
Flats



Moonee Ponds, Mt
Alexander, 519



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Location

519 Mount Alexander Road MOONEE PONDS, MOONEE VALLEY CITY

Municipality

MOONEE VALLEY CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO522

Heritage Listing

Moonee Valley City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 4, 2019

What is Significant?

The apartment building at 519 Mount Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds, is significant. It was built in 1941-42 by owner William James Simmie, a Melbourne builder, who was a president of major interwar construction company Simmie & Co Pty Ltd. The building contained six apartments for rent, and a larger two-storey unit that was William Simmie's home until his death.

Significant fabric includes the:

original building form, roof form and fenestrations;

tiled roofs and chimneys;

unpainted face brick walls;

face brick details including contrasting sills, clinker brick base and brick detailing around the entry porches;

window and door joinery;

metal framed windows with horizontal glazing mullions;

brick garages, laundry and counter-weighted garage doors; and

front fence including mild steel gate, letterboxes and mild steel details

The generous garden setting and early rose garden are contributory elements.

How is it significant?

519 Mount Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds, is of local historical and architectural (representative) significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

The apartment building at 519 Mount Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds, is historically significant for its illustration of the higher housing densities that began to appear in the municipality around World War Two, marking a change from the detached villa character seen previously in suburbs like Moonee Ponds and Essendon. (Criterion A)

The apartment building at 519 Mount Alexander Road is a representative example of how scarcity of building materials and labour during the war impacted on construction techniques in a shift towards a functional austerity. This is evident in its simple design that relies on massing and subtle details for visual interest, such as the contrasting brick sills, horizontal glazing mullions, clinker brick base work and contrasting brick detailing around the entry porches. Overall this gives the building a gentle Moderne feel that reflects a restraint required for the period in which it was built, without losing the overall quality of execution that one would expect of a building that was constructed in part as the home of the head of a major construction company. The place is enhanced by the retention of its original setting, including the garages, external laundry, generous garden setting, original front fence and gate, and early rose garden. (Criteria A and D)

Heritage Study/Consultant Moonee Valley - Moonee Valley 2017 Heritage Study, Context, 2019;

Construction dates 1942,

Hermes Number 202271

Property Number

Physical Description 1

519 Mount Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds, faces east on a large allotment fronting a main arterial road and abutting Newton Parade to the rear. The building is a double-storey interwar cream brick apartment block with a terracotta tiled roof. It is utilitarian in style with some gentle references to the Moderne aesthetic.

The built form comprises two substantial conjoined hipped roof structures arranged perpendicularly in a largely L-shape plan. The front wing aligns east-west, while the rear wing, aligning north-south, is set back from the street and has a smaller hipped roof projection attached to its northernmost end. The terracotta roof comes down to simple eaves with a narrow-boarded soffit. Four short chimneys of slightly differing proportions pierce the roof, distributed two to the front wing and one to each of the rear wings. The chimneys are made of yellow-brown clinker bricks and capped with red-blue clinker bricks laid on edge with simple metal flues atop.

Constructed of cream brick laid in stretcher bond, the wall planes form expansive unadorned surfaces with simple paired casement windows evenly punctuating the elevations. The windows have minimal decoration except for the angled brown-blue clinker bricks that form the sills. On the upper pane of each window is a timber mullion that lends a gentle horizontal appearance to the building's design. A narrow band of red-blue clinker bricks encircling the base of the building reinforces this horizontal element in the design.

On the western facade of the rear wing is a protruding yellow-brown clinker brick panel containing an entrance door beneath an elongated vertical pane of glazing and housing the stairwell internally. Two narrow horizontal bands of recessed Roman bricks decorate the space between the door and window. The same Roman bricks are paired to imitate quoins around the glazed opening. The windows have frosted glass decorated with a single continuous line in a geometric pattern. Externally, they have three horizontal members dividing the glazed surface and a sill of angled brown bricks. Next to the entrance door is a narrow-fixed window comprising glass blocks. Beneath the building's eaves is a shallow concave roof and simple cornice capping the protruding brick panel. A second brick panel of matching design is centred on the northern facade of the front wing.

The eastern elevation is painted brick with single windows evenly spaced along the first storey. An external timber stairwell with a simple horizontal beam balustrade connects the first and ground floors. A tall vertically boarded gate secures access to the southern elevation of the apartments.

A low red-blue clinker brick fence delineates the eastern boundary of the allotment. It is interspersed with slightly taller brick piers enlivened by two bands of Roman cream bricks above the main fence component. The fence is capped with brown bricks headers, surmounted by simple mild steel panels with a stretched diagonal motif. The fence has an apron approach turning slightly inward at the main entrance path, closer to the northern boundary. At the approach is an intact low mild steel gate featuring the same motif as the fence. Behind this gate are two brick letterboxes, matching the brick fence piers in design and material but made to a larger scale. The letterboxes are narrow wooden boxes with individual doors above separate, concrete cylindrical openings. Each letterbox has a small metal number affixed and several have intact metal keyholes. The fence, gates and letterboxes appear to be original or early. Two concrete paths lead off from the fence openings. The first, on the southern end, leads to a tall timber gate that provides private access to the rear of the building. The second path leads to the main entrance doors. The garden is generously sized with mature and well-maintained hedges and bushes planted alongside the boundary fences. Low, rubble-course masonry borders run parallel to the western and northern walls of the front wing containing shrubs of various sizes. In the north-facing courtyard several birch trees form a row alongside the entrance path. A row of established rose bushes along the western fence appears to be an early planting.

It does not appear that any additions have been made to the main built form, but some of the rear and side elevation has been overpainted. The garage and external laundry at the rear of the property are intact, apart from overpainting of the garages. Six metal garage doors, five of which are early or original, punctuate the brick wall abutting the site's western perimeter. The early or original garage doors are divided into ten panels, organised by two horizontal and five verticals.

519 Mount Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds, is of very high integrity with very few changes visible to original or early elements of the place. The building retains its main built forms, unpainted face brick, tiled roofs, fenestration, external garages and laundry, and fence.

The integrity of the building is enhanced by the high level of intactness of these main elements which include original chimneys, face brick detail (including sills, raised brick panels and capping), metal-framed windows, original counterweight garage doors, front fence, gate, letterboxes, and mild steel details on the fence.

The integrity of the place is greatly enhanced by its original curtilage and generous garden setting, original front fence and gate, and early rose garden.

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/>