
BELLETT STREET PRECINCT



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PRECINCT map.jpg



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PRECINCT street.jpg



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Location

47-71 Bellett Street CAMBERWELL, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO731

Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 21, 2018

What is Significant?

The Bellett Street Precinct, comprising 47-71 Bellett Street, Camberwell, is significant. While the southern half of Bellett Street existed since the 19th century, the northern half was only created by a 1921 subdivision of much of the land from the Riversdale Road-facing mansions *Warrawee* and *Astolat*. The subdivider, Samuel Whitehead, placed a restrictive covenant on the lots, on both sides of Bellett Street, specifying freestanding houses with tile

or slate roofs and brick walls, at a cost of no less than £750. The subdivision developed rapidly, with ten houses constructed between 1921 and 1925, and then one each in 1926, 1927 and 1933, giving the precinct a consistent character.

Whitehead, recorded as a farmer in 1921, became a builder in the Boroondara area, and likely constructed his own home at no. 57 (Contributory). The Brown family also made a substantial mark on Bellett Street. David Austin Brown (no. 69) and his parents, Emma and James Brown (no. 71), were the first people to purchase allotments from Samuel Whitehead. Another son of Emma and James Brown, Clifford Willis Brown, was the designer-builder of five distinctive houses in the precinct: his own house at no. 67, those for his parents and brother, as well as two others (nos. 47 and 65). Clifford Brown advertised frequently in the late 1920s and early 1930s, indicating that he was both a designer-builder and a small-scale property developer in the Camberwell area. Remaining houses are of contributory significance to the precinct. The curved street alignment and the mature camphor laurel trees also contribute to its significance.

How is it significant?

The Bellett Street Precinct is of local historical, architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

Historically, the precinct illustrates the influence of the electrification of the tramways and railway on the subdivision and development of housing in Camberwell during the interwar period, which spread north, east and south from Camberwell Junction during this period. While the southern half of Bellett Street, between Camberwell Road and King Street, was created during the 19th century, the northern part was only created by a 1921 subdivision. This part of the street demonstrates the curved street form that was lauded by town planners in the early 20th century, made necessary here to bypass the rear of Victorian mansions *Astolat* and *Warawee*. The houses designed and built by builder Clifford W Brown, at 47 and 65-71 Bellett Street also demonstrate the role of craftsman-builders on the creation of Boroondara's interwar character, as they designed and built high-quality housing that transcended the typical styles of their era, adding visual interest and variety to the streetscapes. (Criterion A)

Architecturally, the houses in the precinct are representative of styles popular during the 1920s and early 1930s, including accomplished examples of Attic Bungalows, Arts & Crafts Bungalows and California Bungalows, as well as the Georgian Revival, all of which exhibit a high level of intactness. They also represent the high quality of construction, with brick walls and slate or tile roofs, specified by subdivider and resident Samuel Whitehead's restrictive covenant on the housing lots, which was typical for residential development interwar in Camberwell. (Criterion D)

Aesthetically, the precinct is significant thanks to the picturesque curved street, surviving camphor laurel trees, the consistency of garden setbacks, and the survival of many original fences. The group of houses designed and built by Clifford W Brown at nos. 65-71 recognisable by the distinctive chimney designs, with a variety of tapered concrete caps, often with tile details below or at the base of them. *Truro* of 1927, at no. 67, was designed by Brown as his home and is of Individual Significance for its French Provencal design with picturesque massing of projecting hip-roof rooms at the ground and first floor levels set against the very high main hip roof, and a prominent front chimney with curved buttresses. No. 71 of 1925, designed by Brown for his parents, is an Attic Bungalow also of Individual Significance for its picturesque massing and jerkin-head roof. (Criterion E)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study: Vol. 2 Camberwell, Context, 2018;
Construction dates	1922,
Hermes Number	202109
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The northern end of Bellett Street is curved picturesquely past the rear of Victorian-era mansions *Astolat* and *Warawee* in Riversdale Road. The streetscape is enhanced by camphor laurel street trees. Substantial single-storey and attic Bungalows have consistent front setbacks with medium-sized front gardens, many of them with original brick and rendered front fences.

Houses all have brick walls and tiled roofs, in keeping with the covenant placed in the 1921 subdivision. Some have red or clinker face brick walls, others are finished in whole or in part with roughcast render. No. 51 retains roughcast walls with the original unpainted finish. Gables are filled with timber shingles, panelling to resemble half-timbering, notched weatherboard, or vertical board-and-batten cladding. Most houses have double-hung leadlight windows, with an Art Nouveau influence to the earlier houses and more geometric patterns to the later ones. A few have multi-paned upper sashes.

Stylistically, they range from substantial examples of Attic Bungalows (Nos. 49, 55, 57, 63, 71), Arts & Crafts and California bungalows, some gable fronted and others with a transverse roof (Nos. 51, 53, 61, 65, 69). Among them, No. 61 is particularly well detailed, with a jerkin-head front gable with an arched gable vent set within timber shingles above a bay window with a separate roof. There is also a relatively rare Georgian Revival house at No. 59, which has a hipped roof, rendered walls, margin glazing and louvered shutters to the windows, and a segmental fanlight and sidelights with delicate circular and star-shaped glazing bar patterns.

One of the defining features of the precinct is a distinctive group of houses by builder and Bellett Street resident, Clifford W Brown, at Nos 47 and 65-71. Of particular interest are Nos. 67 and 71. No. 67 was Brown's home, built in 1927. It is a picturesque house with French Provencal inspiration. It has a very high hip roof, clad in the original concrete tiles (which may have been painted originally). At the centre of the roof is a hipped dormer with a cast-concrete flower box below a pair of small four-over-one sash windows. This dormer sits between two ground-floor pavilions with hipped roofs. To the side of the dormer is a tall clinker-brick chimney with curved buttresses to the sides and a cast-concrete cap with a decorative tile detail. Walls are a combination of roughcast render and clinker bricks. The house retains a copper nameplate above the front porch giving the house's name - 'Truro' - as it was during Brown's residence. It appears that the porch supports have been replaced with the current timber posts. The house is of Individual Significance.

The house at 71 Bellett Street is also of Individual Significance. Built in 1925 for Mrs J (Emma) Brown by builder CW Brown, it is an Attic Bungalow with very picturesque massing and jerkin-head roof. The front gable is embellished with an integral flowerbox to the attic window, a ground-floor bay window with a hipped roof, and hexagonal leadlights to upper sashes. Very tall clinker-brick chimneys flank the front gable, each with a cast-concrete cap and two square tiles at the top of the shaft - a signature of CW Brown's work. The house retains its original complex front brick fence, comprising clinker brick piers, and solid curved balustrade of roughcast render above a red brick plinth. This same fence form continues in front of No 69 next door, where David Brown resided. The simple mild-steel pedestrian and vehicular gates also appear to be original. The house is highly intact as viewed from the street, with a simple recessive new carport on the east side of the house.

The other CW Brown houses are variations on California Bungalows, with No. 69 being the most substantial. All but the later No 47 share distinctive chimney designs, with a variety of tapered concrete caps, often with tile details below or at the base of them. No. 65 has an unusual bull's eye window with keystones on four sides in the front gable, with corbelled brick bands below it, and rendered pilasters framing the windows.

Houses in the precinct are of an overall high level of intactness. A number retain their original or early front fence, such as Nos. 49, 59, 61, 69, and 71. Several have a new carport or garage, which are either simple in design (Nos. 61, 71) or adopt some of the features of the house (Nos. 63, 69), but they do not impede significant views to the house apart from the large free-standing carport in front of No. 47. Otherwise the houses are mostly intact, aside from minor instances of overpainting (the upper part of the chimney at No. 47, the brick dados to Nos. 61 and 65), overcladding of the shingles in the gable of No. 55, a very recessive rear extension to No. 57, and the addition of Federation-style timber brackets to the porch of No. 63.

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/>