
135-137 Union Road

Location

135-137 Union Road SURREY HILLS, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Incl in HO area contributory

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO532

Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is Significant?The Union Road Commercial Precinct is concentrated in Union Road, Surrey Hills, which is a north-south running road through the suburb. The precinct straddles the railway line, and incorporates development at the corner of Canterbury Road, including some (limited) development on the south side of Canterbury Road, east of Union Road. The precinct emerged in the 1880s after the extension of the railway line to Lilydale and the construction of the Surrey Hills Railway Station. Dates of construction for the graded heritage buildings range from the late 1880s through to 1940, although the majority of buildings fall within the period of the 1890s to the 1920s. The historic development, save for the former 1888 Surrey Family Hotel, is typically single and double storey, of masonry construction, with zero setbacks to the street. Many shopfronts at ground level retain their original or early form, and first floor facades are typically intact. Parapets are variously plain, stepped and curved; some have pediments, with decoration; and some with cement signage panels. Non-original or altered shopfronts, and non-original verandahs are also found, which is common in historic commercial streetscapes of Melbourne. There is also landscaping in the precinct which contributes to its character, albeit some of more recent origin. The landscaping includes pinoak plantings setback from the street; plane trees including at corners with intersecting streets; and some low trimmed box hedges to the footpaths.

How is it Significant?The Union Road Commercial Precinct is of historical, social and aesthetic/architectural significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it Significant?Union Road Commercial Precinct is of local historical significance (Criterion A). It is a long-standing local commercial/retail shopping area in Surrey Hills, which emerged in the 1880s after the extension of the railway line to Lilydale and the construction of the railway station in 1882. The diversity of local businesses was well established by the interwar era, by which time the built form of the precinct

had also consolidated. The diverse commercial enterprises of the period met the typical needs of middle class suburban living, including the growing number of railway commuters, with a ladies draper, boot shops, laundry, painter, greengrocers, florist, chemist, butchers, delicatessen, cab proprietors and newsagents. The precinct is also of historical significance for its pattern of development which followed a similar pattern to that of residential development in Surrey Hills, commencing in the 1880s and, after some fitful follow up development around the turn of the nineteenth century, culminated in substantial consolidation in the 1920s. In terms of social significance (Criterion G), Union Road Commercial Precinct is locally significant as a much valued commercial/retail shopping area in Surrey Hills, which has served the community, and railway commuter traffic, for over 120 years. Although comparatively modest in size, its ongoing commercial focus emphasises its importance to the community of Surrey Hills. Union Road Commercial Precinct is of local aesthetic/architectural significance (Criterion E). The precinct has a comparatively high level of intactness, and streetscape diversity arising from the variety of facade and parapet treatments. Earlier buildings in the precinct have typical Classical Revival detailing, at least to their first floor facades, while later buildings of the 1910s and 1920s have simpler detailing. There is also some homogeneity to the shopping strip, enhanced by pairs or multiple shop terraces that have remained unified, at least at first floor or parapet level. The precinct also derives some aesthetic value from its landscaping and street plantings. Union Road Commercial Precinct is additionally significant for demonstrating some of the principal characteristics of late nineteenth and early twentieth century shopping precincts (Criterion D). These include a mix of single and double storey historic masonry commercial buildings, with zero setbacks to the street; shopfronts at ground floor level which retain their original or early form and fabric; awnings of mostly simple form and detailing; and a preponderance of intact first floor facades, with solid walls, punched rectangular windows, and often prominent parapets.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Surrey Hills and Canterbury Hill Estate Heritage Study, Lovell Chen, 2011;
Hermes Number	192650
Property Number	

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/>