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# 179-183 High Street

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## Location

179-183 High Street KEW, BOROONDARA CITY

## Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

## Level of significance

Incl in HO area contributory

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO520

## Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

## What is significant?

The Kew Junction Commercial Heritage Precinct has a predominantly retail and commercial built form character, with the majority of contributory buildings, as well as some individually significant buildings within the precinct boundaries dating from the Victorian and interwar eras, with some more limited Federation and post-WWII development (up to the 1960s). The precinct includes several substantially contiguous building groups along both the north and south sides of High Street, east of the five ways junction; extends into Cotham Road from the junction with High Street; and breaks up into smaller non-contiguous groups of heritage buildings further east on High Street. The key focal point within the precinct is the (former) public buildings group (post office [VHR 885; HO68], police station and court house [VHR 994; HO69] and war memorial [VHR2035; HO572]) on the landmark triangular site at the junction of High Street and Cotham Road. The earliest businesses on High Street were established in the 1850s, albeit no buildings appear to survive from this period. As the number of businesses grew, they concentrated in High Street to the east of the five ways road junction, up to the intersection with Cotham Road; this area is now known as 'Kew Junction'. Development in the later decades of the nineteenth

century attracted banks, hotels, a variety of merchants, horse-drawn transport services and the Kew spur railway line. This burst in growth culminated in the late 1880s in the construction of the outstanding complex of public buildings (post office, court house and police station) on the prominent and elevated triangular site at the junction of High Street and Cotham Road. Development picked up again in the interwar period, including new buildings constructed on the south side of High Street following the road alignment of 1934. The road works were aimed at improving traffic congestion, a constant problem at Kew Junction from the 1920s, and still being addressed with road widening and realignment in the late 1950s when the five ways junction was altered and opened up. Significant and contributory buildings are principally two-storey terraces, with ground floor shopfronts (many of which are not original); parapeted first floors which display overall a high level of intactness; and zero setbacks to the main street frontages. There are also some single storey and larger commercial buildings, some of which have strong corner presentations. The precinct is generally linear in nature with the valued built form typically presenting as a 'wall' of building frontages, and the majority of architectural detailing concentrated in the visible streetscape facades.

## How is it significant?

The Kew Junction Commercial Heritage Precinct is of historical, social and architectural significance to the City of Boroondara.

## Why is it significant?

The Kew Junction Commercial Heritage Precinct is of local historical and social significance. It has been a commercial centre and a civic and social focus for residents of Kew since the mid-nineteenth century, attracting many prominent public and commercial buildings as well as numerous local businesses established and supported by the community over many decades. The Precinct is also significant for demonstrating several of the principal characteristics of historic retail strips/shopping centres in inner and middle-ring suburbs of Melbourne. These include the comparatively high level of intact and parapeted first floor facades; the generally linear nature of the precinct whereby the valued built form presents as a 'wall' of building frontages; and the concentration of architectural detailing in the streetscape facades. Architecturally, the Kew Junction Commercial Heritage Precinct is also of local significance. It retains many comparatively intact buildings constructed in the second half of the nineteenth century through to the first half of the twentieth century, including through to the post-WWII period (up to the 1960s), some of which are architecturally distinguished. Architectural styles evident in the precinct include Italianate and Renaissance Revival, Commercial Gothic, Queen Anne, Baroque influenced buildings of the early twentieth century, and a rich collection of interwar buildings displaying Art Deco characteristics. The precinct also has a notable intact collection of interwar (1920s and 1930s) commercial and retail buildings.

Heritage Study/Consultant Boroondara - Kew Junction Commercial Heritage Study, Lovell Chen, 2012;

Hermes Number 192776

Property Number

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*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/>*