

## Former Balwyn Baby Health Centre, later Maternal and Child Health Centre, 1 Cherry Road, Balwyn Statement of Significance, July 2022

<b>Heritage Place:</b>	<i>Formerly Balwyn Baby Health Centre; later Maternal and Child Health Centre</i> 1 Cherry Road, Balwyn	<b>PS ref no:</b>	HO943
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### 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)

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. (Criterion G)

### **Primary source**

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*Former Balwyn Baby Health Centre, later Maternal and Child Health Centre, 1 Cherry Road, Balwyn Heritage Citation (Context, July 2022)*

This document is an incorporated document in the Boroondara Planning Scheme pursuant to section 6(2)(j) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*