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# Glenferrie and Riversdale Roads Commercial Precinct



Glenferrie and Riversdale Roads Commercial Precinct Map



The intersection of Glenferrie and Riversdale roads.jpg

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## Location

Riversdale Road and Glenferrie Road HAWTHORN, BOROONDARA CITY

## Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO775

## Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 18, 2019

What is Significant?

The Glenferrie and Riversdale Roads Commercial Precinct, located at the intersection of Glenferrie and Riversdale roads, at nos. 87-95A and 97-1/105 Riversdale Road, and 524-544 and 529-549 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn. The precinct consists of single and double-storey Edwardian and Interwar shops built in a range of architectural styles on both corners of the intersection, built from c.1915 to c.1942. Although land in the precinct was advertised for sale from the late nineteenth century, development of the area remained largely residential until at least 1917. Its development as a commercial/retail shopping centre commenced around 1920. Two main historical events provided the impetus for development of the commercial/retail hub, improved transport services and the post-WWI boom that saw a massive population expansion in the area and new subdivisions on the sites of older villas that had been demolished.

How is it significant?

The Glenferrie and Riversdale Roads Commercial Precinct is of local historic, architectural, and aesthetic significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

Historically, the group of shops at the intersection of Glenferrie and Riversdale roads is significant for its ability to demonstrate a major development phase of commercial/retail centres in Hawthorn. It demonstrates the influence of improved transport connections by the second decade of twentieth century and the massive expansion of the population in the post-WWI period on this part of Hawthorn. Before the turn of the century the main local shopping strip was along Burwood Road, which was serviced by a horse tram between 1890 and 1916. In 1913, a tramline was opened along Glenferrie Road, which stimulated the building of a second shopping strip, which ultimately overtook Burwood Road. Further development by the Hawthorn Tramways Trust of an electric tramline along Riversdale Road in 1916 combined with post-war boom conditions in the 1920s, were the stimulus for the development of the commercial precinct at the intersection of Glenferrie and Riversdale roads. The predominance of Edwardian and interwar architectural styles, and absence of Victorian architectural styles common in other precincts in Hawthorn, are indicative of the precinct's relatively late development in response to improvements in transport services and population growth after WWI. (Criterion A)

Architecturally, the shops in the precinct are important as high quality and largely intact (above ground floor level) and partially intact (at ground floor level) representative examples of Edwardian and interwar suburban commercial/retail buildings prior to WWII. Most of the single-storey and double-storey shops have been built in rows, which enhances their visual presence and contributes to the cohesion and aesthetic quality of the precinct. The precinct is further enhanced by the presence of striking landmark buildings of high quality, most evidently the curved Edwardian corner building at nos. 524-532 Glenferrie Road, but also the group of interwar Old English style shops at 529-539 Glenferrie Road, and the large Edwardian corner building at 541-545 Glenferrie Road. The roofscape of the single-storey shops (nos. 534-544) which step down the eastern side of Glenferrie Road from the intersection is also a distinctive element within the precinct. (Criterion D)

Architecturally, some of the buildings in the precinct are notable examples of their type. The upper storey facade and parapets of the corner building at 524-532 Glenferrie Road, built in the Federation Free Style is a notable example of its type and it is a prominent landmark within the precinct. The building exhibits unusual and distinctive facade decoration, especially in its extensive use of heavy rockfaced masonry in dramatic contrast to smooth rendered surfaces elsewhere. While unusual, the eclectic and idiosyncratic use of decorative motifs and contrasting materials is what makes it typical of the Federation Free Style architectural style. (Criterion D)

Use of the interwar Old English architectural style on commercial buildings is uncommon in Hawthorn. A smaller comparable example to nos. 529-539 Glenferrie Road exists in Camberwell, in the Burke Road North Commercial and Transport Precinct (HO505); it has three shops instead of the six shops at Glenferrie Road. The upper storey facades of both examples are of equally high quality and integrity. However, the three ground floor shopfronts of the Burke Road example appear to have experienced less unsympathetic change. (Criterion D)

Aesthetically the precinct is significant for its striking landmark corner buildings, specifically the curved Federation Free Style corner building at nos. 524-532 Glenferrie Road, the large Edwardian corner building at 541-545 Glenferrie Road, and the distinctive roofscape of the single-storey shops (nos. 534-544) which steps down the eastern side of Glenferrie Road from the intersection. (Criterion E)

Grading and Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Boroondara Planning Scheme as a precinct.

For a full list of individual place gradings within the precinct, please refer to the attached PDF citation, or individual child records attached to this parent record.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study Volume 3: Hawthorn, Context, 2018;
Hermes Number	202197
Property Number	

## Physical Description 1

**Description & Integrity** The Glenferrie and Riversdale Roads Commercial Precinct is located at the intersection of Glenferrie and Riversdale roads, at nos. 87-95A and 95-105 Riversdale Road, and 524-544 and 529-549 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn. It consists of single and double-storey Edwardian and interwar shops built in a range of architectural styles on the four corners of the intersection, built from c.1915 to c.1938-42.

A number of the shop buildings were built as rows which contribute to a cohesive character to the precinct. The precinct is also defined by landmark corner buildings on three corners; made so because of massing, unusual detailing, and a distinctive roof-scape. All the shops are built to the front and side boundaries forming a continuous street wall. The predominance of Edwardian and interwar architectural styles, and absence of Victorian architectural styles, are indicative of the precinct's relatively late development, from the 1920s, compared to other commercial strips in Hawthorn.

Nos. 541-545 Glenferrie Road, built by 1920 (also 87-95A Riversdale Road), is a large two-storey rendered brick and masonry Edwardian shop building, with splayed corner addressing the northwest corner of the Glenferrie and Riversdale roads intersection (see Figure 7). The building is largely intact, and displays elements typical of a range of Edwardian architectural styles, but predominantly Federation Free Style. Typical elements (on the upper-storey) include: pairs of double-hung timber-framed windows with multi-paned glass in the upper window and sill-aligned string course with Classical regula with guttae. The string course extends the full span of the building's facade, interrupted by the rendered pilasters and the arched opening to the chamfered corner. On the Riversdale Road facade, the paired windows are interspersed with narrow and taller timber-framed windows in segmental arched openings (positioned above the ground floor entrances on Riversdale Road of nos. 91 and 93-95A, which retain their original timber joinery). Projecting pairs of timber-framed windows sit above the Riversdale and Glenferrie road upperstorey facades of the corner shop, on either side of a large arched opening which is defined by fine arched masonry trim (window new). The roof form is concealed behind a low parapet that is topped with varied curved and rectangular pediments and articulated with masonry trim that includes some garlands. The ground floor shopfront of the corner shop building (no. 541 Glenferrie Road) is largely intact, retaining three distinctive strongly emphasised arched window openings that terminate in squat masonry columns. The copper window joinery to all three and the timber and glazed door appear to also be original. The ground floor shopfronts to nos. 543-545 Glenferrie Road retain a considerable proportion of original fabric, including copper window joinery, splayed ingos, timberframed and glazed doors, and aspects of the panelled highlight windows that sit above the main display window (infilled or overpainted). The side and rear elevations are also largely intact. The original red face brick has been over painted on the west-facing side elevation and some part of the rear skillion wings. The flat awning is suspended from cables. The ground floor shopfronts fronting Riversdale Road (nos. 89 and 93-95) have been replaced.

Nos. 97-105 Riversdale Road, is a cluster of five single-storey brick late-Edwardian to early interwar shop buildings, built by 1920 (see Figure 8). No. 97 has a face brick parapet with slab capped piers projecting above a

central parapet, rendered in contrast to face brick parapet. A side view reveals stepped profile to the face brick side elevation and original chimney with moulded top. The shopfront has been replaced.

Nos. 99?101 Riversdale Road is a group of three shops built together with matching rendered parapets with central small triangular pediment. Brick pilasters that terminate above the parapet define the boundaries of the three shops. Smaller matching piers site at either side of the triangular pediments. The parapets and pediments are capped with cement-render coping. A cantilever awning spans the three shops. The ground floor shopfronts have been replaced.

No. 1/105 Riversdale Road has a roughcast rendered parapet, recessed name panel with 'W.E. McDonell. Butcher' in relief lettering below an arched pediment. Short roughcast rendered piers define the boundaries. The piers, parapet, and pediment are brick capped, matching the coping at the neighbouring shops but in a contrasting material. The east-facing side elevation (brick) has been overpainted. The ground floor shopfront has been replaced. The awning appears to be from the 1920s.

Nos. 524?532 Glenferrie Road is a striking double-storey Edwardian corner building on the southeast corner of the Riversdale/Glenferrie roads intersection, built between 1920?25 in a sweeping curve (see Figure 9). The upper storey facade is largely intact (overpainted), and displays features typical of the Federation Free Style, distinguished by its use of dramatically contrasting textures ??smooth render against heavy rockfaced masonry plinth (Mount Gambier limestone) and pilasters ??sets of paired double-hung windows (single windows on parts of the curve) with ninepaned upper windows. The roof form is concealed behind an elaborate masonry parapet (featuring alternating patterns) with masonry mouldings. Many of the ground floor shopfronts have been altered with the exception of tiled stallboards (although tiles are replaced). The cantilever awning is not original.

Nos. 534?544 Glenferrie Road comprises a row of single-storey brick Edwardian shops, built by 1920 (see Figure 10). The shops are unusual in that the roof form is not concealed behind a parapet. Instead the front face of the long, terracotta-tiled hip roof is visible above the awnings, articulated by the rendered ribs of the protruding party walls (the tiles have been unsympathetically replaced or overpainted on the corner shop at no. 534 Glenferrie Road). Located on one of the precinct's northern corners, they were some of the first commercial buildings constructed in the precinct, initiating the intersection's transition from a residential pocket to a commercial/retail strip. The end shop at 544 Glenferrie Road is distinguished by its roof form; the end of the hip roof, with narrow eaves. The side elevation retains its face brick facade. The shopfronts at nos. 536, 538, and 540 retain original splayed ingo entries (no. 538 has a timber panelled dado). No. 540 retains the largest proportion of its original fabric, including the timer and glazed door, brass window joinery, and obscure glass window panels above the main display window. The other shopfronts have been replaced (nos. 534, 542?544). The cantilever awning is likely to be original or early, based on the pressed metal linings retained at nos. 536?540.

Nos. 529?539 Glenferrie Road is a cluster of six brick shops, built between 1938 and 1942 in the interwar Old English architectural style (see Figure 11). The upper storey and roof form display typical elements of the style: asymmetrical massing, projecting gables with decorative timber bargeboard, imitation half-timbering, and clinker brickwork. The upper storey of each shop features a rectangular opening to a recessed porch. Some of these have been infilled with glazing. The gable and half-hipped roof has glazed tiles. The roof face of nos. 529?533 is divided by protruding stepped brick extensions of the party walls. The end wall of the group retains its original face brick (vine covered). Original brickwork is retained across the ground floor shopfronts (over painted at nos. 529 and 532), and nos. 535?537 retain original shopfront fabric including window joinery and diamond patterned lead light windows above the main display window, splayed ingo entry, brick floor and timber and glazed door (at no. 537). The cantilever awning is likely to be original or early, based on the pressed metal linings retained at nos. 535?539.

Nos. 547?549 Glenferrie Road is a group of three early interwar shops, built by 1925 (see Figure 12). The shops have matching parapets concealing the roof form. The side elevation to no. 549 is brick with a stepped profile from the parapet. An original chimney is visible at no. 549; rendered with decorative mouldings around the top. The parapets are divided into three bays, with projecting, slab capped piers defining the boundaries. The parapets are rendered with a large recessed rectangular panel. The ground floor shopfronts of no. 547 retain

some original features including part of the original copper window joinery, leadlight highlight windows above the main display windows, and tiled stall boards (overpainted). The shop features a cantilever awning with modern linings and signage. The ground floor shopfront of no. 549 has been replaced.

The upper level facades and parapets of the shops within the precinct are remarkably intact. While some ground floor shopfronts have been modified, a number of them retain original features, which contribute to the relatively high integrity of the precinct overall.

Most of the single-storey and double-storey shops have been built in rows, which enhances their visual presence and contribute a sense of cohesion to the precinct. The precinct is further enhanced by the presence of striking landmark buildings, most evidently the curved building at nos. 524-532 Glenferrie Road, but also the group of interwar Old English shops at 529-539, and the large Edwardian corner building at 541-545 Glenferrie Road. The roofscape of the single-storey shops at 534-544 Glenferrie Road which wraps the northeast corner of the intersection and steps down Glenferrie Road is also distinctive.

**Comparative Analysis** There are a number of commercial precincts already on the Boroondara Heritage Overlay. This section considers those with a mix of Edwardian and interwar commercial building.

- HO505 Burke Road North Commercial & Transport Precinct, Camberwell - A cohesive group of retail and commercial buildings, built between 1880 and 1930, in the vicinity of Camberwell Railway Station. It features single and double-storey Victorian, Edwardian, and interwar shop buildings, including a row of two-storey interwar Old English shops (see Figure 10).

- HO520 Kew Junction Commercial Precinct - A collection of retail, commercial and civic buildings mainly from the late Victorian and interwar periods. The built form is primarily two storeys in scale. The focal point of the precinct is the fiveways junction with its collection of civic buildings and the WWI memorial.

The three precincts are comparable in that they comprise a mixed character; at Burke Road and Kew Junction this is created by the range of Victorian, Edwardian, and Interwar architectural styles, and single and double-storey built form. The predominance of Edwardian and Interwar architectural styles, and absence of Victorian architectural styles which are common in other precincts in Hawthorn, and indicative of the precinct's relatively late development, make the subject precinct distinctive.

As at Burke Road and Kew Junction, the varying architectural styles and building heights in the Glenferrie and Riversdale Roads Commercial Precinct are given cohesion by almost all the shops being built to the front and side boundaries to form a largely continuous street wall, with roofs hidden behind parapets, as was typical prior to WWII. This cohesion is less apparent, however, at the Glenferrie and Riversdale Road Precinct because the precinct spans a wide intersection, as opposed to a long straight stretch of road which can be more readily comprehended visually. A greater sense of cohesion in the subject precinct is provided by the construction of shops in rows.

The group of interwar Old English shops on Burke Road is smaller than the row on Glenferrie Road; three shops compared to six. The upper storey facades of both groups of shops display similar detailing typical of the architectural style. The three ground floor shopfronts on Burke Road appear to have been sympathetically restored and to exhibit a higher degree of integrity than the six on Glenferrie Road; although the leadlight highlight windows above the main display window seen at Glenferrie Road to two shops (nos. 535-537 Glenferrie Road), are not present at the Burke Road example (plate glass used instead).

**Assessment Against Criteria**

Criteria referred to in Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay, Department of Planning and Community Development, revised July 2015, modified for the local context.

**CRITERION A:** Importance to the course, or pattern, of the City of Boroondara's cultural or natural history (historical significance).

The group of shops at the intersection of Glenferrie and Riversdale roads is of historical significance for demonstrating the major development phases of commercial/retail centres in Hawthorn. It demonstrates the

influence of improved transport connections by the second decade of twentieth century and the post-WWI population expansion on this part of Hawthorn. Before the turn of the century the main local shopping strip was along Burwood Road, which was serviced by a horse tram between 1890 and 1916. In 1913, a tramline was opened along Glenferrie Road, which stimulated the building of a second shopping strip, which ultimately overtook Burwood Road. Further development by the Hawthorn Tramways Trust of an electric tramline along Riversdale Road in 1916 combined with post-war boom conditions in the 1920s, were stimuli for the development of the commercial precinct at the intersection of Glenferrie and Riversdale roads. The predominance of Edwardian and interwar architectural styles, and absence of Victorian architectural styles common in other precincts in Hawthorn, are indicative of the precinct's relatively late development in response to improvements in transport services and population growth after WWI.

CRITERION B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Boroondara's cultural or natural history (rarity).

NA

CRITERION C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Boroondara's cultural or natural history (research potential).

NA

CRITERION D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

The shops in the precinct are important as high quality and largely intact (above ground floor level) and partially intact (at ground floor level) representative examples of Edwardian and interwar suburban commercial/retail buildings prior to WWII.

Most of the single-storey and double-storey shops have been built in rows, which enhances their visual presence and contributes to the cohesion and aesthetic quality of the precinct. The precinct is further enhanced by the presence of striking landmark buildings of high quality, most evidently the curved Edwardian corner building at nos. 524?532 Glenferrie Road, but also the group of interwar Old English style shops at 529?539 Glenferrie Road, and the large Edwardian corner building at 541?545 Glenferrie Road. The roofscape of the single-storey shops (nos. 534?544) which step down the eastern side of Glenferrie Road from the intersection is also a distinctive element within the precinct.

The upper storey facade and parapets of the corner building at 524?532 Glenferrie Road, built in the Federation Free Style is particularly fine example of its type and a prominent landmark within the precinct. The building exhibits unusual and distinctive facade decoration, especially its extensive use of heavy rockfaced masonry in dramatic contrast to smooth rendered surfaces elsewhere. While unusual, the eclectic and idiosyncratic use of decorative motifs and contrasting materials is what makes it typical of the Federation Free Style architectural style. The building's integrity is compromised, however, because it has lost much of its original ground floor fabric. To this end the building at nos. 524?532 Glenferrie Road is not individually Significant but remains contributory to the precinct.

Use of the interwar Old English architectural style on commercial buildings, such as at nos. 529- 539 Glenferrie Road is uncommon in Hawthorn. A smaller comparable example exists in Camberwell, in the Burke Road North Commercial and Transport Precinct (HO505). The upper storey facades of both examples are of equal high quality and integrity, whereas the three ground floor shopfronts of the Burke Road example appear to have experienced less unsympathetic change. To this end the building at nos. 529-539 Glenferrie Road is not individually Significant but remains contributory to the precinct.

CRITERION E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

Aesthetically the precinct is significant for its distinctive and striking landmark corner buildings, specifically the curved Federation Free Style corner building at nos. 524?532 Glenferrie Road, the large Edwardian corner building at 541?545 Glenferrie Road, and the roofscape of the single-storey shops (nos. 534?544) which step down the eastern side of Glenferrie Road from the intersection. (Criterion E)

CRITERION F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

NA

CRITERION G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

NA

CRITERION H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Boroondara's history (associative significance).

NA

*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/>*