

Former Balwyn Baby Health Centre, later Maternal and Child Health Centre

Prepared by: Context

Address: 1 Cherry Road, Balwyn

Name: Formerly Balwyn Baby Health Centre; later Maternal and Child Health Centre	Survey Date: 8 February 2021
Place Type: Community	Architect: unknown
Grading: Significant	Builder: George C. Maling
Extent of Overlay: To title boundaries	Construction Date: 1927-28



Historical Context

Balwyn

A number of significant infrastructure projects established from the first decades of the twentieth century provided opportunities for extensive residential development in Balwyn. A short section of the Outer Circle Railway, between East Camberwell and Deepdene, was reopened in 1900 and was serviced by the 'Deepdene Dasher' steam train until 1927. In addition, the Prahran & Malvern Tramways Trust extended its electric tramway service from Malvern along Glenferrie Road and Cotham Road to Deepdene in 1913. Near the tram terminus the new Deepdene State School was erected in 1914. In 1916, the tram line reached Mont Albert, but was not through-routed to the city by the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board until 1929. The Burke Road tram reached Camberwell Railway Station in 1917, and in 1918 reached Cotham Road, Deepdene. In 1920 sewerage and electricity were established, with sewerage extending to Balwyn by 1927, and reaching North Balwyn in 1938 (Built Heritage 2015:10). A number of small farms and orchards in Balwyn were carved up for suburban housing in the late 1920s and 1930s. Many new home-buyers erected affordable detached timber bungalows during this period under the

credit foncier scheme provided by the State Savings Bank of Victoria. Californian Bungalows, English Revival and other interwar styles, which were built to designs provided in the State Bank pattern books, predominated across large areas of Balwyn, including that bounded by Whitehorse Road, Belmore Road, Burke Road and Balwyn Road. An elevated area on the north side of Whitehorse Road was developed in the 1930s as the prestigious Reid Estate. The wealthy retailer Oliver Gilpin built the mansion home 'Idylwyld' in Balwyn in the 1930s (now Connaught Aged Care); its extensive grounds included lavish sunken gardens, an ornamental lake, a swimming pool and a private zoo.

Improvements in infrastructure coincided with several successive changes in municipal status. The former Shire of Boroondara (as it had been known since 1871) was renamed the Shire of Camberwell and Boroondara in May 1902, then upgraded to a Borough in April 1905, a Town in May 1906, and finally the City of Camberwell in April 1914 (Built Heritage 2015:10).

In 1925, Balwyn was described in Australian Home Beautiful:

Charming indeed is this new suburb of Balwyn, to the eastward of Melbourne, towards that spot where the morning sun rises over the top of the Dandenong Ranges to stretch its light across one of the most beautiful environs in the city. Here the land is undulating and the eye wanders for miles upon miles across farm and orchard land to the blue distance of the hills to the east, so to the northeast, where the Healesville and Warburton ranges lie – more distant still – in the faint blue of cloud-land. All this erstwhile farming land is revealing the urge of the expansion of the great city, and red-tiled roofs and new homes now dot (and in some places cover) the land of the Orchardist and the Farmer; but “the vistas” are there and there are miles upon miles yet to go before suburban settlement can reach the tall slopes of the Dandenongs. Just as the little farms and glades are varied, both in colour and form, so do the new houses show that pleasing variety which betokens individual interest in the problem of the new home. Gone are the old ideas of slate or iron roofs and party-coloured bricks and cast iron trimmings, and now, pleasing colour notes of red, brown and green nestle into the newly-formed gardens of these outer suburbs. (cited in Built Heritage 2015:11)

The interwar period saw significant expansion of Balwyn and Deepdene. A weatherboard Church of Christ was built at the corner of Cherry Road (1922) and two brick Catholic church-schools were built in Whitehorse Road, Deepdene (1923), and in Brenbeal Street, Balwyn (1930). Around the same time, St Barnabas Anglican Church on Balwyn Road was also extended. There was extensive commercial development, including shops and banks, along both sides of Whitehorse Road in Balwyn. A shopping strip developed along Whitehorse Road, Deepdene, while smaller strips appeared along Burke Road (at Belmore Road, and later at Doncaster Road), and near the junction of Bulleen and Doncaster roads. Other new churches appeared during this period, while some of the older existing church buildings were entirely rebuilt to cater for enlarged congregations, notably the Balwyn Baptist Church on Whitehorse Road (1937), and the Frank Paton Memorial Presbyterian Church on Burke Road in Deepdene (1941) (Built Heritage 2015:11). Fintona Girls' School, which had opened in Hawthorn in 1896, relocated to David Syme's former mansion 'Tourmont' in Balwyn Road in 1936. The Anglican Mission of St James and St John opened a large babies' home on Whitehorse Road, Balwyn, in 1934. Hotels were prohibited in Balwyn and Deepdene following the Local Option vote of 1920, a reflection of the strong temperance views of the local population, but other opportunities for leisure included three picture theatres that operated in Whitehorse Road in the 1930s and 1940s, one of which (the Balwyn Theatre) survives. Beckett Park was well patronised as were the adjacent Maranoa Gardens. There was limited industrial development in Balwyn; an exception was the Oslo Bakery in Deepdene.

Providing maternal and child health services

The following contextual history has been largely cited from the Boroondara Thematic Environmental History (Built Heritage, 2012:197-198). Additional information added has its source noted:

In Australia, the maternal and child health care movement arose in the early twentieth century from an increasing concern over high infant mortality rates in developed areas. In 1917, after Dr Isabella Younger Ross returned from an overseas trip to study child welfare in England and the USA, she initiated the establishment of Victoria's first infant welfare centre, which opened at Richmond in June of that year. Dr Younger Ross became the central figure in the Victorian Baby Health Centres Association, which was formed in June 1918 by a group of volunteers to encourage comparable facilities elsewhere. The nationwide influenza epidemic of 1918-20 (brought to Australia by soldiers returning from the First World War) hastened the establishment of baby health centres by municipal councils. By the end of 1919, Victoria's first centre at Richmond had been joined by others in the inner suburbs of North Melbourne, Carlton, Fitzroy, South Melbourne, Port Melbourne, plus another at Geelong. Reflecting what would become a typical pattern, the services were initially accommodated in existing buildings and, usually, in a spare room at the Town Hall.

Local historian Vaughan noted that the City of Kew was "early in the field" when it came to setting up a baby health centre. After a deputation in November 1919, Council decided to hold over the matter until the passing of legislation (revision of the Local Government Act) that would provide funding. Initially, the State government provided regular grants to local councils to cover running costs of centres, though the councils were responsible for providing or constructing the facilities (Sheard 2007:16). It was resolved in August 1920 to establish a baby health centre at Kew, which opened three months later, on 5 November 1920, in a room at the Town Hall. Around that same time, the City of Camberwell not only set up an equivalent service in its own Town Hall, but also opened a sub-branch at Canterbury, in a room at the public library. The City of Hawthorn was not far behind and, a month later, on 10 December 1920, started its own service – also at the Town Hall. Within three years, the Cities of Camberwell and Hawthorn had each expanded their own maternal health service network with additional sub-branches (including, in the former municipality, those at Surrey Hills, Balwyn and Burwood).

The spread of sub-branches was in keeping with the early principle established by the Infant Welfare Society that baby health centres should be accessible by mothers pushing prams, in other words, in easy walking distance from most suburban homes. This was, of course, in the days before widespread car ownership and the advent of low-floor trams that would have made longer trips viable. A further effort to ensure wide accessibility was the free nature of the service (Sheard 2007:15).

During 1925, the contiguous municipalities of Hawthorn and Kew each took the bold step of erecting a modern purpose-built infant welfare centre. The earlier of the two, located at 319 Burwood Road, Hawthorn, was under construction by March 1925, and was officially opened in June by the Countess of Stradbroke (then Patroness of the Victorian Baby Health Centres' Association). Six months later, she returned to the area to perform the same duty for the new centre at Strathalbyn Street, Kew East, which was designed by Council's Building Surveyor, Rowland Chipperfield. By this time there were a total of 25 centres and 18 sub-centres across metropolitan Melbourne, most in existing buildings (Sheard 2007:23). The building of a permanent baby health centre was symbolic of a culturally progressive caring society, a place associated with new scientific ideas, and professionally designed programs designed to improve the health education of women raising families in the suburbs (VHR).

By mid-1926, in the Boroondara area, the City of Camberwell was a strong leader, with six baby health centres and sub-centres. The City of Kew had two, and Hawthorn only one (Sheard 2007:42).

It was not until 1928, however that Camberwell City Council decided to erect its first purpose-built facility. Described as “an attractive looking building”, it opened in Cherry Road, Balwyn, in March 1928. Later that year, it was proposed to open another branch in the municipality’s South Ward, and to negotiate with the Cities of Kew and Hawthorn to establish yet another, in the developing northern fringes of the study area. By that time, the City of Kew had already resolved to provide a baby health centre in Kew North, which operated from a rented house at 50 Willsmere Road until a new purpose-built centre (also designed by Chipperfield) was erected in Peel Street in 1930. During the early 1930s, the City of Camberwell opened another centre in South Camberwell (in an existing dwelling, at 102 Bowen Street), and provided two more purpose-built centres alongside parks at Canterbury and Surrey Hills – the latter proving a new home for the service that had previously been accommodated in a room under the local bandstand.

State-wide progress slowed in the early 1930s, due to the Depression, and in mid-1931 the State government both reduced its subsidies of existing centres, and announced that new centres would not be subsidised (Sheard 2007:43). Due to this, expansion of the infant welfare network across the study area abated somewhat during the Depression years, but burgeoned again towards the end of the 1930s, as government grants were reinstated in 1936 (Sheard 2007:44). In December 1936, the City of Camberwell opened its seventh centre in a new four-roomed modern building in High Street, Glen Iris, which was intended also to serve the Ashburton area. Three years later, the City of Kew also erected a similar building – located on Denmark Street, adjacent to the railway station – as the new home for the city’s original infant welfare service, which had been based in the town hall for almost two decades. At the same time, land was purchased in John Street for another centre, intended to serve the south-west of the municipality, but this was not realised. The land was sold and another site acquired in Davis Street for a combined kindergarten and infant welfare centre, although only the former component had been completed by 1960.

In the Boroondara area, as was true for the rest of Victoria, there was no funding from the state (or federal) government to construct baby health centres until the post-war period. This meant that purpose-built centres established during the interwar era were usually initiated by a local committee which was supported by the municipal council once they gained momentum. Funds were raised by the local committee and then sometimes augmented by council. This meant that there was no central control or pattern book for baby health centre designs, so they varied in style and in size, according to the wealth of the community. One common factor was the reflection of popular house styles by the interwar centres, which often resembled contemporary homes (Crockett 2000: 14). The use of domestic styles demonstrates a philosophical association between early baby health centre designs and the ideal suburban house, both traditionally perceived as the domain of women and children (VHR).

The post-war period was otherwise characterised by the demolition of some of the earlier baby health centres in the study area (including the City of Hawthorn’s original building at 319 Burwood Road, and the City of Kew’s centre on Denmark Street) and by their replacement with modern counterparts that, reflecting a new trend, were invariably incorporated within (or alongside) other community buildings such as public libraries (eg 534 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, and Inglesby Road, Camberwell) or kindergartens (eg two in Balwyn, on Maud Street and Trentwood Drive).

History of the place

The first baby health centre in the City of Camberwell was opened in the Camberwell Town Hall in 1921. Within the next two years, sub-branches were opened at Surrey Hills, Canterbury, Balwyn and Burwood (now Glen Iris).

The first baby health centre to be established in the suburb of Balwyn was in Balwyn Park, on Whitehorse Road, in the enclosed ground floor of the bandstand (also referred to as the sports pavilion). It was formally opened on 22 November 1923 by Her Excellency Lady Forster, wife of the Governor General of Australia (*Argus*, 23 Nov 1923:9). This location was soon considered inadequate, as it was shared with sporting clubs who apparently left it dirty after use. A series of other existing buildings were proposed for the centre and rejected: the Mechanics' Institute, the Church of Christ kindergarten hall on Cherry Road (rejected for 'denominational reasons'), and two rooms in the home of Mrs Bellmaine. While the Camberwell Council narrowly voted in favour of Mrs Bellmaine's spacious house, this was hotly debated with the Baby Centre nurse refusing to work in a private home, and concerns raised about disease control, whether less well-off mothers would feel comfortable visiting the grand house, and the appropriateness of public funds spent for accommodation in a private house. At the council debate, in December 1925, Mayor Hocking stated that 'he considered that the council would have to erect a building for the Baby Health Centre' (*Box Hill Reporter*, 4 Dec 1925:6). Mabel Bellmaine was the President of the Camberwell Baby Health Centres and wife of a former Mayor of Camberwell, Francis Edward Bellmaine. Their two-storey home, at 9 Boston Road, had been newly built in 1922 (*Age*, 22 Jul 1926:11; S&McD; HO876 9 Boston Road place citation).

In September 1926, Camberwell City Council was looking at spending £1,000 each to establish purpose-built baby health centres in Balwyn and Burwood (now Glen Iris) (*Box Hill Reporter*, 24 Sep 1926:6). Land was secured by the Balwyn Ratepayers' League on Cherry Street (the name of Cherry Road at the time), across from Balwyn Park, and then transferred to the City of Camberwell. The League was very active around this time, obtaining an old clay pit on Wier Street to become a public park, moving the police station to central Balwyn, tree-planting at Beckett Park, and petitioning the Tramways Board to electrify the local tram line and the Metropolitan Board of Works to improve water supply to the area (*Box Hill Reporter*, 6 Jan 1928:7). The Council then gifted this land to the Baby Health Centres Association, and paid for construction of the new building. They similarly supported construction of a Hartwell Baby Health Centre at the same time (*Herald*, 25 Aug. 1927:20).

The block of land where the Centre was erected was purchased from Johann August Kruse, a chemist who resided on Canterbury Road, Canterbury. Kruse purchased vacant land comprising 1-3 Cherry Road in 1914. This was a standard double block, measuring 82 feet (25 metres) wide. In 1922, he subdivided the land into a wider block (16 metres wide) and a narrower block (9 metres wide), and sold the wider block to Jane Aarons (LV Vol 3845 Fol 902). By 1925, the Aarons had erected a house, at what is now 3 Cherry Road (S&McD). The narrower block became 1 Cherry Road.

While the Council called for tenders for construction in August 1927, it was not until November that G. C. Maling's tender for £900 was accepted. A building permit was granted to construct a five-room brick and tile (roofed) baby health centre at 1 Cherry Street (*Herald*, 3 Nov 1927:15; BP No. 2206, 29 Nov. 1927).

George Collins Maling regularly advertised his services as a builder and contractors in the first decade of the twentieth century, noting his location as White Horse Road, Surrey Hills (e.g. *Box Hill Reporter*, 3 Mar 1905:8). He was born c1880 to John Butler Maling and Jane Emma Saunders in Hawthorn (Ancestry.com). Father John Butler Maling was a carpenter and joiner who emigrated from England to Victoria in 1858. He and his many sons,

including George, constructed many buildings across Melbourne and Boroondara, including St Barnabas' Church in Balwyn. John Butler Maling then had a long career as one of the longest serving councillors of the Shire of Boroondara and then the first mayor of the new Town of Camberwell, with Maling Road named after him (Boroondara Wiki). George Maling died in 1954 (Age, 21 Jul 1954:20).

The new centre was officially opened on 23 March 1928, and it was noted as having 'the distinction of being the first of the six city of Camberwell centres to secure its own building' (Age, 24 Mar 1928:16). The Burwood and Hartwell Baby Health Centre (now the Glen Iris East Maternal and Child Health Centre), tendered at the same time and described as 'a similar structure' though on a larger block was still under construction at this time (*Herald*, 17 Mar 1928:14), and was officially opened the following month. This "cottage", located at 1-3 Trent Street, Glen Iris, was designed by honorary architect Mr Downes (Age, 21 Apr 1928:23). It is possible that Mr Downes also designed the Balwyn centre, as it has a similar massing and similar chimneys.

The opening ceremony was presided over by Mayor of Camberwell J.D. Howie, with speakers including Sir George Cusaden, President of the Baby Health Centres Association, Mrs Bellmaine President of the City of Camberwell centres, and Dr Vera Scantlebury (Age, 24 Mar 1928:15). Dr Scantlebury commended the City of Camberwell on its low infantile death rate, which had declined by 15 percent since centres were first established in 1917, and its decentralised approach of creating six centres across the district to make access easy for mothers (*Argus*, 24 Mar 1928:31). Scantlebury was Victoria's first Director of the Department of Infant Welfare, and serve in this role from 1926 to 1946 (Sheard 2007:40).

The final cost of constructing and furnishing the Balwyn Baby Health centre was £1,100. It was designed to be easy to clean, with rubber floor coverings, built-in cupboards, and a verandah that could be hosed down (Age, 24 Mar 1928:16). The verandah was used to park prams out of the weather (PROV), and it was reached by a low ramp. Inside, the furnishings were of brown timber, with cream walls and brown trim, and decorated with brightly coloured cretonne (a heavy cotton fabric) curtains and screens. It contained a weighing room, a consulting room, a test feeding room, and a room for the nurses (*Argus*, 24 Mar 1928:31). At the rear was an enclosed porch. The tea following the formal opening was held in the Church of Christ kindergarten hall next door, which had once been put forward as a potential location for the baby health centre (*Box Hill Reporter*, 30 Mar 1928:7).

The Balwyn Baby Health Centre, later known as the Balwyn Maternal and Child Health Centre, operated until 2019. As some time after 1975 the front porch was enclosed (PROV).

Description & Integrity

The former Balwyn Baby Health Centre, at 1 Cherry Road, is situated on the east side of Cherry Road, just south of Whitehorse Road. To its north, across a laneway, is the Balwyn Church of Christ and to its west, across Cherry Road, is Balwyn Park. To the south is residential development of various eras from the interwar period onwards.

The narrow block slopes up slightly, and there is a sympathetic (though non-original) capped timber picket fence set behind a line of hedge. The Baby Health Centre is set behind a medium-sized garden setback, with a broad paved path leading to the front porch. Plantings in the front garden – hedges and trees – are all young or semi-mature.

The Baby Health Centre building is a single-fronted brick building, as required by its narrow block. The timber-lined eaves are wide and sit below a hipped roof clad in terracotta Marseilles tiles. There are two internal chimneys on the north side of the building, with

plain, rendered shafts. Its design is very domestic, in scale and style. It takes the form of the type of California Bungalow that was popular in the late 1920s and early 1930s. This type has a hipped roof and a classical influence seen in the porch details.

Walls are of hard red bricks with light grey mortar with a struck profile. At the base of the front wall, now hidden by bushes, is a granite foundation stone which reads:

*Balwyn Baby Health Centre
The stone was laid by
His Worship the Mayor
J.D. Howie Esq. J.P.
February 1928*

The porch is located on the south side of the front façade, and sits beneath a slightly lower hipped roof with timber-lined eaves and a timber-lined ceiling. It is long and narrow with a white and dark grey terrazzo floor, once providing a space to park prams. The porch is supported by dwarf Tuscan columns set on red brick piers. One pair and one triplet of columns frame the front entry, and there are two more pairs along the south side, with solid brick balustrades between them.



Figure 1. Bank of three front windows and part of the front porch visible to the right. (Source: Context, 2021)

The front windows are a bank of three, set below a broad rendered (or concrete) lintel. These double-hung sash windows sit in a projecting box frame, typical of the interwar period. At their top is a simple timber hood resting on decorative timber brackets, and below them are projecting corbels comprised of an ovolo-profile moulded brick resting on a projecting header. There is a single box-frame window on the south elevation, behind the porch, four more single box-frame windows on the north side elevation, and another on the rear elevation. Near the front of the north elevation are two tiny highlight windows with the same box-frame detailing. At the rear of the south side elevation are two tiny, high-set windows that are set into the wall with sloping brick sills and rendered lintels. All but the front windows have textured privacy glass.



Figure 2. View from the north-west. Note the two rendered chimneys, and group of four large and two small box-frame windows on the north side elevation. (Source: Context, 2021)

At the back of the building, the small back porch shelters an original high-waisted back door beneath a rendered lintel. The porch has a low-pitched skillion roof and is enclosed by a weatherboard dado with glazing above.



Figure 3. Rear elevation, with the enclosed back porch and high-waisted back door just visible in it. (Source: Context, 2021)

The building is highly intact externally, apart from the enclosure of most of the front porch and changes associated with this. This work was largely sympathetic, retaining the timber-lined ceiling and all brickwork and columns (though the two southern columns have been enclosed behind a Perspex pane and are suffering from moisture condensation). The terrazzo floor has been covered with carpet inside, but presumably survives intact. The

biggest change was the creation of a large opening to the second room, and the bricking up of double doors to the front room. One other alteration has been the replacement of a double-hung sash window from the front façade with a fixed pane beneath a protruding air-conditioning unit.

Comparative Analysis

As noted in the history, maternal and child health movement arose in Australia in the early 20th century due to increasing concern with high infant mortality rates in developed areas. Under the influence of Dr Isabella Ross, the Victorian Baby Health Centres Association was formed in 1918, and Victoria's first centre was opened in Richmond in 1917. The three municipalities in the area that is now Boroondara – Kew, Hawthorn and Camberwell – all opened their own services in late 1920 at the respective town halls. It was not until 1925 that the first purpose-built baby health centres were built, in Hawthorn (demolished) and in Kew (21 Strathalbyn Street, VHR H0055).



Figure 4. Hawthorn Baby Health Centre of 1925 (demolished). (Source: Boroondara Library Service)

The first purpose-built centre in the City of Camberwell was the Balwyn Baby Health Centre of 1928, followed shortly by one on Trent Street, Glen Iris. This was followed, in 1930, by new centres in Canterbury (in HO145) and Surrey Hills, as well as one on Peel Street, Kew. The Peel Street centre was a large brick bungalow located at approximately 150 Peel Street, but it has been demolished. Construction of baby health centres was slowed by the Depression, but a Moderne example was built at 113 High Street, Glen Iris in 1936 (demolished), and another in Denmark Street, Kew in 1939 (demolished).

Most purpose-built centres in Victoria were designed to resemble a typical middle-class suburban house in a garden setting, and were a symbol of domesticity and stability. The building of a permanent baby health centre was also symbolic of a culturally progressive caring society, a place associated with new scientific ideas, and professionally designed programs designed to improve the health education of women raising families in the suburbs.

The surviving purpose-built baby health centres in Boroondara of the interwar period are all versions of the California Bungalow, blending into their residential surroundings in scale and style. They include:

21 Strathalbyn Street, Kew East of 1925 (HO486, VHR H55) – of State significance as one of the earliest purpose-built centres in Victoria. Architecturally significant as a highly intact Arts and Crafts Bungalow finished in unpainted roughcast render. And of social significance ‘for its enduring civic value to the community’.



Figure 5. Kew East Baby Health Centre of 1925. (Source: Heritage Victoria, 2005)

1-3 Trent Street, Glen Iris of 1928 – a double-fronted brick building in the California Bungalow style. It has an L-shaped hipped and tiled roof, with a small front porch. Some details are similar to the Balwyn centre, including box-framed windows and simple rendered chimneys. The front porch has been infilled with brick and window, and the front wall behind it demolished.



Figure 6. Glen Iris East Baby Health Centre of 1928. (Source: City of Boroondara, 2021)

Kendall Street, Canterbury of 1930 (Contributory in HO145) – part of Canterbury Gardens, which is Contributory to HO145 Maling Road & Environs Precinct. This is a very modest timber building with a tiled hip roof. The main decorative feature is box windows with restrained shingle hoods. The front porch has been infilled.



Figure 7. Canterbury Baby Health Centre of 1930. (Source: Google Maps, 2019)

88 Union Road, Surrey Hills of 1930 (Contributory in HO623) – the first Baby Health Centre in Surrey Hills was established in 1920 in the undercroft of the Surrey Gardens bandstand. Ten years later, a purpose-built facility was opened, also in the park. It had been constructed by volunteer labour and took the form of a modest timber California Bungalow. It has a tiled hipped roof that continues at a shallower pitch over a return verandah. To one side of the façade is a projecting gable with a bow window. The verandah, originally supported on dwarf Tuscan columns on brick piers, has been enclosed with new walls and a loss of the columns. A lean-to addition has also been made to the west side elevation.



Figure 8. Surrey Hills Baby Health Centre of 1930, prior to alterations. (Source: Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre Heritage Collection)



Figure 9. Surrey Hills Baby Health Centre of 1930. (Source: Surrey Hills and Canterbury Estate Heritage Study, 2014)

Comparing all of the Boroondara's surviving purpose-built baby health centres constructed prior to World War II, the East Kew centre is the earliest in date (in Boroondara and state-wide) as well as the most substantial and externally intact. These factors result in its significance to the State of Victoria as a whole.

Interestingly, the remaining centres are all in the former City of Camberwell. Among them, the Surrey Hills and Canterbury examples are modest timber examples with major changes to their external appearance resulting largely from the enclosure of their porch or verandah. Appropriately, both are graded contributory within larger heritage places.

The two remaining centres, in Balwyn and Glen Iris, are similar in that they are both constructed of brick. They differ in their massing, with the Glen Iris centre arranged across the width of its block as was typical of California Bungalows. In contrast, the Balwyn centre was designed to suit its narrow site, with a tighter composition incorporating most of the porch along the side elevation. They were both complete two years before the Canterbury and Surrey Hills centres, though the Balwyn centre was first and has symbolic significance as such. Both have infill to their front porch, but it has far less of a visual and physical impact on the Balwyn centre. This is for two reasons. First of all the front porch of the Balwyn centre makes up only a small portion of the front façade, while the verandah of the Glen Iris centre extends across half the front façade and its infill is necessarily larger. Secondly, the enclosure of the Balwyn centre's porch has been undertaken with great care, ensuring that all elements (columns, balustrade, ceiling lining, terrazzo floor) are preserved, and using lightweight glazing as infill. In contrast, the verandah of the Glen Iris centre has been enclosed with a brick wall, and the original front wall behind it lost, similar to the alterations at the Surrey Hills centre.

In conclusion, the Balwyn Baby Health Centre is the second oldest purpose-built baby health centre to survive in the City of Boroondara, the very first purpose-built centre to be opened in the former City of Camberwell, and is one of the most substantially constructed (though petite in size) and intact in Boroondara, again second only to the East Kew Baby Health Centre. As such, it is an excellent illustration of this important movement in Boroondara.

Furthermore, the centre served Balwyn for over 90 years, and is likely to hold many positive memories for families who have raised children here. The social significance of baby health centres is frequently recognised in heritage assessments, for example, the Heritage Victoria statement of significance for the East Kew Baby Health Centre notes:

The East Kew Maternal and Child Health Centre is of social significance for its enduring civic value to the community. As a baby health centre, the building is socially and culturally important for marking phases in the lives of mothers and infants.

In other cases, where the original use has long ceased, there is only recognition of historical and architectural significance (for example, the former Brunswick Baby Health Centre, 320 Lygon Street, Brunswick East).

The Balwyn Baby Health Centre served the local community for over 90 years. It has marked important phases of life of mothers and babies who have lived in the area over that time. It is likely to be a well-known local landmark, and still hold associations for families in the area despite its closure in 2019.

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 building at 1 Cherry Road is significant as the first purpose-built baby health centre constructed in the City of Camberwell, and the second oldest to survive in the City of Boroondara. It is associated with an important public health effort that began in the early interwar period to decrease child mortality rates and provide free, universal health care to mothers and their babies. This transition from the use of council facilities and other public spaces as temporary centres marked the determined joint efforts of the city council and the local community – particularly local women – to ensure that these services would be permanently provided in a modern, appropriate setting. Its construction in the late 1920s is also associated with the intensive growth of the suburb during the interwar period.

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 former Balwyn Baby Health Centre is architecturally significant as a representative example of the typical use for interwar centres of domestic architectural expression externally as a symbol of domesticity, while the interiors were designed with an up-to-date understanding of hygiene. The modest size of the centre is indicative of the purposeful strategy to disperse baby health centres and sub-centres throughout all suburbs, aiming so that all mothers had one within walking distance in a time before common car ownership.

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

NA

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).

The Balwyn Baby Health Centre served the local community for over 90 years, and has marked important phases of life of mothers and babies who have lived in the area over that time. It is likely to be a well-known local landmark, and still hold associations for families in the area despite its closure in 2019, however, as the residual level of social significance has not been investigated it is not known if it reaches the threshold of local significance under this criterion. For this reason, it is not cited in the statement of significance.

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).

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The former Balwyn Baby Health Centre, at 1 Cherry Road, Balwyn, is significant. It is a small brick building of domestic appearance, set behind a deep front garden. Constructed in 1927-28 by local builder George Collins Maling, it replaced a temporary centre beneath the bandstand in Balwyn Park. The centre was officially opened on 23 March 1928 and closed in 2019.

How is it significant?

The former Balwyn Baby Health Centre is of local historic, representative and social significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

The building at 1 Cherry Road is significant as the first purpose-built baby health centre constructed in the City of Camberwell, and the second oldest to survive in the City of Boroondara. It is associated with an important public health effort that began in the early interwar period to decrease child mortality rates and provide free, universal health care to mothers and their babies. This transition from the use of council facilities and other public spaces as temporary centres marked the determined joint efforts of the city council and the local community – particularly local women – to ensure that these services would be permanently provided in a modern, appropriate setting. Its construction in the late 1920s

is also associated with the intensive growth of the suburb during the interwar period. (Criterion A)

The former Balwyn Baby Health Centre is architecturally significant as a representative example of the typical use for interwar centres of domestic architectural expression externally as a symbol of domesticity, while the interiors were designed with an up-to-date understanding of hygiene. The modest size of the centre is indicative of the purposeful strategy to disperse baby health centres and sub-centres throughout all suburbs, aiming so that all mothers had one within walking distance in a time before common car ownership. (Criterion D)

Grading and Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Boroondara Planning Scheme as an individually Significant place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Boroondara Planning Scheme:

External Paint Colours <i>Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface?</i>	No
Internal Alteration Controls <i>Is a permit required for internal alterations?</i>	No
Tree Controls <i>Is a permit required to remove a tree?</i>	No
Victorian Heritage Register <i>Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?</i>	No
Incorporated Plan <i>Does an Incorporated Plan apply to the site?</i>	No
Outbuildings and fences exemptions <i>Are there outbuildings and fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted <i>Can a permit be granted to use the place for a use which would otherwise be prohibited?</i>	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place <i>Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006?</i>	No

Identified By

City of Boroondara

References

Age, as cited.

Ancestry.com, as cited.

Argus, as cited.

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Box Hill Reporter, as cited.

Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2015, 'Balwyn and Balwyn North Heritage Study', prepared for the City of Boroondara.

Crockett, C.D. 2000. *Save the Babies: The Victorian Baby Health Centres' Association and the Queen Elizabeth Centre, the first 83 years*. Melbourne: Arcadia.

Herald, as cited.

LV: Landata Victoria, Certificates of title, as cited.

PROV: Public Record Office of Victoria, Public Building File, VPRS 7882/P1 Unit 2124 File 17472 – General Health Branch, Infant Welfare Centre, 1 Cherry Street.

S&McD: Sands & McDougall's Melbourne Street Directory, years as cited.

Sheard, H. 2007. *All the Little Children: The Story of Victoria's Baby Health Centres*, Melbourne: Municipal Association of Victoria.

VHR: Victorian Heritage Register, Place citation for East Kew Maternal and Child Health Centre, accessed 3 February 2021.