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# Former Hawthorn Tramways Trust Depot



Hawthorn Heritage study  
1992



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## Location

Wallen Road HAWTHORN, Boroondara City

## Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO133

## Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

-The complex remains the most intact and unaltered Melbourne tram depot from the formative era of the present electric tramway network, and the most substantial remnant of the former Hawthorn Tramways Trust infrastructure.

-It is important for its association with the Trust, which developed into the second most important municipal electric tramway undertaking in Melbourne. The Trust's tramways were responsible for the development of large

areas of the south eastern residential suburbs during the First World War and in later decades. Wattle Park also survives as a significant legacy of the Trust's enterprise. The Trust was the first tramway undertaking to operate electric trams in the City of Melbourne.

-The original depot complex, designed by the notable architect, Leonard Flannagan, is an imposing application of the American Romanesque style to an early tramway building. Its commanding elevational treatment is an expression of the civic status of the Trust at its inception.

-Although Flannagan designed many buildings for the contemporary Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust, Hawthorn depot represents the best example of his use of this architectural style for a tramway building.

-The building complex is distinguished by its unique siting on steeply sloping ground, and by its gently curved and rhythmic contribution to the streetscape.

-It has historical significance for its long term association with the central driver training school and the uniform clothing workshop established by the Tramways Board in 1925 and 1940 respectively.

-The separate structure comprising the former stable and overhead wagon shed recalls the means by which specialist maintenance, peculiar to an electric tramway, was carried out in the pre-motor vehicle era.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Hawthorn Heritage study 1992, Meredith Gould, Conservation Architects, 1992;
Hermes Number	14843
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

The depot is unusually sited on steeply sloping ground between Wallen Road and Fairview Park on the north bank of the Yarra River. All other Melbourne tram depots have flat sites.

The original complex comprised a three storey brick structure containing offices, amenities, workshop and sub-station along the Wallen Road frontage and an adjoining four track brick car shed.

Flannagan's initial design for a two storey office section with a rather plain street elevation was later altered to include a third or mid-floor level in the west end. The converter station and battery room at the opposite end occupied the equivalent height of the ground and mid-floor storey. The top floor containing the principal offices had its main entrance fronting the intersection of Wallen Road and Power street.

The top floor of the main building extends south along the Power Street frontage and is actually located above the east end of the car shed. The now demolished Footscray depot was the only other Melbourne tram depot where offices were located above the car shed. This section of the Hawthorn building formerly accommodated the Trust's boardroom.

Flannagan's final design for the street facades, comprising a long run of arched bays following the gentle curve of the street intersection, is a bold application of the Romanesque style commonly used for American warehouse buildings in the 1890s. Typical bays have round arched upper levels with red brick pilasters and rendered spandrels.

The curved section of the facade was dominated by the main entrance and a curved flight of steps leading up from street level. A pediment above the entrance contains the crest of the Hawthorn Tramways Trust in the tympanum. Unfortunately, this entrance was abolished when an addition storey was inserted into the former battery room to form a clothing store in 1965. A small external entrance to serve this new storey was inserted into

the lower part of the east elevation at this time.

The west end of the Wallen Road facade is terminated by a wide bay, divided on the upper storey by pilasters and surmounted with a pediment. The street elevation closely resembles the less developed American Romanesque style used by Flannagan on the Church Street elevation of the contemporary depot at Kew. The office part of the complex has timber floors, lightweight partitions and a skillion corrugated iron roof. Two straight-flight timber staircases serve the three offices floors.

The original car shed has a steel framed off-set gable roof structure with corrugated iron roofing and glazing on the south face slope. The west elevation originally had a symmetrical gabled brick parapet incorporating a central oculus and steel roller shutters were used to close off the entrance to the four tracks. A tram servicing pit is located between the rails of each track. A Grinell fire sprinkler system was installed throughout the car sheds in 1922.

#### Car Shed Extension:

The three track car shed extension designed by Sydney Smith is generally of similar construction to Flannagan's car shed. However, the south wall was built as a temporary lightweight structure (steel columns and corrugated iron sheeting) to allow for future extension to the south. In fact, connections for the addition of future roof trusses can be seen protruding through the wall cladding. The west facade of the second car shed was of brick and had a stepped parapet and symmetrically placed pair of oculi. During 1947 the brick parapets at the front of both car sheds and the columns for the roller shutters on the original shed were removed".

*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/>*