East



504-510 Lygon Street
Brunswick East



514 & 516 Lygon Street
Brunswick East



Lygon Street Precinct A Map

Location

495-511 & 500-522 LYGON STREET BRUNSWICK EAST, MERRI-BEK CITY

Municipality

MERRI-BEK CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO435

Heritage Listing

Merri-bek City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 17, 2023

What is significant?

The Lygon Street Precinct A area is located at the northern end of Lygon Street, close to its intersection with Albion Street. The precinct comprises a row of interwar single and two storey shops on the west side of Lygon Street (500-522 Lygon Street) and an interwar dance hall and cinema on the east side (495-497 Lygon Street). It also includes the laneway which abuts the cinema on the south and west sides of the buildings.

This shopping strip was developed in the 1920s, to service the western end of Glenmorgan Street and other interwar subdivisions surrounding this part of Lygon Street which were developed as a result of the economic prosperity and growth in the municipality following World War One. As is usual in commercial areas, many of the original shopfronts have been replaced, although the form and scale of the shops, parapet design and cantilevered verandahs survive in almost all shops. The former Liberty Cinema has had alterations to the lower storey, but its landmark qualities remain intact, as does its upper storey facade. The precinct is in good condition and has a high degree of integrity to its 1920s period, although a number of shopfronts have been replaced. Elements which contribute to the significance of the precinct include (but are not limited to):

- The former Liberty Theatre at 495 Lygon Street as a landmark building
- The intact copper shopfronts at 506 and 510 Lygon Street
- The intact cantilever verandahs on all of the single storey shops (except 518 Lygon Street)
- The intact parapet form, design and (in some cases) original unpainted face brick and render
- Retail and commercial buildings with roofs concealed by parapets
- The consistent one or two storey scale of retail and commercial buildings.
- The attached form of the one and two storey shops with no front setbacks and similar facade widths creating a repetitive module.
- The form and fabric of surviving early shopfronts, typically built with large timber or metal framed display windows above stall boards, smaller highlight windows (often with leadlight glazing), glazed ceramic tile surfaces, and recessed doorways.
- The limited number of modern internally illuminated signs.
- The retention of original unsealed bluestone pitch laneways

How is it significant?

The Lygon Street Precinct A is of historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Merri-bek

Why is it significant?

The Lygon Street Precinct A area is historically significant as it is representative of a small shopping strip developed principally in the period of rapid economic and residential growth within Merri-bek between c1920-1935. This precinct in particular was influenced by growth in adjacent Coburg, once it was deemed a City in 1922. The residential housing stock which surrounds this precinct (but is beyond the precinct itself) is predominately post World War One, and was constructed within the same c.1920-1935 timeframe. It is of particular historical significance for its capacity to illustrate one of two major phases of development in the Municipality; the economic

and residential 'boom' within Merri-bek following the First World War. (Criterion A & C)

It is of further historical significance as one of the most 'complete' precincts, representing not only the commercial needs of the immediate community during this period of Merri-bek's growth, but their needs for leisure and recreation. The Liberty Picture Theatre and Dance Hall are important historically as they both played an important part in the social and recreational lives of the people within the locality. (Criterion G)

The Lygon Street Precinct A is aesthetically significant as a fine representative example of a 1920s shopping strip built to service the immediate residential community. The commercial and retail buildings were constructed between c.1920-1935 and exhibit a very good representation of the form, scale, design and materials used during this period, including restrained classical detailing. The row of single shops and the cinema and dance hall makes an important contribution to valued interwar character of the area. (Criterion D & E)

Theme

5. Building Victoria's industries and workforce

Heritage Study/Consultant Moreland - Lygon Street Heritage Study Stage 2, Context Pty Ltd, 2012;

Hermes Number 184692

Property Number

Physical Description 1

Precinct A is situated at the north end of Lygon Street, Brunswick East, just south of Albion Street.

On the west side is the former Liberty Picture Theatre and dance hall, with a bluestone pitched laneway along its south boundary. Situated across from it, and extending northward to Albion Street, is a row of 11 single and double-storey shops, most of them built in pairs or larger groups during the 1920s to early 1930s.

The former cinema is a freestanding building, which strengthens its landmark character. It has red brick walls with cement render dressings, and a gabled hip roof, which is largely concealed from Lygon Street by a parapet. The building has a simple, classical-inspired style, as was popular in the 1920s. This is seen in the engaged pilasters, pedimented parapet, and dentil and modillion mouldings beneath the cornice and central bank of windows, respectively.

The ground floor has modern shopfronts and the entire facade has rendered in recent times.

The shops on the east side of the street were built in four or five groups. The first pair, Nos 500-502, are single-storey red brick shops with rendered parapets. The parapets intersperse simple rectangular and semi-circular forms with a simple square-run moulding at the top. There is a similar square-edged moulding along the tops of the rectangular parapets at Nos 504-510, suggesting that they may be the work of the same builder (and the same red brick was used). These four two-storey shops are labelled with the date '1924' and name 'W.H.N. Bls.' [Buildings] at the centre of the row. They have an inset panel of red brick at the centre of the parapet, above a rectangular opening creating an inset balcony. Original frosted multipane windows and doors are visible on the balconies of Nos 504 & 506.

The next shop, No 512, is the only single built one in the row. It is single-storey, with a rendered facade, and simple parapet with basic classical ornament including flattened pilasters and modillions.

The single-storey shops at Nos 514-518 were built together and both have rendered parapets with pilasters and curved sides. While No 518 is a narrow shop, Nos 514 & 516 share a single parapet, giving them more presence in the streetscape.

The final pair of shops, Nos 520-522, were the latest to be constructed in the precinct, probably in the early 1930s. They have finely detailed parapets with raised borders and lines in red brick set on clinker bricks, as well as a soldier course of clinker bricks at the top.

All but the shop at No 518 retain their cantilevered verandahs, in varying states of repair. Nos 500-504 all have retained unpainted cement render, and No 520 has an unpainted red and clinker brick parapet. Nos 506 and 510 retains original shopfronts with decorative copper framings with leadlight highlights to No 510, while Nos 500, 512 & 522 have sympathetic postwar shopfronts.

Apart from the replacement of the other shopfronts and over painting of most of the rendered and brick parapets, alterations include the infilling of the recessed balconies to Nos 508 & 510 and replacement of the verandah with a fabric awning at No 518.

Condition: The precinct is in good condition -all of the shops are in generally good condition.

Integrity: The precinct retains a high degree of integrity

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/>