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# Barrington Avenue Precinct, Kew



HO142 Precinct extension  
2018.jpg

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## Location

KEW, BOROONDARA CITY

## Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO142

## Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 10, 2019

Precinct character and significance

The Barrington Avenue Precinct was identified by the 'Kew Urban Conservation Study' (P Sanderson, 1988); in that report it was called Urban Conservation Area No. 1 (C). Its initial extent included Kew Cemetery and Victoria Park as the northern part of the precinct.

No precinct citations as such were prepared as part of the 1988 study, but there is a brief description of the proposed precinct focusing on the character of the individually significant buildings:

*This area contains 8 structures that have been designated Grade A in the study, and includes the large tracts of land of Boroondara Cemetery and Victoria Park. . The streets to the south of the cemetery contain four Grade A houses, and a high concentration of Grade B and C buildings of the Edwardian and inter war periods. They warrant protection as an area of architectural significance and as forming a most in keeping southern boundary to the cemetery and Victoria Park. (Sanderson 1988: Vol. 1, 3/19)*

When implemented, the precinct contained only the residential area to the south of Parkhill Road. Boroondara Cemetery is included separately as a place on the Victorian Heritage Register, while Victoria Park is a Council-owned place that is recommended for future assessment by this Kew Heritage Gap Study (2017).

A statement of significance was prepared for Barrington Avenue Precinct (HO142) as part of the 'Review of Heritage Overlay Precinct Citations' (Lovell Chen, 2006). It reads as follows:

Barrington Avenue Precinct, Kew, is an area of heritage significance for the following reasons:

- . *There is a concentration of graded buildings of high quality design in the area.*
- . *The area features predominantly Federation and interwar building stock, reflecting the strength of Kew's development in these years, and has a high level of integrity. It stands as the leading concentration of Kew housing from these combined periods.*
- . *The area features generally well preserved basalt kerbing, grading and bitumen footpath surfacing in the streets, on their original pattern, and a large number of mature street trees and private gardens.*
- . *The area complements the historical and architectural significance of the Boroondara Cemetery adjacent to it, and the design of Victoria Park adjoining it.*

While they are not specifically mentioned in the statement of significance for the HO142 precinct, there are also groups of Victorian houses that are Contributory to the precinct. Examples include houses at the south end of Belmont Avenue (Nos. 9, 11 and 18; No. 14 is Significant).

Apart from the removal of the cemetery and park, the extent proposed in the 1988 study is precisely as it is today. It runs south from Parkhill Road, between Ridgeway Avenue and Adeney Avenue, to the south end of the north-south streets just before they reach Cotham Road (apart from Hillcrest Avenue whose southern half is excluded). No properties facing Cotham Road were included in the precinct.

#### Extension character

The proposed extension runs along the north side of Cotham Road, from the east side of Kent Street almost to Marshall Avenue. It also takes in two houses just north of Cotham Road that sit between the Cotham Road properties and the existing boundaries of HO142 Barrington Avenue. There is a third house, 'Barrington', whose current address is 2-4 Barrington Avenue, but it actually faces Cotham Road.

Like the existing precinct, the extension contains residential buildings, primarily constructed during the Edwardian and early interwar periods, as well as a few Victorian houses (one remodelled in the interwar period).

The Victorian houses are all grouped around the south end of Belmont Avenue. As shown on the MMBW Detail Plan No. 1591, the southern two-thirds of this street, as well as the adjoining lots on Cotham Road, were developed with suburban houses by 1904.

Figure 1. The three late Victorian houses at 161 (Belmont), 163 and 165 Cotham Road, at the south end of Belmont Avenue. (Source: MMBW Detail Plan No. 1592, 1904)

Victorian houses in the extension include a row of three villas at 161-163 Cotham Road, built in 1891-92, most likely by a single builder. Note that No. 161 is in an individual HO (HO284), but is also considered to contribute to the precinct extension. All three are built of bichrome (or polychrome) face brick in the Italianate style, similar to examples already in the precinct at 14 and 18 Belmont Avenue (Significant and Contributory, respectively).

At the south end of Belmont Avenue, on the west side, is a pair of two-storey semi-detached Italianate dwellings (originally Nos. 155-157), of a similar age. They were converted to flats in the 1920s with some stylistic remodelling of the facade at that time.

The two-storey villa at 143 Cotham Road demonstrates the transition from the Victorian Italianate to the Federation Queen Anne. Like other early examples of this style in Australia, it has a far stronger English influence with vertical massing and a very small corner verandah, but displays elements that would become typical of suburban housing in the early 1900s, such as a tall hipped roof with projecting gabled bays, exposed roof rafter tails, decorative strapwork and terracotta pots to the chimneys, half-timbering to the front gable, and timber fretwork detail to the entrance porch and corner verandah.

The Edwardian-era houses use many of the same decorative elements as at 143 Cotham Road, and add to it the use of terracotta roof tiles and cresting, the use of red face brick, and the introduction of a strong diagonal axis often emphasised by a bay window and/or verandah gablet at one corner. This diagonal emphasis is particularly effective on corner houses, such as 151, 169 and 179 Cotham Road.

The next stylistic transition is demonstrated by a group of early interwar houses, all with attic storeys, at 2-4 Barrington Avenue (formerly 171 Cotham Road), and at 139, 181, 185 & 187 Cotham Road.

The first, and finest, of these houses is a late Queen Anne villa constructed by builder Frederick R Ratten as his home in 1916-17. This property was assessed by Lovell Chen in 2005 as part of the larger 'Review of B-graded buildings in Kew, Camberwell and Hawthorn' (revised 2007, 2009) and recommended for an individual heritage overlay. It was found to be significant for the following reasons:

. of local historical and architectural significance. A representative and externally relatively intact example of a brick attic-style residence of the late Federation period, it features distinctive bracketed flying gable ends with carved barge boards, roughcast rendered infill and ornate pressed cement cartouche. It is of historical significance in the local context for its association with two prominent local residents, Frederick Ratten, builder and Mayor of the Borough of Kew in 1915-16 and Desmond Kennedy, Mayor of the City of Kew in 1963.

While the Amendment C64 Independent Panel agreed that the villa is of individual heritage significance, they recommended that it should be included in the Heritage Overlay as part of a larger extension to precinct HO142, and that Boroondara Council investigate such an extension in the future.

That same year, 1916, a quite different attic-storey house was built at 187 Cotham Road, demonstrating a strong influence from the English Arts & Crafts movement and a clear break from the Queen Anne style. Walls are finished in roughcast render and ornament is far simpler, with triangular eaves brackets and solid verandah brackets in a slim 'knife blade' shape. Later houses in this group illustrate a transition to the California Bungalow style that was so ubiquitous in the 1920s and early 1930s (see, for example, 147 & 149 Cotham Road in the extension). Houses such as the 1917 attic bungalow at 185 Cotham Road, 139 Cotham Road of 1921, and 181 Cotham Road of 1924, all have red face brick walls and a steep transverse gabled roof with prominent gabled dormers. Windows have geometric leadlights and porches are supported on heavy brick piers. Among these examples, 'Currajong' at 139 Cotham Road is particularly fine, with a hit-and-miss brick balustrade to the sleepout porch of the attic dormer. It was occupied by Frederick R Ratten when built in 1921, and presumably also built by him.

The final Contributory houses built in the precinct extension took the place of a Victorian villa at the corner of Cotham Road and Kent Street in 1936. They include a semi-detached pair at 135-137 Cotham Road and a detached house behind it at 2 Kent Street. Their identical chimneys and same built-date indicate they were the work of a single designer/builder. Both can be described as Georgian Revival, or Old Colonial, in style. Both have long, tiled hipped roofs and walls with a clinker-brick dado and roughcast render above. The semi-detached pair has a more obvious Georgian influence, with Tuscan-order columns to its long verandah, and a corner parapet that projects through the roof. Notably, the render of No. 137 has never been painted. The house at 2 Kent Street has a symmetrical facade with a central porch flanked by hipped projecting bays. The porch is supported by pairs of heavy piers with fluted tops.

## Conclusion

The current HO142 Barrington Avenue Precinct is noted in the statement of significance for its collection of Edwardian and interwar dwellings. There is also a core of surviving Victorian houses, particularly along Belmont Avenue, that are also graded as Contributory and Significant to the precinct.

The proposed precinct extension contains a very similar building stock to the existing HO142 precinct, both in their built dates, as well as in design quality and intactness. They range from Victorian Italianate villas, to Edwardian Queen Anne villas, to early interwar attic bungalows, 1920s California Bungalows, and 1930s Georgian Revival houses.

The extension is also logical in its boundaries, binding together the south ends of the streets within the existing precinct (but excluding the less intact section of the streetscape east of Marshall Avenue).

Amongst the 25 properties in the proposed extension (two of which already have individual HO numbers), 20 of them would be Contributory or Significant to the extended HO142 precinct, an overall rate of 80 percent. This compares favourably to the existing extent of HO142, which has 70 percent Contributory and Significant properties within it.

For a full list of individual gradings within the precinct, please see the attached PDF citation.

Hermes Number 22132

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/>*