
Kew Jewish Centre (Bet Nachman Synagogue)

Location

53 Walpole Street KEW, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO559

Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

The Bet Nachman Synagogue is a pre-cast concrete portal frame building, with infill panels of chocolate brick laid in stretcher bond, set on a plinth of brickwork. The building addresses Malmsbury Street and the angled facade of staggered panels of brickwork interspersed with elongated concrete framed windows projects forward, like the bow of a ship to the centre of the facade. A row of timberframed highlight windows is set below the portal frame, here rendered and over-painted. The building is double-height, and a painted concrete awning cantilevers forward over the three pairs of flush paneled painted metal sheathed entrance doors. These form an acute angle, like the structure above. There is an entry podium and shallow steps of terrazzo and painted metal handrails. The Star of David, formed of painted cast concrete or of cement is set to the 'prow' of the building above the entry, flanked by stylized Chanukahs (Menorahs) set high on the facade brickwork and also of painted cast concrete or cement. To either side travertine clad planter boxes are set below the windows and those to the east and west sides are set below narrow windows and also support the stones commemorating the foundation of the building in 1963 and its dedication in 1965 respectively. The centre's name is formed in painted metal lettering to the edge of the awning. In 1982 a series of stained glass windows designed by the noted artist Louis Kahan were installed within the auditorium.

The buildings to the west of the main Synagogue building are of no significance.

How is it significant?

The Kew Jewish Centre (Bet Nachman Synagogue) is of historical, architectural and social significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

The Kew Jewish Centre (Bet Nachman Synagogue) is of historical, architectural (typological) and social significance as an externally intact example of a major post-WWII synagogue in Boroondara and for its associations with the local Jewish community. Synagogue buildings vary significantly in terms of their specific design, but aspects of this building, including the bold and monumental temple-like form and application of symbolic elements, are broadly demonstrative of the architectural approach to such buildings and are seen in other examples. While not a building of great architectural refinement, it is a bold design that is expressive of the aspirations of the community and stands as a statement of its presence in this locality. Although not investigated as part of this assessment, as for all places of worship, the Kew Synagogue is also likely to be of social value to members of its congregation.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Kew Heritage Precincts Study, Lovell Chen, 2012; Boroondara - City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, 1988; Boroondara - Individual Heritage Citations, City of Boroondara, 2016;
Other Names	Kew Jewish Centre (Bet Nachman Synagogue),
Hermes Number	199790
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/>