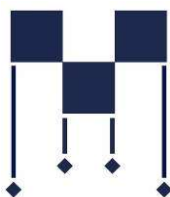




# Box Hill Commercial Precinct

## Heritage assessment

Prepared for the City of Whitehorse



LANDMARK HERITAGE PTY LTD | 21 APRIL 2022

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*Cover image: Aerial view of the Box Hill Commercial Precinct, 1950s  
(Detail of 'Box Hill', C.D. Pratt, State Library of Victoria)*

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## **Executive summary**

### **Purpose**

Landmark Heritage Pty Ltd was asked by the City of Whitehorse to assess the heritage value of a number of properties, most of which are in the Box Hill Commercial Precinct (920-956 Whitehorse Road) of the Whitehorse Heritage Overlay. Particular attention was to be placed on whether they may warrant inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register, individual or as a group (precinct). In addition, was the heritage assessment of a single house which is not in the Heritage Overlay.

These properties are:

- ▶ HOg1 Former Colonial Gas Assoc. building, 942-946 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill
- ▶ HOg2 Former Railway Hotel, 950-956 Whitehorse Road & 615-617 Station Street, Box Hill
- ▶ HO244 Box Hill Commercial Precinct, 920-984 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill
- ▶ 5 Elland Avenue, Box Hill (not in the Heritage Overlay)

### **Findings and recommendation**

#### ***Findings***

The investigation carried out for this report have concluded that:

- ▶ The Box Hill Commercial Precinct as a whole is the earliest commercial precinct in Whitehorse, created from the early 1880s and retaining nineteenth-century buildings, and it is one of the few commercial HO precincts in the surrounding municipalities with an urban form. Its western half contains the best grouping of Moderne commercial buildings in the municipality.
- ▶ The former Colonial Gas Association Building is of high importance as the finest Moderne style commercial building in the City of Whitehorse. It is also the only surviving evidence known of the Colonial Gas Association, so is one of a small group of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century buildings that illustrate the many gas producing and retailing companies that once served Melbourne and its suburbs, which together are of historical importance.
- ▶ The former Railway Hotel is a rare example of a towered Edwardian hotel in the City of Whitehorse, and the only one of its type in the surrounding outer eastern municipalities.
- ▶ The house (and garage) at 5 Elland Avenue is highly intact and illustrates a creative and non-academic approach to the 1930s Old English style. The comparative analysis has demonstrated that it is one of the more interesting examples of this style in the municipality.

#### ***Recommendations***

The investigation has also concluded that the precinct (as a whole or just the western half) and the three individual places are not of State-level heritage significance, so should not be nominated to the Victorian Heritage Register.

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose**

Landmark Heritage Pty Ltd was asked by the City of Whitehorse to assess the heritage value of a number of properties, most of which are in the Box Hill Commercial Precinct (920-956 Whitehorse Road) of the Whitehorse Heritage Overlay. Particular attention was to be placed on whether they may warrant inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register, individual or as a group (precinct). In addition, was the heritage assessment of a single house which is not in the Heritage Overlay.

These properties are:

- ▶ HO91 Former Colonial Gas Assoc. building, 942-946 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill
- ▶ HO92 Former Railway Hotel, 950-956 Whitehorse Road & 615-617 Station Street, Box Hill
- ▶ HO244 Box Hill Commercial Precinct, 920-984 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill
- ▶ 5 Elland Avenue, Box Hill (not in the Heritage Overlay)

### **1.2 Project background**

As noted above, all but one of the properties (and the precinct) are already protected in the Whitehorse Heritage Overlay. All, however, will be affected to a greater or lesser extent by the Suburban Rail Loop East project.

At the time of writing, the demolition of most of the western half of the Box Hill Commercial Precinct is proposed, including the individually significant HO91 Former Colonial Gas Association building, contributory buildings at 920-928, 930-932 and 948 Whitehorse Road, as well as a non-contributory building at 934-940 Whitehorse Road. In addition, an Old English style house at 5 Elland Avenue, Box Hill, is to be demolished. It was identified as a potential heritage place in 2001, but is not in the Heritage Overlay.

In response to this threat to Box Hill's heritage, the Whitehorse City Council resolved at its meeting on 22 November 2021 to receive a report from officers about nominating buildings in the western half of the Box Hill Commercial Precinct (920-956 Whitehorse Road) and 5 Elland Avenue to the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR).

Landmark Heritage was engaged by the City of Whitehorse to investigate whether it is advisable to nominate these properties to the VHR, that is, the likelihood that such nomination would be accepted (or rejected), and if accepted the likelihood that all or some of the properties would be found to meet the threshold of State significance. In the event that one or more of the properties under investigation does not appear to have a chance at being added to the VHR, its heritage value in the local area and beyond has also been considered.

### **1.3 Methodology**

The following tasks were carried out to assess the heritage values of these places and precinct:

- ▶ Review of existing documentation on these properties and the precinct from previous heritage studies and reviews prepared for the City of Whitehorse and the former City of Box Hill, as well as documents concerning historic heritage prepared in relation to the Suburban Rail Loop East. These documents are listed in the bibliography.

- ▶ Identification of appropriate comparative examples for the two Significant places on Whitehorse Road (Railway Hotel, Colonial Gas Assoc. building), the Box Hill Commercial Precinct as a whole, and 5 Elland Avenue. This has been done by reviewing heritage studies prepared for the City of Whitehorse, and interrogating the Victorian Heritage Database for comparable places and precincts in other municipalities.

Comparative analysis for each individual place and the precinct was carried out in a step-wise fashion. First, comparative examples were sought within the City of Whitehorse and its Heritage Overlay. If there were no comparable examples, or if the subject place/precinct was superior to the local comparisons, then the geographic area of inquiry was enlarged. This was generally to look first at adjoining municipalities (Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Knox and Boroondara), and then to the entire Melbourne metropolitan area or the State of Victoria if appropriate.

While the Council resolution called for the assessment solely of the western half of the Box Hill Commercial Precinct, the starting point for comparison was the precinct as a whole.

- ▶ Site visit to the subject properties and precinct and surroundings, and to some comparative examples. The comparative examples visited were all in the City of Whitehorse. They included another commercial precinct in the Heritage Overlay, and all residential precincts noted as containing interwar houses (as comparators for 5 Elland Avenue).

The author of this report is already well-acquainted with commercial precincts in the City of Boroondara (through involvement in their recent 'Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study') and commercial heritage in Maroondah and Manningham, and to a lesser extent in Knox (all three through heritage advisory roles), so they were not visited as part of this project. Comparators in the City of Monash were examined through heritage citations and Google Streetview.

- ▶ Reporting on findings, including brief descriptions, a comparative analysis for the three individual places and the precinct, and conclusions about their levels of heritage significance, found in this report. More information about local and state levels of heritage significance and the criteria against which places are assessed is provided in the next section.
- ▶ Recommendations of any further actions to be taken, based on the findings of this report.

#### **1.4 Heritage protection in Victoria**

In Victoria, places of heritage significance can be protected and managed through one or more of four statutory mechanisms. The mechanism that protects the largest number of places is the Heritage Overlay, which includes places that have been demonstrated to be of heritage value to a locality or municipality. Such places are said to meet the threshold of local significance. Next is the Victorian Heritage Register, which includes places (and objects) that are of heritage value to wider Victoria (meeting the threshold of state significance). There are also a much smaller number of places on the National Heritage List (which meet the threshold of national significance), and on the World Heritage List (which are of outstanding universal value).

To determine the significance threshold of a place, and thus whether it warrants protection in the Victorian Heritage Register, it must be assessed against the HERCON Criteria to see if it satisfies one (or more) criterion *better than most other places in Victoria* of that type. This is explored by carrying out comparative analysis with similar places across the state. It is often

helpful to carry out comparative analysis in a stepwise fashion, first investigating whether the place is one of the best of its type in a given locality or municipality (is it of local significance?), and if so checking if it is one of the best of its type in its region. If the answer is yes in both case, it then makes sense to compare it with other places of the type across the entire state, and thus of potential state significance. A place of potential state significance can then be nominated to Heritage Victoria for further assessment, with the final decision on inclusion (or not) in the Victorian Heritage Register made by the Heritage Council of Victoria.

The HERCON Criteria, against which places and objects are assessed are as follows:

- (a) Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.*
- (b) Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.*
- (c) Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.*
- (d) Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.*
- (e) Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.*
- (f) Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.*
- (g) Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.*
- (h) Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.*

## 2 HO244 Box Hill Commercial Precinct

### 2.1 Description

As noted in the current heritage citation for the Box Hill Commercial Precinct (Coleman Architects, 2012, rev. 2016), the 1882 opening of the Box Hill railway station at Station Street just to the south of Whitehorse Road spurred the creation of a major commercial area along Whitehorse Road.

The most distinctive aspect of the Box Hill commercial area is the presence of a generous central reserve (or “plantation”) created in the 1880s, which divides the north and south sides of Whitehorse Road. Though now somewhat diminished by the inclusion of a carpark and *ad hoc* shops next to the tram stop, it is an unusual element that lends a country town feel to an otherwise very built-up and urban area.

The HO244 precinct encompasses the most cohesive area of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial development on Whitehorse Road, which is located on the south side of the road to either side of Station Street. Nearly all buildings in the precinct are two-storey in height, and all are constructed of brick with a zero front setback.

The east end of the precinct is the earliest in character, retaining one simple Victorian Italianate shop at No. 980, surrounded by six Edwardian and late Victorian/Edwardian shops. Of these, the pair of Edwardian shops at No. 982-984 are of the greatest architectural interest, with arcaded first-floor balconies (Figure 1). And No. 982 is the only building in this group whose face brick has not been overpainted. None of the shops in this row retain their original shopfront or posted verandah. There is a non-contributory double-fronted building in their midst (Nos. 976-978) of the same two-storey scale.

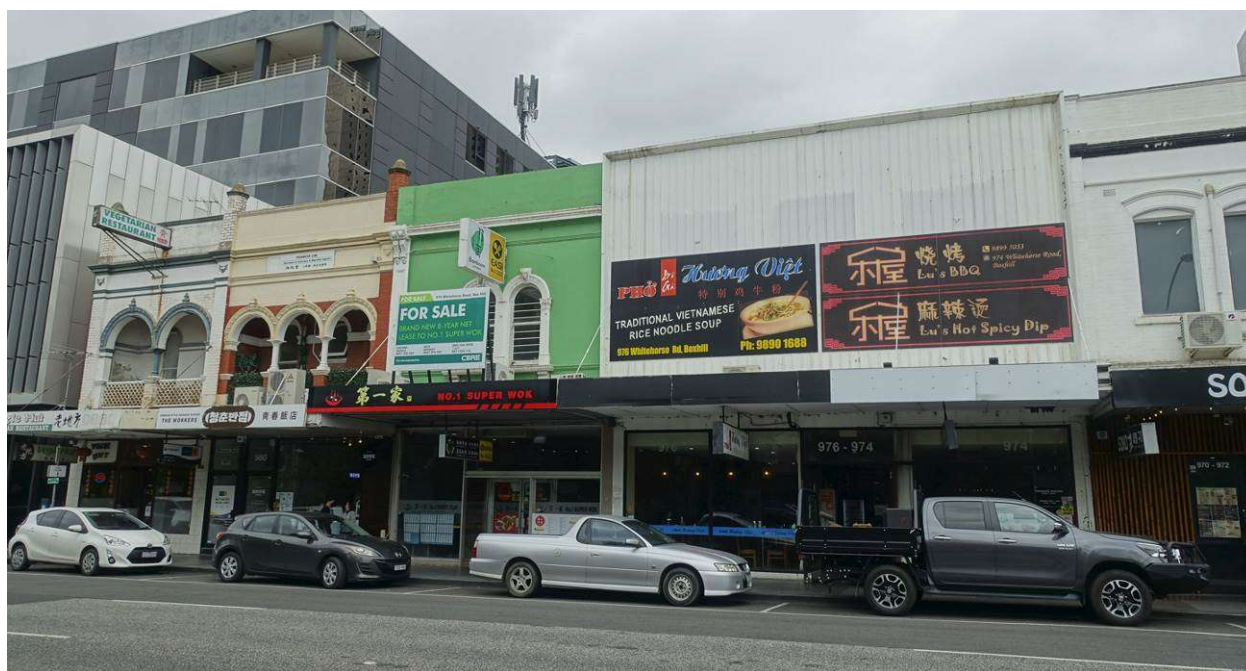


Figure 1. Edwardian shops (Nos. 982-984, at left), a Victorian Italianate shop (green), and one of a row of four late Victorian-Edwardian shops (at far right) in the eastern end of the HO244 precinct. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

This half of the precinct terminates with one of two fine corner buildings: the two-storey brick and render Old English building of 1936 at 958-964 Whitehorse Road & 614-616 Station Street (HO93, Figure 2). It is rather domestic in appearance and retains a very high degree of intact ornament and detail to the first floor. Vergeless gables provide a rhythm to the two frontages, with a central gable on a splay responding to its corner location. The first floor retains textured render with bands of glazed tiles. Window surrounds and eaves are marked with tapestry bricks. The vergeless gables feature timber weatherboards to their apexes and delicate mild-steel Juliette balconies to first-floor French doors. Sash windows retain diamond leadlights, with a whimsical semi-circular oriel window on the corner with glazing featuring diamond panes and heraldic shields. Images from the 1950s suggest that the cantilevered awning over the shopfronts is original (though covered by signage).



Figure 2. Old English commercial building at 958-964 Whitehorse Road & 614-616 Station Street. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

The building is further distinguished in the HO244 precinct by the retention of some original elements at ground floor level. These are a Tudor-arched doorway and original glazed door to 960 Whitehorse Road, and a shopfront at 616 Station Street (Tea Royale, second shop from the south end). Original elements of the shopfront include a terrazzo floor and pressed metal ceiling to the ingo (recessed entrance) and glazed door with a Tudor arch. The metal shopfront and tiled stallboards appear to be later than the 1930s, possibly dating to the 1950s.

Similarly, the western half of the precinct is strongly characterised by a single era (the late interwar period) with a corner building of a contrasting era (the former Railway Hotel). It is this western half that has been specifically earmarked for assessment of its State-level heritage significance. The earlier former Railway Hotel is discussed in detail in chapter 4, but it is worth noting here the important role it plays in the HO244 precinct, with its tower providing both a visual landmark and addressing this key intersection (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Western half of the HO244 precinct, with the former Railway Hotel in the foreground. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

Built form to its west is almost all two-storey, with the exception of a diminutive brick and render building next to the Railway Hotel, at 948 Whitehorse Road (Figure 4). Finished with textured render and (overpainted) brick accents, it exhibits a classic Moderne balance between strong horizontal lines (to the parapet and window hood), with a stepped pylon at one end. As with all buildings in this part of the precinct, its ground floor has been entirely rebuilt.



Figure 4. Contributory Moderne building at 948 Whitehorse Road, and the former Colonial Gas Association building to its right. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

Beside it is the very long Colonial Gas Association building, discussed further in chapter 3. Its Moderne façade is also strongly horizontal, and features face brick with geometric Jazz Moderne (or Art Deco) reliefs along the parapet. It forms a visual pair, in its materiality, with the late interwar (c1940) building at the west end of the precinct, at Nos. 920-928 Whitehorse Road on the corner of Market Street (Figure 5). This also features warm buff-coloured brick. The Whitehorse Road elevation is rather plain, with accents in glazed brown half-bricks, a flat concrete hood above its horizontally glazed steel windows. The Market Street elevation, on the other hand, features an entrance tower with an elegant Juliette balcony and panel of Jazz Moderne bas-relief.



Figure 5. Market Street elevation of the contributory building at 920-928 Whitehorse Road. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

The final contributory building, at Nos. 930-932, is the only example of pure Jazz Moderne in the precinct, with a prevailing vertical emphasis created by pylons and a stepped parapet (Figure 6). The façade is finished in cement render, and retains colours typical of the interwar period. It has elegant geometric railings to its first-floor balconies, but the associated windows or French doors have been lost.



*Figure 6. The Jazz Moderne contributory building at 930-932 Whitehorse Road. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)*

There is a large non-contributory building at the middle of this section, at 934-940 Whitehorse Road. While it has nineteenth-century origins, the front façade has been entirely rebuilt. Its two-storey scale and traditional first-floor window sizes are in keeping with the rest of the precinct, though its bright yellow advertising colour scheme is jarring in comparison to the mellow colours and materials of the surrounding buildings. Overall, this section of the precinct has a strong and consistent Moderne character, though broken by the non-contributory building in the centre of the row.



*Figure 7. The row of Moderne buildings at 920-948 Whitehorse Road, with the yellow non-contributory building in the centre. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)*

It is clear why the north side of Whitehorse Road has not been included in the HO244 precinct, as most buildings are quite new or extensively altered. The exception is the former bank at 953 Whitehorse Road, protected in HO116.

Travelling east, there are two important civic buildings, just outside of the precinct boundaries: HO117 Former Girls' Technical School and HO94 Box Hill Town Hall. They are divided from the precinct by a very large new glass building at No. 990, which breaks the visual connection.

A block south of the precinct is a small group of buildings, between Rutland Road and Ellingworth Parade, that are protected in individual Heritage Overlays (HO114 Victorian shops at 566-572 Station Street, HO115 1910s towered building at 578-580 Station Street).

## **2.2 Comparative analysis**

### ***City of Whitehorse***

In a 2003 heritage assessment of this area, Graeme Butler stated that 'it is evident that the Whitehorse Road area contains the City's earliest commercial development strips and some of its most important civic sites'. Coleman Architects (2012, rev. 2016) concluded that: 'There are no comparative precincts in the City of Whitehorse. The township of Box Hill developed as the largest commercial centre in the municipality and this portion of Whitehorse Road demonstrates this character most clearly.'

There is one other commercial precinct in the Whitehorse Heritage Overlay: HO103 Mont Albert Shopping Precinct. It covers a small area near the Mont Albert Railway Station, around the intersection of Hamilton and Churchill streets. Unlike the Box Hill Commercial Precinct, this one has a smaller-scale, village feel to it. Contributory shops date from the 1910s and 1920s. About two-thirds of them are single storey, with the rest two storey. There is a higher level of intactness in this precinct, with the retention of many original shopfronts and even a few posted verandahs (though many are reconstructions).

In conclusion, the Box Hill Commercial Precinct provides a wider illustration of commercial development in the area, starting from 1890s through 1940, and it is also distinguished by a fine group of 1930s Moderne buildings. While the Mont Albert Shopping Precinct lacks the early and late components, it contains a group of early interwar shops that are superior in their cohesiveness and intactness, as noted in its statement of significance ('the most intact inter-War shopping centre in the City of Whitehorse').

### ***Surrounding municipalities***

The only commercial HO precinct in the City of Manningham is HO191 Warrandyte Township Precinct. It comprises residential, civic and commercial buildings, as well as parkland and open space which illustrate three key phases in the historic development of the township: the establishment and early development following the gold rush of the mid nineteenth century, the rise of the town as a tourist resort and artists retreat during the Inter-war years, and the rebuilding that occurred in the wake of the disastrous 1939 bushfires. It has aesthetic significance as an informal almost semi-rural village where the buildings are often secondary to the landscape elements. For this reason, it is very different to the urban Box Hill Commercial Precinct, and does not provide a useful comparison beyond its development over two centuries.

The cities of Maroondah and Monash have some residential precincts in their Heritage Overlays, but no commercial or civic HO precincts. The City of Knox doesn't have any precincts at all, only scattered individual places in its Heritage Overlay.

In contrast, the City of Boroondara has many commercial as well as residential precincts in the Heritage Overlay. The most comparable commercial precincts, which encompass Victorian through late interwar built form, are:

- ▶ HO520 Kew Junction Precinct – A large precinct which stretches along both sides of High Street and extends a short way along Cotham Road. It contains a number of key civic buildings (post office, courthouse, war memorial rotunda, all of which are in the VHR) as well as commercial buildings dating from the Victorian, Edwardian and interwar periods.

Like the Box Hill Commercial Precinct, the largest number of buildings are Victorian and late interwar (1930s). Large cohesively designed 1930s buildings (rows of shops) with facebrick facades (e.g. 142-146 & 154-160 High Street). can be compared to the larger Moderne buildings in Box Hill. There is a high level of intactness to upper facades, though all original shopfronts and posted verandahs have been lost, as also seen in Box Hill. It contains a relatively high proportion of Significant-graded buildings, and is said to be comparable to major retail precincts in Fitzroy (Smith and Brunswick streets); Richmond (Swan Street and Bridge Road); and Prahran/South Yarra (Chapel and Greville streets).

- ▶ HO768 Balwyn Village Precinct – Primarily interwar in date, with a few late Victorian and Edwardian shops, this is a relatively large precinct of mostly two-storey shops on both sides of Whitehorse Road. The largest proportion of shops date from the 1930s, many of them in the Moderne style. Other interwar examples include Old English and Spanish Mission styling. The majority of shopfronts have been replaced, with a few notable exceptions, though the first-floor facades are generally intact apart from some overpainting of brickwork.
- ▶ HO532 Union Road Commercial Precinct, Surrey Hills - 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. There is a mix of single and double-storey shops, with the three-storey Surrey Family Hotel of 1888 on the corner of Canterbury Road. Many shopfronts at ground level retain their original or early form, and first floor facades are typically intact. Unusually for Boroondara, some shops retain their posted verandahs. It has a quiet, low-intensity feel to it, in contrast to shopping centres on major roads such as precincts on Glenferrie Road and High Street Kew, as well as Box Hill Commercial Precinct. There are two Moderne buildings at the north end of the precinct (138 & 140-148 Union Road), both of which are single-storey and have a decorative pylon as a key decorative feature.

While comparable to these three Boroondara HO precinct in many aspects, it is clear that the Box Hill Commercial Precinct does not surpass them in the scope, quality and intactness of the buildings. While buildings in the Kew Junction Precinct are of a comparable intactness to those in HO244, this precinct is distinguished by the presence of landmark civic buildings in its centre. Shops in the Union Road Commercial Precinct are of a higher level of intactness, retaining many original shopfronts and verandahs. The Balwyn Village Precinct is the closest comparator in all aspects, though it is larger and on both sides of the road.

Boroondara also contains commercial HO precincts that are suitable comparisons for the Moderne western half of the Box Hill Commercial Precinct, including:

- ▶ HO768 Balwyn Village Precinct – As noted above, this precinct contains a large proportion of 1930s Moderne commercial buildings. They are typically expressed with dark-coloured clinker brickwork to the upper facades, with some horizontal emphasis introduced by stringcourses in contrasting cream brick, rendered banding at parapet level, projecting concrete window hoods, and horizontal glazing bars to windows. A few have rendered facades. As noted above, a small number of original shopfronts survive, while first floor facades tend to be intact.
- ▶ HO802 Cotham Village Commercial Precinct, Kew – This is a relatively small precinct, of 22 properties, centred around the intersection of Cotham and Glenferrie roads. It was developed over a short period of time, the 1920s to 1940, and features a number of identical rows of Moderne and other types of buildings. A corner site features a fine Moderne bank building with a curved corner and façade of glazed brown bricks. Its

ground-floor windows have been enlarged, but it is otherwise intact. A number of original shopfronts survive.

- ▶ HO839 Harp Village Commercial Precinct, Kew East - The shopping strip was developed almost entirely during the interwar period, with shops and businesses established between c.1920 and 1940. It contains a high proportion of original shopfronts. Styles in the precinct include Moderne, with shops at 659-665 High Street particularly distinctive.
- ▶ HO607 Burke Road Commercial Precinct, Kew & Balwyn – A relatively small precinct of 24 properties, on both sides of Burke Road. It was developed from 1933 to 1954. It features several fine rows of Moderne (Nos. 1046-1060 & 1345-1359), and Spanish Mission (Nos. 1333-1343) shops, giving the precinct a high degree of visual cohesion. A number retain their original shopfronts. There is also an individually significant mid-century Modernist corner shop of 1954 by architect John Tovey.

Western half of Box Hill Commercial Precinct, featuring a collection of Moderne commercial buildings, has a similar architectural quality to the above examples, a similar (or slightly lower) level of intactness, and smaller size.

### ***State of Victoria***

As HO244 Box Hill Commercial Precinct, as a whole and its western Moderne half, can be considered closely comparable to several HO precincts in Boroondara but falls short of a number of similar precincts, there is no indication that it is of potential State significance.

Furthermore, there are very few precincts included in the Victorian Heritage Register, in part because the threshold for inclusion is so high. In 2021 both Heritage Victoria and the Heritage Council separately concluded that the Queens Parade Shopping Precinct, Clifton Hill & Fitzroy North, was not of State heritage significance. This precinct comprises a boulevard, surveyed by Robert Hoddle in 1853, lined with mostly two-storey commercial buildings on both sides that were developed from the 1870s to the 1920s.

In assessing this nomination, Heritage Victoria compared it to precincts in the VHR, as well as shopping precincts in Melbourne and regional Victoria developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included in municipal Heritage Overlays.

The only (partially commercial) precinct in the VHR is:

- ▶ Emerald Hill Estate, South Melbourne (VHR H1136) - An essentially intact precinct of mainly two-storey, 1880s brick, commercial and residential buildings, considered the most intact 1880s shopping precinct in Victoria. At its centre is a civic area with the South Melbourne Town Hall, library and former police station.

Highly significant commercial (and mixed) precincts in municipal HOs listed in the assessment are:

- ▶ Pall Mall, Bendigo (City of Bendigo, HO3) – A large area that extends across parts of Bendigo's City Centre and contains some of the most historically and architecturally important sites in the city, including major commercial and civic buildings.
- ▶ Sturt Street, Ballarat (City of Ballarat, HO167, HO171) – A streetscape of important commercial and civic buildings, with a wide central reservation featuring plantings and a bandstand.
- ▶ Auburn Village Precinct, Hawthorn (City of Boroondara, HO260) – A group of highly intact two and three-storey commercial buildings designed by architect John Beswicke 1882-

1892. They are a very cohesive and highly ornamented group of buildings, lining Auburn Road.

- ▶ Chapel Street (City of Stonnington, HO126) - Chapel Street developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and became a major commercial and social hub. The central section incorporates a number of impressive department stores. The built form in the precinct is of predominantly two-storey buildings supplemented with a number of taller premises, including the Town Hall and the department stores.

Amongst the above comparators, Sturt Street, Ballarat is of interest because it has a broad central reserve, which stretches 14 blocks in all, as compared to the shorter four-block reserve in Box Hill. Its east end is lined with mostly Victorian and Edwardian buildings, some three-storeys in height, as well as a Town Hall. So, while comparable, it is clearly superior to the Box Hill Commercial Precinct.

Heritage Victoria's comparative analysis also looked at many other local shopping strips in Melbourne suburbs, the nearest being Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn (characterised by Victorian and Edwardian built form, plus the Hawthorn Town Hall). They concluded that the Queens Parade Shopping Precinct fell short of many of the other HO commercial precincts because:

- ▶ It is more modest in length, stretching for a little over 400m, is substantially shorter than the precincts of Bridge Road, Sydney Road and Chapel Street, which all stretch for over 1km.
- ▶ It is more modest in scale, almost exclusively dominated by two-storey buildings contrasting with Chapel Street, Smith Street, Bridge Road and Swan Street, which all feature larger commercial and institutional buildings that have often been designed by prominent architects.

The same can be concluded for HO244 Box Hill Commercial Precinct. At just 200 metres in length, it is substantially shorter than Bridge Road (Richmond), Sydney Road (Brunswick) and Chapel Street (Prahran). It is more modest in scale, with primarily two-storey buildings, and only one prominent architect identified as designer of its buildings (RM & MH King for the Colonial Gas Assoc. building).

## **2.3 Conclusions and recommendations**

### ***Conclusion***

While there is no indication that the Box Hill Commercial Precinct is of State heritage significance, it is clearly significant in the City of Whitehorse context and possibly beyond.

Within Whitehorse, it is the earliest commercial precinct, created from the early 1880s and retaining nineteenth-century buildings. It also contains the best grouping of Moderne commercial buildings in the municipality.

Looking further afield, while the City of Boroondara contains a number of comparable commercial precincts, the Box Hill Commercial Precinct is one of a very small number of commercial HO precincts in outer ring suburbs, such as Manningham, Maroondah, and Monash, and the only one in these municipalities with an urban built form.

### ***Recommendations***

Nominating the Box Hill Commercial Precinct to the VHR is not recommended, as it is likely that the nomination would be rejected (that is, it would not be accepted for assessment).



### 3 HOg1 Former Colonial Gas Association Building

#### 3.1 Description



Figure 8. Front façade of the Colonial Gas Association building. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

The former Colonial Gas Association Building is a very wide, two-story building with a façade of brick with pressed-cement ornament. In colour, the bricks range from pale cream to a mid red-brown and have an unusual narrow format ("heelers") emphasising the horizontality of the building. Curved bricks are used for the window reveals with inset horizontal lines of white glazed bricks (Figure 9). Curved bricks are also used to frame the flat central panel. There are vents above the awning of fine hit-and-miss brickwork. Overall the bricks and brickwork are unusual and finely executed.



Figure 9. Detail of the first-floor brickwork and pressed-cement band. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

Another unusual and finely wrought feature is the band of pressed-cement bas-relief along the parapet, featuring geometricized floral motifs that are so characteristics of the French Art Deco (known in Australia as Jazz Moderne).

As noted in the heritage citation, the decorative pressed-cement pylon at the top of the central bay has been removed. It provided a balancing vertical element, which was characteristic of the largely horizontal Streamlined Moderne style. In addition, the original multipaned steel windows have been replaced at first floor level, and all shopfronts have been replaced. In addition, its original two small awnings have been replaced by a single large one. Its original appearance is visible in the 1950s photos below (Figures 10 and 11).



*Figure 10. Detail of the Colonial Gas Association Building showing its two awnings, c1950-56. (detail from CD Pratt, 'Box Hill' aerial photo, c1950-56, State Library of Victoria)*



*Figure 11. The Colonial Gas Association Building in the 1950s. Note the vertical pylon above the centre window, and the separate awnings over the two shopfronts. (Box Hill Historical Society)*

### **3.2 Comparative analysis**

There are a number of typologies that are appropriate when carrying out comparative analysis of the Colonial Gas Association Building. It is a 'particularly fine example of the Moderne style of the 1930s, as applied to a commercial building', so it should be compared to other Moderne buildings of this type. It is also important for its connections to the gas industry.

While it is not considered to be of local significance due to its association with the designing architects, RM & MH King, it is useful to place them in context to understand their prominence during the interwar period. Father and son practice, RM & MH King, was formed in 1926, becoming one of Melbourne's most prolific architectural firms of interwar period. They are best known for their residential designs of the 1920s and '30s, with their Moderne houses considered some of the finest examples in Melbourne. They designed a range of building types including commercial (e.g., Kurrajong House, Collins Street, Melbourne of 1926-7), factories (e.g., the Hopkins Odlum Apex Belting factory at Footscray of 1938-40) and churches (e.g., Knox Presbyterian Church, Ivanhoe of 1927). Many of the firm's clients were high profile Victorians including theatrical entrepreneurs J. & N. Tait, Arthur Rylah, lawyer and later Chief Secretary and Deputy Premier of Victoria; the Myttons and Beaurepaires. Ray King died in the early 1950s. Maurice King died prematurely in 1956 and the practice was closed shortly afterwards.

#### ***Non-residential Moderne in Whitehorse***

The most closely comparable Moderne commercial buildings in the Whitehorse Heritage Overlay are the contributory Moderne buildings in the HO244 Box Hill Commercial Precinct, particularly the cream-brick building at 920-928 Whitehorse Road. No other individually significant commercial buildings of this style could be identified in the Heritage Overlay.

There are, however, a number of fine Moderne educational and civic buildings in this style which provide a suitable comparison for architectural quality and intactness. They are:

- ▶ HO117 Former Box Hill Girls' Technical School, 1010 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill of 1936 - A large double storey building constructed in the Moderne style, probably to designs by Percy Everett of the Public Works Department. Two-storeys high, it has a long horizontal body balanced by a vertical tower and semi-circular bay at one end. Walls are primarily of red brick, with cream and brown brick accents. The building is highly intact, retaining steel windows, salt-glazed porch tiles, flagpole, and glazed front doors. It is an accomplished design by an influential interwar architect.



*Figure 12. Former Box Hill Girls' Technical School. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)*

- ▶ HO32 former Box Hill Technical School, 19 Dunloe Avenue, Mont Albert North of 1941-42 – Another design by Percy Everett, executed with red brick to horizontal bands and contrasting brown brick to central vertical bays. The use of concave and convex curves is a striking feature of this building. It appears to be intact, though some windows may have been replaced.



Figure 13. Box Hill Boys' Technical School. (Rohan Storey, nd)

- ▶ HO249 Former Kildonan Children's Home, 213-243 Burwood Highway, Burwood of 1937 – The Administrative Block is of aesthetic significance as a fine, distinctive and intact building designed in the Moderne style. It is constructed in warm cream (or apricot) bricks with a striking tower element which features raised brickwork bands to created a ribbed effect. It appears to be highly intact.



Figure 14. Kildonan Children's Home Administrative Building. ([www.clan.org.au](http://www.clan.org.au), nc)

- ▶ HO257 Former Box Hill Swimming Pool entrance building, 354 Elgar Road, Box Hill of 1939 – An excellent example of a public building designed in the Moderne style. The semi-circular entry bay and the emphasis on horizontal lines are key features of this style. It is constructed of clinker bricks with glass blocks (a product introduced in 1936). It is highly intact apart from the probable replacement of the entrance doors.



Figure 15. Entrance to the Box Hill Swimming Pool. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

As can be seen from the examples above, there are a number of very high quality non-residential Moderne buildings in the City of Whitehorse, which are of at least an equal design quality to the Colonial Gas Association Building and of higher intactness. This still leaves the Colonial Gas Association Building as a standout in the municipality among Moderne commercial buildings.

### ***Moderne commercial buildings in surrounding municipalities***

How does the Colonial Gas Association building compare with Moderne commercial buildings in surrounding municipalities? There aren't any such places identified in the Manningham or Monash Heritage Overlays. There are, however, several modest examples in the City of Maroondah:

- ▶ HO107 former Gibson's Café 197-207 Mt Dandenong Road, Croydon of c1940 – A small cream-brick shop featuring a semi-circular parapet element and intact shopfronts. Note that the cream face brick has since been overpainted.



Figure 16. Gibson's Café. (City of Maroondah, c2001)

- ▶ HO108 Croydon Hall, 212 Mt Dandenong Road, Croydon – The hall opened in 1909 as the Croydon Mechanics' Institute, with a new façade built in 1937 to a design by local architect Arthur Pretty. The front section is of cream face brick, which has been overpainted.



Figure 17. Croydon Hall. (Google Streetview, 2021)

- ▶ HO100 Grey & Burns chemist shop, 161 Main Street, Croydon of c1953 – A late example of the Moderne with a very simple execution reflecting its postwar date. It is highly intact and retains tiled walls and original shopfronts.



Figure 18. Grey & Burns chemist shop. (City of Maroondah, c2001)

In the City of Knox, the only comparable Moderne commercial building is:

- ▶ HO29 Royal Hotel, 1208 Burwood Highway, Upper Ferntree Gully – first constructed in 1889, the front façade was remodelled in 1935 possibly by prominent practitioner of the Moderne style Harry Norris. Reportedly the very 'pronounced parapet on the northern side' was altered c1968. Ground floor glazing also appears to have been altered.



Figure 19. Royal Hotel. (Google Streetview, 2021)

The City of Boroondara has a larger selection of Moderne commercial buildings, including two that exhibit particularly fine brickwork:

- ▶ HO503 Dillon's Buildings, 493-503 Riversdale Road & 554-564 Burke Road, Camberwell of c1937 – A prominent Moderne corner building with decorative brickwork particularly on the corner tower. All ground-floor shopfronts have been replaced, while the first floor remains highly intact.



Figure 20. Dillon's Buildings. (Google Streetview, 2021)

- ▶ VHR H1524 Rivoli Theatre, 200 Camberwell Road, Hawthorn East of 1940 – A building of architectural significance as an intact and distinctive example of the Streamlined Moderne style which was highly fashionable in the design of commercial buildings in Melbourne in the 1930s. It includes an impressive display of decorative brickwork externally and plasterwork internally. It was designed by specialist cinema architects, H Vivian Taylor and Soilleaux and is the most intact example of their work in Victoria.



Figure 21. Rivoli Theatre. (Heritage Victoria, 2008)

The former Colonial Gas Association Building compares most closely with Dillon's Buildings in Camberwell, though it is somewhat less intact. While it is a strong example of a locally significant Moderne commercial building, the comparative analysis indicates that is not superior to all comparable examples in surrounding suburbs so there is no rationale to carry out further comparisons to determine if it is of State level architectural significance.

### ***Gas retailing buildings***

As noted in the place citation, the Colonial Gas Association building is the only surviving building related to the gas industry in the City of Whitehorse. Is it perhaps a rare building type Victoria-wide, suggesting it could be of State significance for rarity and historical reasons?

Examples of commercial (as opposed to industrial) gas buildings were gathered, starting with the Melbourne metropolitan area. They are presented in built-date order:

- ▶ HO654 Former Metropolitan Gas Co. building 194-196 Flinders Street, Melbourne of 1892 – This large Gothic Revival building was constructed as offices for the Metropolitan Gas Co. to a design by prominent architects Reed, Smart and Tappin. Originally a red brick building with rendered dressings, it has been totally rendered.



Figure 22. Metropolitan Gas Co. building. (City of Melbourne, 2002)

- ▶ Contributory in HO310 former Metro Gas Company District Depot, 197 Bridge Road, Richmond of c1915-25 – A single storey shop with integral signage on the parapet. The ground-floor shopfront has been replaced.



Figure 23. Metro Gas Company District Depot. (City of Yarra, 2009)

- ▶ Significant in VHR H1136 Former Metropolitan Gas Company Depot, 230-236 Bank Street, South Melbourne of 1919-20 – This Neo Grec rendered building was designed by prominent architects Smith & Ogg, with an upper floor added in 1934. It is highly intact.



Figure 24. Metropolitan Gas Company Depot. (City of Port Phillip, 2016)

- ▶ Contributory in HO425, Former Metropolitan Gas Company depot, 2-2A Keilor Road, Essendon North of 1928 – Designed by architects the Tompkins Brothers, a single-storey Neo Grec corner building. It retains its cantilevered verandah but ground floor windows and walls have been opened up with large plate-glass windows.



Figure 25. Metropolitan Gas Company depot. (Google Streetview, 2019)

- ▶ HO547 Former Brighton Gas Company Office, 263-275 New Street, Brighton of the late 1920s (or '30s) – A red brick Georgian Revival building of very residential appearance, designed by architect and company director Phillip B Hudson. The statement significance notes that: 'gasworks infrastructure, although once ubiquitous in Melbourne, is now rare, as most of the nineteenth and early twentieth century gasworks sites have been redeveloped. A notable and rare survivor is the Gasworks Park in South Melbourne, which, although now used as a public reserve, retains a number of its original production and office buildings (recycled for community uses) as well as part of the tall perimeter brick wall.'



Figure 26. Brighton Gas Company Office. (City of Bayside, 2008)

- ▶ Significant in HO324 Former Metropolitan Gas Company Depot and Showrooms, 12-14 Johnston Street, Collingwood – Established here c1915, a new Moderne front wing was built c1939. A modest building, it retains the 1939 shopfront.



Figure 27. Former Metropolitan Gas Company Depot and Showrooms. (City of Yarra, 2009)

The above examples illustrate that while infrastructure related to gas production and retailing is relatively rare, there are still surviving examples scattered around the metropolitan area. The Former Metropolitan Gas Co. building on Flinders Street, Melbourne, is undoubtedly the most important of them, both for its early date and imposing architectural design. Amongst the interwar examples, the closest comparison is perhaps the Brighton Gas Company Office, which is far more intact, but represents a different style and residential-friendly approach. The only other Moderne example, in Collingwood, is a modest building but far more intact.

Comparison against these other gas company buildings in metropolitan Melbourne indicates that the Colonial Gas Association Building is one of a group of retail building that are important for illustrating this industry. Like the Brighton Gas Company Office, it appears to be the only survivor from the company that created it. But as there is no indication that it a standout example among them, further comparisons with examples across the entire State of Victoria is not considered necessary.

### **3.3 Conclusions and recommendations**

#### ***Conclusion***

Comparative analysis has demonstrated that the Colonial Gas Association Building is of high importance in the City of Whitehorse as the finest Moderne style commercial building. It is also the only surviving evidence known of the Colonial Gas Association, so is one of a small group of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century buildings that illustrate the many gas producing and retailing companies that once served Melbourne and its suburbs, which together are of historical importance.

#### ***Recommendation***

The Colonial Gas Association Building has not, however, demonstrated to be of potential State-level heritage significance, so an individual nomination of the former Colonial Gas Association Building to the VHR is not recommended.

## **4 HO92 Former Railway Hotel**

### **4.1 History and description**

The current heritage citation for the Railway Hotel (Allom Lovell, 1999) states that 'The original 1882 hotel forms the southern component of the precinct building [and] The northern section with tower was completed in January 1911', and refers to it as constructed in 1882 and remodelled in 1911. In fact, as set out below, the 1882 hotel formed the *north* (corner) section, and it has been entirely rebuilt. The southern section was built c1900-05 (judging by its design), and extended northward in 1911. It appears that the building retains negligible 1880s external fabric.

The current HO244 precinct citation (Coleman Architects, 2021 rev. 2016) is more accurate, describing the building as 'largely rebuilt' in 1911-12. This conclusion, rather than "remodelled", is supported by historical images. An image included in the HO244 citation shows that in 1905, the hotel had a single-storey structure at the corner, while a two-storey extension had recently been built to its south. This southern section survives and has been incorporated into the present building.



*Figure 28. Detail of a 1905 photo of 'Station Street, Box Hill looking South'. The single-storey 1882 hotel is in the foreground with a c1900-05 two-storey wing to the rear. (Box Hill Historical Society)*

A second photo, taken shortly after the Railway Hotel was enlarged in 1911-12, shows its form prior to conversion to shops in the 1920s. The pre-1905 southern section has been integrated into the enlarged hotel, but there is no sign of the 1882 corner section. While parts of its masonry walls may have been integrated into the enlarged building, the small rectangular windows were replaced with large semi-circular arches. Only the splayed corner entrance references the old building.



*Figure 29. Stutt's Railway Hotel soon after completion of the corner section. Note the freshly tuckpointed brickwork below the eaves and in the ground-floor piers. (Detail of an image of 'Station St Box Hill', [www.fletchers.net.au](http://www.fletchers.net.au))*

Since the above c1912 photo was taken, the remainder of the ground floor of the former Railway Hotel was demolished in several steps. First was the conversion of the hotel's ground floor into shops during the 1920s, with the installation of standard shop windows with tiled stallboards and a cantilevered awning. The second step has been the gradual replacement of the 1920s shopfronts with modern aluminium shopfronts. The arched entry to upstairs offices on the Whitehorse Road side may be the only ground-floor remnant of the old hotel. In any case, the entire ground floor of the former Railway Hotel has been replaced, meaning that the single-storey 1882 corner hotel is gone.



Figure 30. The Railway Hotel in the 1950s, after its conversion to Tait's Corner Shop. Note the standard interwar shopfronts and cantilevered awning. (Belinda Smith, Pinterest)

Above the ground floor, however, the former hotel as rebuilt in c1900-12 can be said to survive almost intact. It retains a steeply pitched hipped roof clad in corrugated metal, with red brick chimneys topped with a cornice of pressed brick "specials" and terracotta pots. The first floor retains a band of tuckpointed red face brick beneath the eaves and roughcast render below that. It is overpainted to the street frontages, but left in its original state on the west side elevation. (NB: The Lovell Chen citations describes the upper band as "smooth render", but this is clearly an error.) The southern three bays, facing Station Street, visible in the 1905 photo, retain the three double-hung sash windows and a flat panel for signage below. Further north on the east elevation, the building retains a small timber oriel window and another sash window. The north elevation retains five double-hung sash windows and an arched panel for signage on the wall. Most importantly, the building retains its octagonal corner tower intact, with three double-hung sash windows at first floor level, and five oval tower windows surrounded by sinuous bas-relief foliage. It is topped by a bell-shaped roof clad in lead with a metal finial.



*Figure 31. North-west corner of the former Railway Hotel showing unpainted tuckpointed brick and roughcast render below the eaves. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)*

#### **4.2 Comparative analysis**

While initially examples of nineteenth-century hotels, both those intact and those remodelled in the early twentieth century, were considered appropriate comparators for the Station Hotel, the historical research carried out as part of this report indicates that while the first hotel of this name opened in 1882, little or no 1880s building fabric survives. For this reason, comparative analysis has been restricted to other early twentieth-century hotels featuring landmark towers, many with Art Nouveau ornament.

##### ***Towered hotels in the City of Whitehorse***

The most closely comparable building in Whitehorse is not a former hotel, but the nearby:

- ▶ HO115 Former Ellingworth's Estate Agency and Shops, 580 Station Street, Box Hill of 1911 – A two-storey brick and rendered building dominated by an octagonal corner oriel window topped by a witch's hat roof. Other decorative details are incised designs on the parapets and a tiny timber bay window. The brick and render surfaces have been overpainted, posted verandahs removed. While the two southern shopfronts have been replaced, the corner premises retains two large arches windows with Art Nouveau highlights.



Figure 32. Ellingworth's Estate Agency and Shops. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

No other towered hotels, or similar, have been identified in the municipality.

#### ***Towered hotels of local significance in other municipalities***

There are a large number of such hotels in municipal Heritage Overlays and in the Victorian Heritage Register, though only one in a neighbouring municipality. Examples that are solely in a municipal Heritage Overlay (that is, excluding those in the VHR) include:

- ▶ Significant in Boroondara HO768 349-353 Whitehorse Road, Balwyn, 1910s - A modest Edwardian Baroque corner shop, with an eye-catching domed corner tower. While not a hotel, it uses a similar architectural device. It retains all first-floor windows, but ground-floor shopfronts are new and the face brickwork has been overpainted.



Figure 33. 349-353 Whitehorse Road, Balwyn. (City of Boroondara, 2018)

- ▶ Significant in HO140, Vine Hotel, 59 Wellington Street, Collingwood, rebuilt after 1893 - an Edwardian-era hotel with Art Nouveau bas relief ornament and a prominent chimney and gable motif to the front façade. It is intact apart from overpainting of brick.



Figure 34. Vine Hotel. (City of Yarra, 2009)

- ▶ HO146 Former Terminus Hotel, 40 Hammer Street, Williamstown of c1911 – Designed by prominent architects Sydney, Smith & Ogg architects. The tower roof is very similar to that of the Railway Hotel. Highly intact.



Figure 35. Terminus Hotel. (City of Hobsons Bay, 2006)

- ▶ Significant in HO324, Bendigo Hotel, 125 Johnston Street, Collingwood of 1911 – Designed by prominent architects Sydney, Smith & Ogg architects. The tower roof is very similar to that of the Railway Hotel. Highly intact apart from overpainting of brickwork.



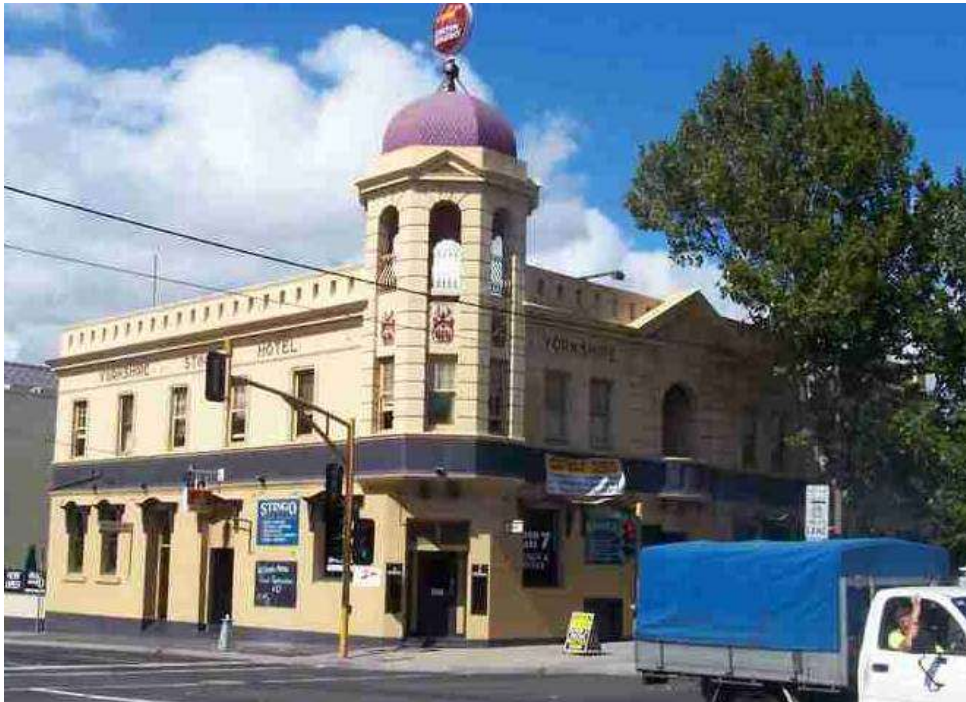
Figure 36. Bendigo Hotel. (City of Yarra, 2009)

- ▶ Significant in HO313, Retreat Hotel, 226 Nicholson Street, Abbotsford of c1911 – Designed by prominent architects Sydney, Smith & Ogg architects. Highly intact externally and internally.



Figure 37. Retreat Hotel. (City of Yarra, 2009)

- ▶ Significant in HO16, Yorkshire Stingo Hotel, 48 Hoddle Street, Abbotsford – A Victorian hotel rebuilt 1912 to a design by prominent architects Sydney Smith & Ogg. Highly intact.



*Figure 38. Yorkshire Stingo Hotel. (City of Yarra, 2009)*

- ▶ HO1074 Former Sir Charles Hotham Hotel, 2-8 Spencer Street & 570-580 Flinders Street, Melbourne of 1913 – Designed by architect William Pitt. While the brickwork has been overpainted, it is otherwise highly intact externally.



*Figure 39. Sir Charles Hotham Hotel. (City of Melbourne, 2002)*

- ▶ Significant in HO334, Napier Hotel, 210 Napier Street, Fitzroy – It replaced a Victorian hotel in 1916, and is attributed to Sydney Smith & Ogg. It is highly intact.



Figure 40. Napier Hotel. (City of Yarra, 2009)

There are further examples in the metropolitan area which date from the 1920s, and many in country towns from the 1910s and '20s.

The similarity between the tower roof of the Railway Hotel and that of two hotels designed by Sydney Smith & Ogg, suggest that it may have been designed by this important architecture practice, or inspired by their work, but it is still far less intact than the comparators.

The wealth of examples of towered hotels in the Melbourne metropolitan area indicates that this is a valued and well-preserved building type, particularly in the inner and middle suburbs. The former Railway Hotel is far more altered than all of the above examples.

It is, however, a rare type in the City of Whitehorse and the surrounding municipalities.

### 4.3 Conclusions and recommendations

#### *Conclusion*

The former Railway Hotel is a rare example of a towered Edwardian hotel in the City of Whitehorse, and the only one of its type in the surrounding outer eastern municipalities as well. However, there are many superior examples, both in design and intactness, in many of Melbourne's inner suburbs. Thus there is no indication that it is a building of State level heritage significance.

#### *Recommendation*

Nominating the former Railway Hotel to the VHR is not recommended, as it is likely that the nomination would be rejected.

## **5 Old English house, 5 Elland Avenue, Box Hill**

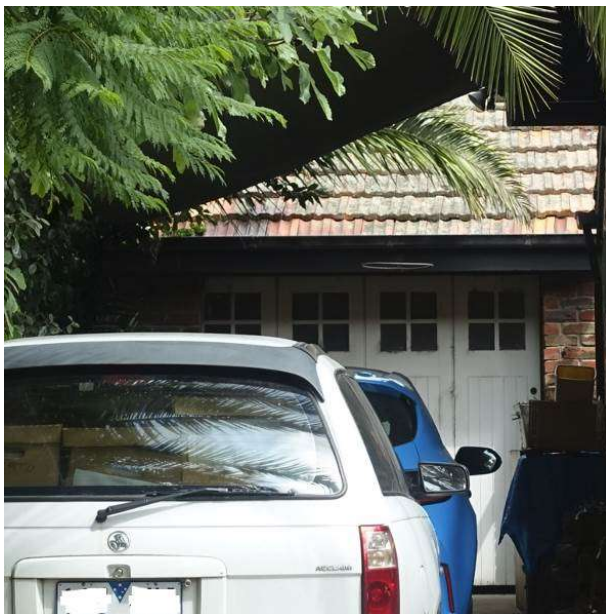
The house at 5 Elland Avenue, Box Hill, was identified as a place of potential heritage significance by the 'Whitehorse Heritage Review' (Lovell Chen, 2001), but was not assessed at the time.



*Figure 41. House at 5 Elland Avenue, Box Hill. The garage is just visible at far left. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)*

### **5.1 Description**

This is a medium-large Old English style house is located on a medium-sized block, just north of the Box Hill commercial centre. It retains rubble stonework along the front boundary, which may be early, as well as a recent Victorian-style picket fence. The concrete driveway has a split track, as was common in the interwar period, but appears to have been re-laid. There is an original garage at the end of the driveway, set behind the house, which retains its timber doors.



*Figure 42. Garage of 5 Elland Avenue. Note the original timber doors. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)*

The house itself has a complex hipped roof, roughly L-shaped, with intersecting major and minor gables to the front façade. The roof is clad in terracotta tiles, which are typical of the 1930s, but may have been renewed in kind. The house has two chimneys, with clinker brick shafts and a tapestry brick soldier course at the top.



Figure 43. Detail of the textural render to the half-timbered gable and tapestry brick wall below. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

This materiality is reflected in the walls of the house, which are largely of clinker brick with tapestry brick to the two projecting front gables. The gable apexes are half-timbered, with black-stained curved timbers and infill render that is so highly textured it looks like a pile of bananas. There is also an area of decorative *fachwerk* (half timbering with brick nogging in various patterns) at the bottom of this wall.



Figure 44. The two projecting front gables, with fashwerk executed in tapestry bricks below the window opening. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

The large, sliding windows in the opening beneath the front gables suggests this was once an open sunporch, which has since been infilled with glazing. Other windows to the front façade, to either side of the central gables, are six-over-one double-hung sash windows with unusual louvred shutters with a stepped ziggurat pattern to their top halves (apparently to fit around the fascia and gutter of the projecting gabled bays). The front door is reached via a small porch set under the roof, reached via the driveway on the east side. A bank of three six-over-one windows is also visible on this elevation.



*Figure 45. Detail of a front window with stepped louvred shutters. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)*

The house appears to be highly intact externally, with the only alteration noted is the loss of a planter box below front windows (though the corbelled brick supports remain). The retention of black painted (or stained) timberwork and a garage with original timber doors is notable.

### 5.2 Comparative analysis

Other examples of houses in the Old English style, also referred to as Tudor Revival and Cottage Style, have been identified in the Whitehorse Heritage Overlay. All of them are located in HO precincts, and all have a Contributory grading, though there is demonstrably a variety of levels of architectural quality and intactness among the examples.

All example identified are set out below, roughly ordered from those considered the most accomplished and unusual to those that are quite standard for their time:

- ▶ Contributory in HO178 4 Black Street, Mont Albert – A striking and unusual Old English house with a strong Arts & Crafts influence. The broad front gable with external chimney is the central focus, enhanced by materials such as textured render, rustic weatherboards to the gable apex, and multi-coloured roof tiles. Highly intact externally. The front fence is new.



Figure 46. 4 Black Street. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

- Contributory in HO100 52 Churchill Street, Mont Albert – This brick and half-timbered house has a very similar composition to 5 Elland Street (the subject property), but executed in a more sophisticated manner. It has a high hipped roof and decorative corbelled chimneys. Walls are of clinker brick with intersecting half-timbered major and minor gabled at the centre. The front porch is set beneath the minor gable and it rests on heavy timbers. Windows are groups of a picture window flanked by narrow four-over-one double-hung sashes. The house appears to be highly intact externally. It is a high-end version of the subject house, with more academically correct roof form and chimneys, but with a less adventurous approach to materials.



Figure 47. 52 Churchill Street. (City of Whitehorse, 2001)

- ▶ Contributory in HO102 23 High Street, Mont Albert – A picturesque example of Old English, distinguished by its highly textured render, jerkin-head roof finished with terracotta shingles, and brick patterning around the windows. Intact apart from the loss of sash windows around the front picture window.



Figure 48. 23 High Street. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

- ▶ Contributory in HO102 18 High Street, Mont Albert – A substantial but typical brick version of the Old English style, common in the late 1930s. The house appears to be externally intact, but half of the front yard has been paved for parking. It retains a largely intact though standard brick front fence.



Figure 49. 18 High Street. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

- ▶ Contributory in HO178 11 Black Street, Mont Albert – A rendered Old English house with a complex gabled roof. There is bold half timbering in the front gable and heavy porch timbers, unfortunately painted light brown instead of the traditional dark brown or black. The house is externally intact, but the fence is new and there is a large and somewhat intrusive carport.



*Figure 50. 11 Black Street. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)*

- ▶ Contributory in HO178 5 Black Street, Mont Albert – A substantial version of a mostly brick Old English house, with simple half-timbering and other details. Apparently externally intact, though the dormer window may be later. It retains a simple brick front fence.



*Figure 51. 5 Black Street. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)*

- ▶ Contributory in HO178 66-70 View Street, Mont Albert – A row of three modest Old English houses, probably by a single builder. Nos. 66 and 70 are all brick, and No. 70 has an intrusive upper-level addition. No. 66 is highly intact, with rendered walls decorated with tapestry brick flashes, an original attached garage (doors replaced) and matching front fence.



Figure 52. 68 View Street. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

- ▶ Contributory in HO102 23 Wolseley Close, Mont Albert – A small and typical of the Old English brick type common in the late 1930s. It is largely intact and retains a curved front brick fence.



Figure 53. 23 Wolseley Close. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

- ▶ Contributory in HO178 411 Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert – A very basic version of the brick Old English house, from c1940 or possibly just after 1945. It has steel windows and retains a simple front brick fence.



Figure 54. 411 Mont Albert Road. (Landmark Heritage, 2022)

As shown by the selection of Old English houses in the Whitehorse Heritage Overlay, there are many examples that were quite standard for their time, and a smaller number that were either large and gracious versions creating this standard, or creative examples that played with elements of the style.

As noted above, the house at 52 Churchill Road is a more substantial and academically correct version of 5 Elland Avenue. In fact, the reverse is more likely, with 5 Elland Avenue a builder's version of the high-end house. The designer-builder of 5 Elland Avenue has brought their own aesthetic, with highly textural render in the gables and large swathes of patterned tapestry bricks. It is further distinguished by its very high external intactness and retention of an intact original garage. So, both houses bring something individual of value to Whitehorse's collection of Old English houses.

All examples of Old English houses identified for this comparative analysis are currently graded contributory. This may reflect the 1990s/early 2000s dates of the heritage studies that assessed them, in which late interwar houses were unlikely to be considered individually significant.

This undifferentiated grading makes it difficult to ascribe an accurate grading to 5 Elland Avenue. This consultant believes that a number of the Old English houses in the Heritage Overlay warrant a 'significant' grade, such as 4 Black Street and 52 Churchill Street.\* In comparison, to these two, 5 Elland Avenue is about the same size as 4 Black Street, of similar high intactness to both of the comparators, and illustrates a more creative use of materials

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\* And possibly the early postwar Old English house at 4 High Street, Mont Albert.

than either. On this basis, all three of them appear to be of local significance to the City of Whitehorse, though 5 Elland Avenue clearly does not surpass the other two in design quality.

As there are demonstrably superior examples of Old English houses in Whitehorse, it is clear that 5 Elland Avenue does not rise above the level of local significance so there is no need to compare it with examples in other municipalities.

### **5.3 Conclusions and recommendations**

#### ***Conclusion***

The house (and garage) at 5 Elland Avenue are highly intact and illustrate a creative and non-academic approach to the 1930s Old English style. The comparative analysis has demonstrated that it is one of the more interesting examples of this style in the municipality.

It is clear, however, that it is not of State heritage significance for its architectural design.

#### ***Recommendation***

The place should not be nominated to the VHR, as it is highly likely the nomination will be rejected.

## **6 Summary of findings and recommendations**

### **Findings**

The investigation carried out for this report have concluded that:

- ▶ The Box Hill Commercial Precinct as a whole is the earliest commercial precinct in Whitehorse, created from the early 1880s and retaining nineteenth-century buildings, and it is one of the few commercial HO precincts in the surrounding municipalities with an urban form. Its western half contains the best grouping of Moderne commercial buildings in the municipality.
- ▶ The former Colonial Gas Association Building is of high importance as the finest Moderne style commercial building in the City of Whitehorse. It is also the only surviving evidence known of the Colonial Gas Association, so is one of a small group of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century buildings that illustrate the many gas producing and retailing companies that once served Melbourne and its suburbs, which together are of historical importance.
- ▶ The former Railway Hotel is a rare example of a towered Edwardian hotel in the City of Whitehorse, and the only one of its type in the surrounding outer eastern municipalities.
- ▶ The house (and garage) at 5 Elland Avenue is highly intact and illustrate a creative and non-academic approach to the 1930s Old English style. The comparative analysis has demonstrated that it is one of the more interesting examples of this style in the municipality.

### **Recommendations**

The investigation has also concluded that the precinct (as a whole or just the western half) and the three individual places are not of State-level heritage significance, so should not be nominated to the Victorian Heritage Register.

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