

Gordon Street Precinct

Prepared by: GML Heritage

Address: 133–141 Gordon Street, Balwyn

Name: Gordon Street, Balwyn	Survey Date: November 2021
Place Type: Residential	Architect: n.k.
Grading: Significant	Builder: E.V. Morom (numbers 133, 133A, 135, 135A & 139)
Extent of Overlay: See precinct map	Construction Date: 1937–39; 1950



GRADING

Contributory  Precinct Boundary 

Figure 1. Precinct map showing contributory properties - Gordon Street, Balwyn. (Source: Boroondara City Council)

Historical Context

This place is associated with the following historic themes taken from the *Boroondara Thematic Environmental History* (2012):

6.0 Building Towns, Cities and the Garden State

6.3 Shading the suburbs



Locality History

Balwyn is a residential suburb 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south are Deepdene, Canterbury and Surrey Hills, and to the north is Balwyn North, which is separated from Balwyn by Belmore Road. Deepdene, historically part of Balwyn, became a separate suburb in 2008.

Development to 1914

The beginning of post-contact settlement in the Balwyn area dates back to 1841, when the land bounded by Burke Road, Canterbury Road, Warrigal Road and Koonung Creek was purchased by Henry Elgar under the short-lived 'special survey' provisions, whereby 5120 acres could be purchased at £1 per acre on the condition that survey was carried out by the purchaser. According to a map of May 1841, two squatters occupied the large area known as Elgar's Special Survey at the time that he purchased it: Charles Mullins in the southeast corner and Arundel Wright in the northeast. (Donald Maclean, cited in Built Heritage 2015:7). By 1847, the Port Phillip Directory listed eighteen people with the address of 'Elgar's Survey', including ten 'agriculturists', two farmers, two 'artificiers' and a grazier (Gwen McWilliam, cited in Built Heritage 2015:7).

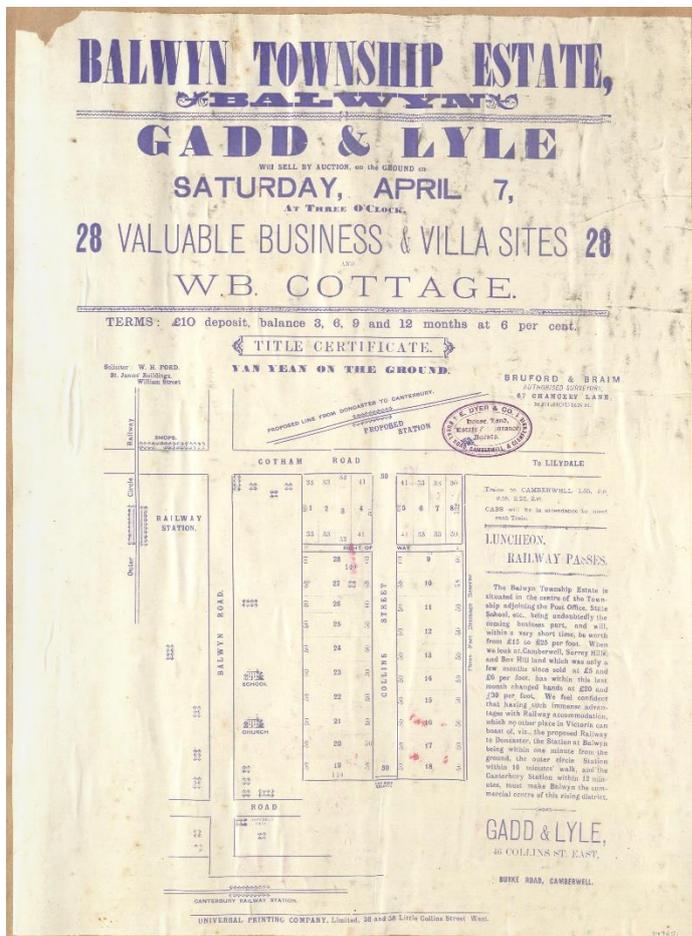
In October 1853, residents of the area signed a petition calling for improvements to roads between Richmond Bridge and Bulleen. A subsequent petition specifically demanded 'a proper line of road to be laid down from the Koonung Creek to the west side of Elgar's Special Survey' (Gwen McWilliam, cited in Built Heritage 2015:7). Over the next few years, several new roads were marked out across the area, including Bulleen Road, Doncaster Road, Whitehorse Road and Belmore Road (Built Heritage 2015:7).

In September 1856, allotments of land in Elgar's Survey totalling more than 1000 acres were offered for sale in Melbourne as the Boroondara Estate. Increased settlement followed, including the establishment of the industries of viticulture and tree felling (Built Heritage 2015:8). One of the allotments for sale in the 1856 subdivision was purchased by Scots editor and journalist, Andrew Murray. He built a house near the site of the present-day Fintona Girls' School in Balwyn Road (Victorian Places 2015). Murray planted a vineyard on the slope of the hill and named his house 'Balwyn', meaning 'home of the vine', using a compound of the Scots Gaelic 'bal (baile)' and the Saxon 'wyn' (ADB 1974).

By the early 1860s the village of Balwyn, centred on the intersection of Balwyn and Whitehorse roads, comprised a Congregationalist chapel on the western side of Bulleen Road, opened in 1857; a modest Catholic school-house, near the corner of Balwyn and Belmore Roads, which existed by 1858; and the Athenaeum Hall, on the western side of Balwyn Road, built in the mid-1850s. A Common School opened in 1868, and in 1872 the St Barnabas Anglican Church opened on an adjacent site to the south. (The Anglican congregation had formerly met in the Athenaeum Hall, which was adapted for use as a post office c.1872.) By 1872 Balwyn comprised five public buildings and 14 residences in the area between Whitehorse Road and Koonung Creek (Built Heritage 2015:8–9).

During the 1880s two significant developments in public works spurred residential settlement. A mains water supply from Yan Yean Reservoir was constructed between 1880 and 1882, from Cotham Road along Whitehorse Road, as far as Balwyn Road. In addition, the construction of the Outer Circle Railway, passing through Ashburton, Camberwell, Deepdene and Kew East, commenced in 1887. As a result, land in the Balwyn area became highly sought after by speculators who established residential estates. The subdivisions included Deepdene estate (1884), Belmore Park Estate in

Deepdene (1888) and others further north, including the Kew Park Estate (1888), the Heights of Kew Estate (1888), and the Kew Vale Estate (1889) – all located on the south side of Doncaster Road in what is now Balwyn North, (Built Heritage 2015:9), and in Balwyn township itself (see Figure 1). A small number of mansion houses were erected in the more elevated parts of Balwyn in the late 1880s and early 1890s, taking advantage of fine views to the north and east.



BALWYN TOWNSHIP ESTATE,
BALWYN
GADD & LYLE
WILL SELL BY AUCTION, on the GROUND on
SATURDAY, APRIL 7,
At Three O'Clock,
28 VALUABLE BUSINESS & VILLA SITES
W.B. COTTAGE.

TERMS: £10 deposit, balance 3, 6, 9 and 12 months at 6 per cent.

TITLE CERTIFICATE.
1/4 AN ACRE ON THE GROUND.

BRUFORD & BRAIM
AUCTIONEERS
47 CHANCERY LANE,
MILBURN LONDON E.C. 4.

W. H. FORD
Solicitor
21, James Street,
William Street.

PROPOSED LINE FROM DONCASTER TO CANTERBURY.
PROPOSED STATION

TO LILYDALE

TO CAMBERWELL LON. P.O.
200 220 240
CASE will be in accordance to meet
each Train.

LUNCHEON.
RAILWAY PASSES.

The Balwyn Township Estate is situated in the centre of the Township adjoining the Post Office, State School, &c., being undeniably the finest business part, and will, within a very short time, be worth from £15 to £25 per foot. When the Box Hill land which was only a few months since sold at £5 and £6 per foot, has within this last month changed hands at £20 and £30 per foot. We feel confident that having such immense advantages with Railway accommodation, which no other place in Victoria can boast of, viz. the proposed Railway to Doncaster, the Station at Balwyn being within one minute from the ground, the outer circle Station within 10 minutes' walk, and the Canterbury Station within 12 minutes' road, make Balwyn the commercial centre of this young district.

GADD & LYLE,
46 COLLINS ST. EAST.
BURKE ROAD, CAMBERWELL.

UNIVERSAL PRINTING COMPANY, Limited, 28 and 28 Little Collins Street West.

Figure 2 Advertisement for business and villa sites in the Balwyn Township Estate, 1888. (Source: State Library Victoria)

The northern section of the Outer Circle Railway – extending from East Camberwell to Fairfield and skirting Balwyn's southwest corner at Deepdene – was opened in 1891 but closed after only two years. Today only a few modest Victorian-era cottages remain in the Deepdene area that represent this period of development (Built Heritage 2015:10).

Interwar development

New public transport connections to the area that were established from the first decades of the twentieth century encouraged residential development in Balwyn and Deepdene. 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; part of the line remained open as goods-only service until 1943. Close to the Deepdene Railway Station, a hotel operated in Deepdene in the early 1900s. 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).

After scattered development in the early 1910s, residential development in Balwyn and Deepdene increased after World War I. 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. Most houses in that part were modest timber (and less often brick) homes built for those seeking an affordable home in the suburbs. Alongside the proliferation of State Bank houses in Balwyn, other building companies active in the area included Dunlop & Hunt. An elevated area on the north side of Whitehorse Road was developed in the 1930s as the prestigious Reid Estate, which permitted only brick construction. With its concrete roads and large double-storey homes on large allotments, this area attracted more discerning home-buyers of a high socio-economic standing who were seeking a better-quality home. In effect, Whitehorse Road delineated the two distinctly different areas of housing in Balwyn. Other areas of Balwyn, including the area north of Gordon Street and the area east of Balwyn Road, were also built up largely in the interwar period. The lower area north of Gordon Street, west of Balwyn Road, included a large area of war widows' housing.

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 in 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 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, was relocated to David Syme's former mansion 'To urmont' in Balwyn Road in 1936. The Anglican Mission of St James and St John opened a 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. The textile company Holeproof Ltd established a large factory in Whitehorse Road, Deepdene, in the early 1940s.

Precinct history

137, 139 and 141 Gordon Street

In 1876 Thomas Neary (Nary), farmer, purchased 10 acres of Elgar's Special Survey fronting Balwyn Road, north of Cotham Road. Neary died in 1878, leaving the land and a three-roomed wooden house and stables valued at £16 to his widow Annie. Annie subdivided the land into three allotments in 1893, one for each for her daughters Ellen and Mary and one for herself (PROV 2022). At this time Normanby Road (now Gordon Street) ran along the southern boundary of the property (CT: V839 F640).



Figure 2. Certificate of title dated 7 April 1876 showing Thomas Neary as proprietor of 10 acres facing Balwyn Road (Source: CT: V859 V640)

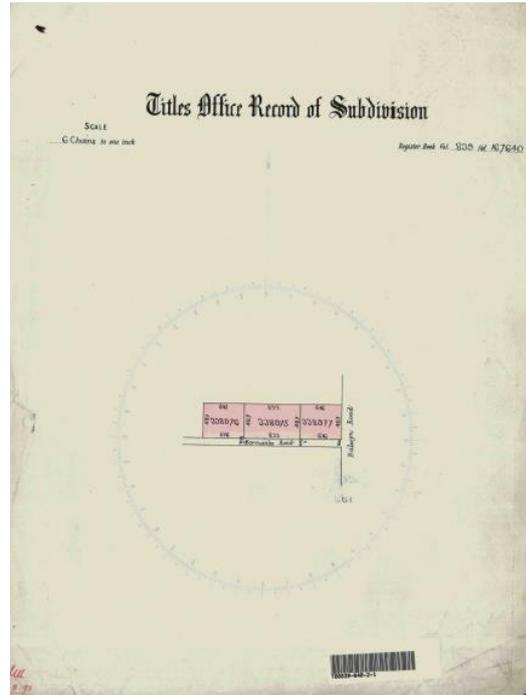


Figure 3. Plan of subdivision showing three lots as subdivided in 1894. Annie Neary retained lot 33897 facing Balwyn Road and transferred the middle lot (338975) to her daughter Ellen and the end lot (338976) to her daughter Mary.

After 1904 the original allotment of 10 acres changed hands several times, until in 1922 Edric David Lister, farmer, purchased the rear two acres facing Normanby Road (CT: V2981 F090; CT: V4000 F905; CT: V4218F575; CT: V4563 F472).

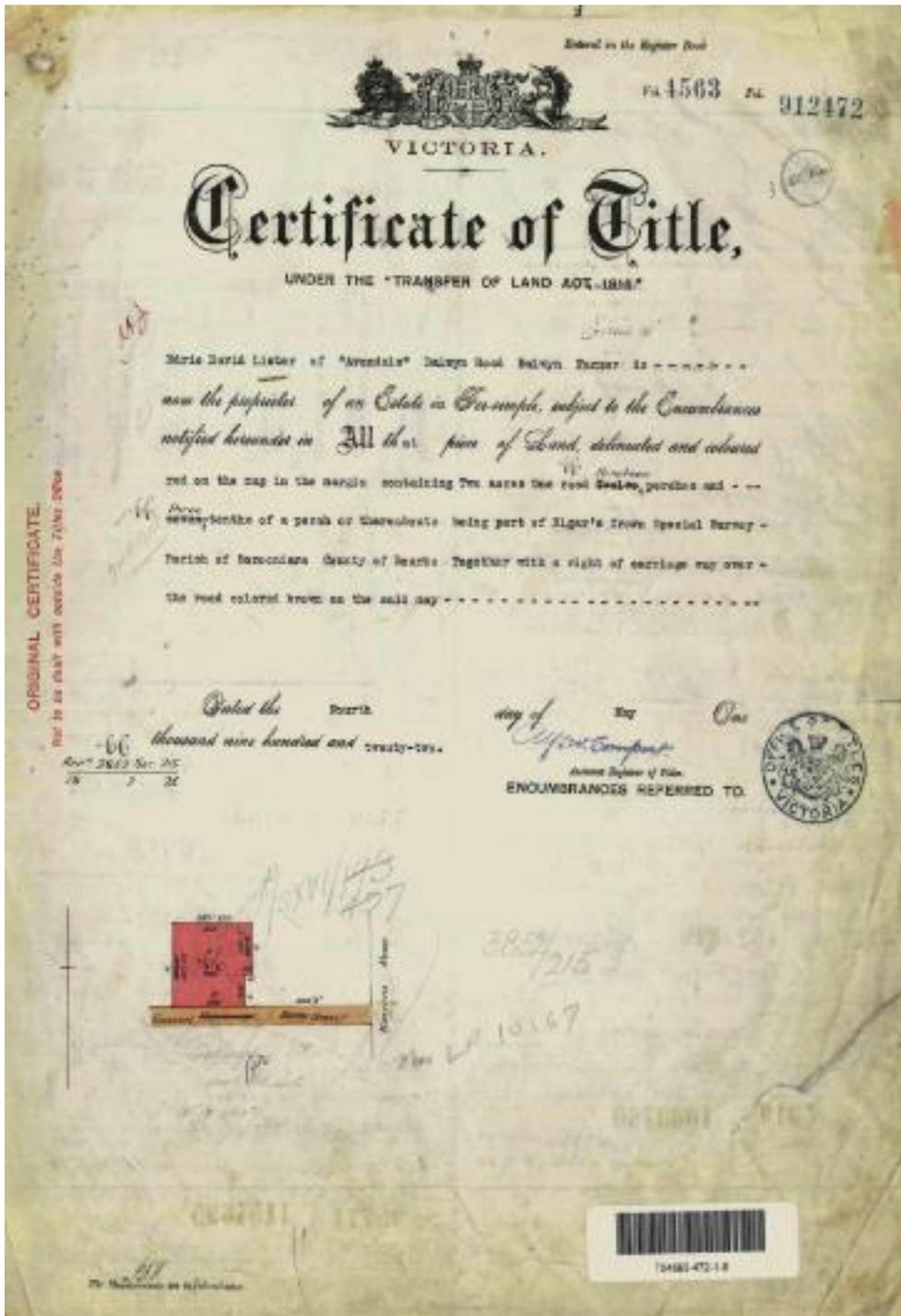


Figure 4. Certificate of Title dated 4 May 1922 showing Edric David Lister as proprietor of 2 acres facing Normanby Road/Gordon Street. (Source: CT: V4563 V472)

By 1926 Lister had subdivided his two-acre parcel of land, creating residential allotments and A.I.F. Street. By this time Normanby Road had been renamed Gordon Street (CT: V4563 F472).

Numbers 137, 139 and 141 Gordon Street refer to lots 44, 43 and 42, respectively, of this subdivision.

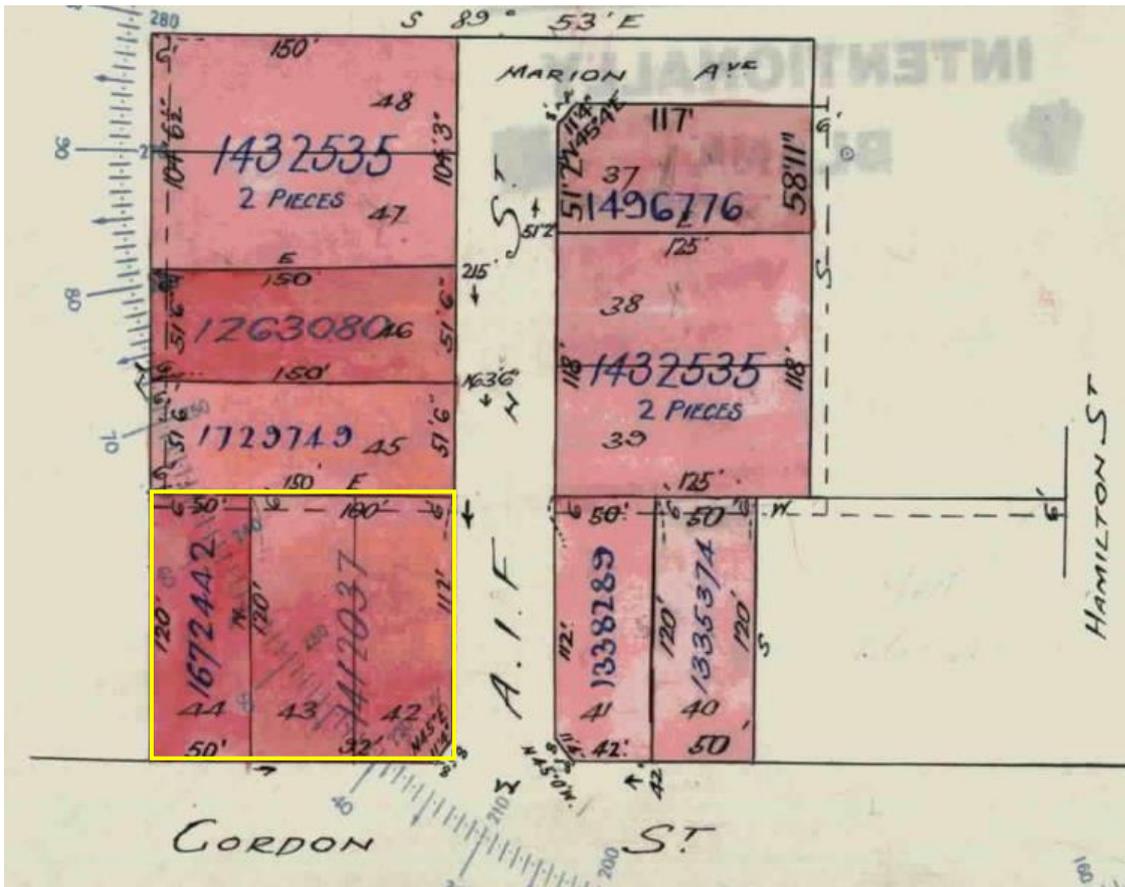


Figure 5. A.I.F. Street subdivision plan c.1926. Lots 42,43 and 44, which became nos. 141, 139 and 137 Gordon Street, are outlined in yellow. (Source: LANDATA, CT: V4563 F474 with GML overlay)

Lots 42 (141 Gordon Street) and 43 (139 Gordon Street) were purchased in 1929 by Walter Horace Hopkins, a storekeeper in Willaura in western Victoria (CT: V5539 F631). The land remained vacant until 1937, when the owner, Elizabeth Hopkins, had builder E. V. Morom construct a five-room brick and timber dwelling on lot 42 (141 Gordon Street) at a cost of £850 (BP 7607).

Brick veneer alterations and additions were made to the house at 139 Gordon Street in 1946, and a brick garage was added in 1951 (BP 18558; BP 7247).

The property at 139 Gordon Street was sold in 1959 (CT V6083 F528), and a carport was added in the same year (BP 24248). Ownership changed again in 1990, and the property was purchased by the current owners in 2001 (CT V6083 F528).

Lot 42(141 Gordon Street) was vacant until William Keith Johns purchased the property in June 1950 and built a four-roomed timber house later that year for a cost of £1500 (BP 6085, CT: V7397 F239). A garage and wood shed were added in 1953, and an addition of 465 square feet was made to the house in 1971 (BP 11718; BP 49069). The property is still owned by the same family (CT V7397 F239).

Lot 44 (137 Gordon Street) was purchased by John Aslin and Joseph Richmond, builders, in February 1938. Aslin and Richmond had already lodged an application for a building permit to construct a five-roomed timber house for a cost of £600 in January 1938 (CT V6176 F096; BP9153). Ownership of the



property subsequently changed in 1938 and again in 1963 (CT V6176 F096). A bedroom was added to the house in 1963 (BP 33811) and a garage in 1969 (BP 41764). Re-cladding works were also undertaken in 1969 (BP 44922), and the house was re-blocked in 1991 (BP 921521). The property was sold in 2003 and again in 2007 (CT V6176 F096). Additions to the rear of the property, which are not visible from the street, were made in 2013.

133, 133A, 135, 135A, Gordon Street

Two adjacent allotments on Elgar's Special Survey, one comprising 21 acres and the other 32 acres, and both facing Normandy Street (now Gordon Street), were acquired by Zilpa Small, the wife of gentleman Thomas Stephen Small, in 1877 and 1884 respectively. Title records show that the Smalls sold their combined holding of 53 acres in the early 1890s, including 34 acres sold to builder John Jeffery in 1893 (CT V1642 F276, CT V993 F421). By 1895 Jeffery had built a house on the property, which he named St Johns (CT V2563 F428).

The Jefferys owned the property until 1912 (by which time it was known as 'Sevenoaks'), when ownership transferred to Jessie Isabel Nott, wife of William Freeman Nott. Nott ran a piggery and dairy from the property (Context 2015). Following William's death in 1921, Jessie Nott sold off the majority of the 34-acre holding, which was subdivided into suburban allotments known as the Sevenoaks Estate in 1923. Nos 133 and 133 A and 135 and 135A Gordon Street are lots 19 and 20 respectively of this subdivision (CT V4684 F622).

Lots 19 and 20 were purchased by Annie Josephine McGrath, widow, of Ninyeunook in northwestern Victoria, in June 1929. Ernest Thomas Austin, a Collins Street dentist, purchased the lots in June 1939 and had builder E. V. Morom (the same builder as for 139 Gordon Street) erect two pairs of brick maisonettes at 133 and 133A Gordon Street and 135 and 135A Gordon Street at a cost of £1500 each (CT V5554 F664; BP 11361; BP 11362. Austin appears to have built the properties as investments, as they were rented out until his death in 1983.

A trellis and fence were added to No. 133 in 1992 (BP 94878; BP 95096). There are no other building card records of works being undertaken to the properties, although No. 133A appears to have had a garage added and an addition across the rear of the maisonette some time before 2007.

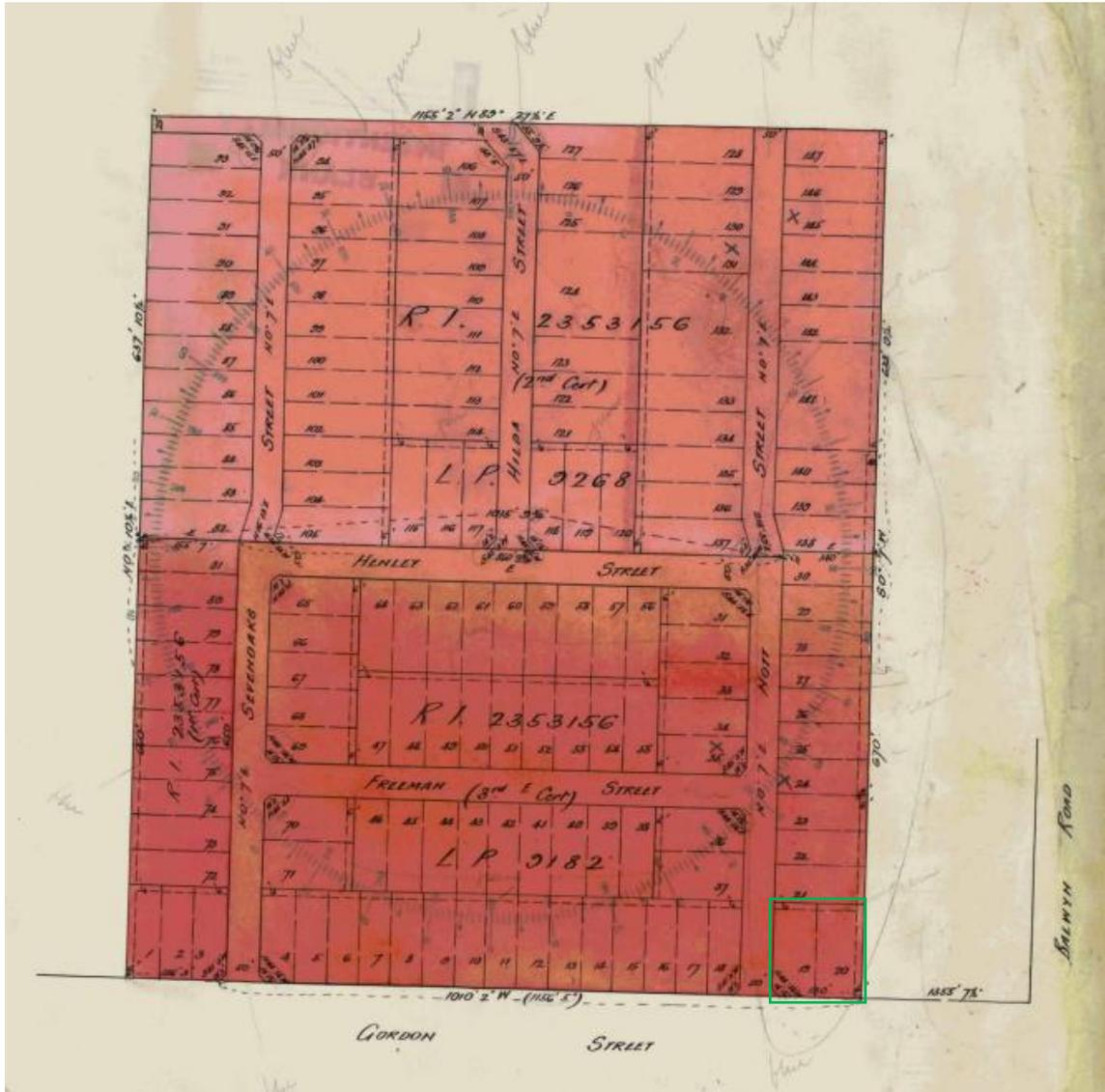


Figure 6. Plan of subdivision of the Sevenoaks Estate, 1923. Lots 19 and 20, outlined in green, became 133, 133a, 135 and 135a Gordon Street respectively. (Source: CT F4684 V622)

Description and Integrity

The Gordon Street Precinct is on the northern side of Gordon Street, Balwyn, between Nott Street and A.I.F. Street. It includes seven properties consisting of two pairs of maisonettes (numbers 133–133A and 135–135A) and three freestanding houses (numbers 137–141).

Gordon Street is a residential street that runs between Burke Road and Balwyn Road and acts as a busy thoroughfare between these two roads. The asphalt street has bluestone curbing with concrete crossovers. The northern side of the street is lined with different species of Australian native trees: Brush Box (*Lophostemon confertus*) and Silky Oak (*Grevillea robusta*).

All the houses in the precinct are single storey. Numbers 137 and 141 are of timber construction, and the others are brick. Built over a short period of time between 1937 and 1939 (with the exception of No. 141, which was built in 1950 on the subdivided land of no. 139), the houses exhibit key characteristics of domestic architectural styling popular during the late interwar period. All have a

simple asymmetrical built form with tiled hip roofs, each pair of maisonettes being designed to appear as a single dwelling. The row of houses presents a particularly consistent streetscape in terms of their form, low roof-lines, common setbacks and general articulation of façades, which have large, tripartite windows and integrated entry porches.

139 Gordon Street

The first house to be built in the precinct was no. 139 Gordon Street, in 1937. This simple, single-storey brick interwar house with terracotta hip roof has a projecting hip entry porch and smooth rendered walls with contrasting face brick base. The somewhat austere appearance of the house is mitigated by regularly spaced tapestry brick motifs midway up the plain rendered walls, and by bands of tapestry bricks which demarcate the windows sills and heads. Across the principal façade are two sets of three timber-framed windows positioned other side of the arched entry porch. The double-hung sash windows have diamond leadlighting in their upper panes. Two rendered chimneys are extant along the western façade and are capped with a double row of face bricks. The rear chimney retains a glazed terracotta chimney pot.

A flat-roofed double-storey extension was added to the rear of the house prior to 2009, It is visible from the street only when the house is viewed from its eastern side. The house sits behind a low slatted-timber fence, which is a recent addition; a concrete-paved double car space in front of the house on its eastern side must also be a recent addition.



Figure 7. 139 Gordon Street, Balwyn. (Source: GML, February 2022)

137 Gordon Street

137 Gordon Street was built in 1938 by John Aslin and Joseph Richmond. Constructed of timber with a terracotta hipped roof, this asymmetrical house features an integrated hip-roofed front porch supported by three square rendered brick columns, each with two bands of applied moulding. Across the principal façade are two sets of timber-framed tripartite windows, each with a large fixed central pane and double hung sashes either side. The upper panes of the side sashes feature leaded glass in a stylised Adamesque design popular during the 1930s. The windows themselves are set on the outer edge of the house's timber frame and have sloped timber top boards supported by small timber brackets. This detailing is reminiscent of earlier bungalows of the 1920s and is typical of the eclectic styling used during the late interwar period. A single painted brick chimney is extant along the western façade.

There are no visible extensions to the house from the public domain. The house sits behind a low slatted-timber fence, which is a recent addition, and there is a brick-paved double car space in front of the house on its western side.



Figure 8. 137 Gordon Street, Balwyn. (Source: GML February 2022)

135/135A and 133/133A Gordon Street

The two pairs of single-storey maisonettes at 133 and 135 Gordon Street were built in 1938 by E. V. Morom. Built to appear as single houses, the maisonettes are of brick construction with hipped terracotta tiled roofs.

135 and 135A Gordon Street

Numbers 135 and 135A feature face brick bases to sill height, with rendered walls above. Window heads are demarcated by two rows of thin roman-style bricks and flashes of face brick at the buildings' edges suggesting the decay of age-old stucco and limewash. A recessed entry porch for

No. 135A faces the street, but the entry to No. 135 is discreetly positioned off the side drive, reinforcing the pair's appearance as a single house. Windows are typically timber-framed, double-hung sash units adjacent to a large, fixed pane. An extant rendered chimney with simple face brick cap penetrates the southern plane of the roof.

There are no visible alterations or additions to either maisonette from the public domain. The maisonettes sit behind a wire post and rail timber fence that is not original. Concrete strip drives with grassed medians and front entry paths, which were part of the early garden layout (just visible in the 1945 aerial), are still extant on both allotments (Melbourne 1945).



Figure 9. 135A Gordon Street, Balwyn. (Source: GML, February 2022)



Figure 10. 135 Gordon Street, Balwyn. (Source: GML, February 2022)

133 and 133A Gordon Street

Numbers 133 and 133A are located on the corner of Nott Street with the entry to No. 133 facing Gordon Street and No. 133A facing Nott Street. The pair appears to be a single house, particularly when viewed from Gordon Street; No. 133 spreads across the width of the block and appears to be a typical asymmetrical 1930s villa with a long wing running down Nott Street (No. 133A). The pair of houses sits on a low face brick base with rendered walls above and features a face brick cornice line, two courses deep, below the boxed eaves. Windows are typically framed by a single course of thin tapestry brick, with window heads and sills distinguished by three courses of the same bricks. As at Numbers 135 and 135A, flashes of face brick at the edges of the buildings suggests the decay of age-old stucco and limewash. Entries to both houses are demarcated by curved wall corners and feature small curved and cantilevered concrete-roofed porches. Windows are typically timber-framed double-hung sash units adjacent to a large fixed pane. Extant rendered chimneys with simple face-brick caps are located along each street frontage.

No. 133 sits behind a tall brick and render fence which runs along both Nott Street and Gordon Street, with a splayed corner. A recessed contemporary metal entry gate is positioned along Gordon Street and the brick fence returns to join the projecting room of the maisonette to create a concrete paved double parking space. There are no visible alterations and additions to the maisonette.

Along Nott Street, No. 133A sits behind a low timber slated fence which steps down the block increasing in height at its northern end before terminating in a single brick drive which leads to a single garage. Both the fence and garage are recent additions.



Figure 11. 133 Gordon Street, Balwyn. (Source: GML, February 2022)



Figure 12. 133A Gordon Street, Balwyn viewed from Nott Street. (Source: GML February 2022)

141 Gordon Street was the last house built in the precinct. Built in 1950 on land that had been owned by the owners of No. 139, No. 141 is positioned on the corner of A.I.F. Street. Constructed of timber with a tiled hip roof, this asymmetrical house takes advantages of its corner block. It bears characteristics popular in the late interwar years that carried on into the 1950s in a vernacular/austere style. This is particularly evident in its cream brick entry porch, which has a curved corner that links to a broad cream brick chimney with stepped edges. Distinctively, the house is clad in wide weatherboards with mitred corners. Windows are typically double-hung sash units. The window in the projecting front room is a tripartite window with a large fixed central pane and double-hung **141 Gordon Street**

sashes either side. Along the A.I.F. Street frontage, the corners of the original 1950 house are set with corner windows. The flat-roofed section at the rear of the house was added in 1971.

141 Gordon Street sits behind a very low timber paling fence which returns down A.I.F. Street with a splayed corner. The fence increases to standard height along A.I.F. Street just north of the house's corner window. Double gates provide access to the rear yard. The house appears to retain its early concrete path layout.



Figure 13. 141 Gordon Street, Balwyn. (Source: GML February 2022)

Integrity

The Gordon Street Precinct has high intactness and integrity, with few changes to original or early elements of the houses. Overall, the visual cohesion of the group is strong, with all dwellings being largely intact, each retaining key characteristics of domestic architectural styling popular during and immediately following the interwar period. All houses retain their original built form, including entry porches, roof form, materiality and pattern of fenestrations. They all retain their original timber-framed



windows, some with leadlighting. The brick houses of the group retain contrasting face-brick detailing typical of the era including, face-brick base work, slim roman style brick work and flashes of tapestry bricks. Although built later, no. 141 bears characteristics popular in the late interwar years that carried through into the 1950s in a vernacular/austere version of an earlier interwar style. These include the curved cream brick entry, stepped chimney and corner windows, all reminiscent of the interwar Moderne.

Alterations and additions that are visible from the street include a single garage at the rear of no. 133A (off Nott Street), a two-storey flat-roofed addition at no. 139, and a flat-roofed addition at the rear of no. 141, added in 1971. These additions are largely not intrusive because they are well set back and not visually prominent from the street. They have not altered the original forms of the house roofs, are modest in scale, and have little impact on the integrity of the group as a whole. All front fences are not original, but (with the exception of No. 133) they are low and do not intrude on the visual unity of the group. The tall fence at No. 133 is somewhat intrusive.

Comparative Analysis

The precinct comprises a small group of single-storey houses and maisonettes built in 1937–39 (with the exception of 141, which was built in 1950 on the subdivided land of no. 139) in architectural styles popular during the late interwar period. Due to material and labour shortages during the war years construction virtually stopped. In the years immediately following the war, house design either continued using the styles and influences popular before the war or embraced the emerging modernist movement. Although 141 Gordon Street is of a later build date than the rest of the precinct, it displays characteristics more typical of houses built in the late interwar years. As a result, and because of its overall form and scale, 141 Gordon Street is integral to the group.

Some large and small houses in other precincts in the Boroondara Heritage Overlay represent the late interwar period. Those of a similar (small) size or a comparable housing stock include the following.

Balwyn and Balwyn North

HO767 Maud Street Maisonette Precinct, Balwyn — The precinct comprises 10 pairs of single-storey semi-detached brick maisonettes, which display consistency in their scale, setback, materials and overall expression, but otherwise display variety in their contrasting materials (face brick vs rendered brick), roof forms (hipped vs gabled), façade articulation (symmetrical vs asymmetrical) and stylistic detailing (Tudor Revival vs Moderne vs Classical influences). All 20 maisonettes were erected between 1938 and 1940.

HO192 Reid Estate, Balwyn — The precinct comprises large, detached brick houses in a range of interwar architectural styles, demonstrating a high quality of architectural design (particularly those constructed during the 1930s). This architectural quality is combined with the visually unifying factors of lot and frontage size, materials, and uniform setbacks, to create a cohesive and notable interwar heritage precinct. The place is a generally intact interwar landscape containing concrete roads, mature gardens and street trees, lamp posts, and some original fencing.

HO231 Riverside Estate and Environs, Balwyn North — The precinct comprises large, detached houses built in various interwar architectural styles, demonstrating a high quality of architectural design. This architectural quality is combined with the visually unifying factors of lot size, materials and uniform setbacks to create a cohesive and notable interwar precinct. The housing types and



styles physically demonstrate the appeal of North Balwyn as one of Melbourne's most fashionable new suburbs of the 1930s, a status that was consolidated after 1945.

Wider Boroondara

HO918 Home Farm Estate and Environs Precinct, Ashburton — The precinct comprises a collection of good-quality interwar dwellings that illustrate the range of styles and materials popular through the course of the interwar period. The earliest houses in the precinct are timber bungalows, including a substantial attic-storey bungalow at 13 Dunlop Street. By the late 1920s the style had moved to face-brick Californian bungalows. The more prestigious masonry construction remained the rule for the rest of the interwar period, moving through the classically inspired Mediterranean Revival (mostly rendered), medieval Old English (clinker brick and/or rendered), and then machine-age Moderne (usually rendered) style houses.

HO226 Goodwin Street and Somerset Road, Glen Iris — Most houses in this precinct, which was surveyed in 1929, were built in 1934–38 during the building revival following the Great Depression. Most houses are rendered and have brick detail, but some are clad in weatherboard. They are modest and simple examples of Mediterranean Revival and Old English styles, with some Moderne. Many retain original brick fences. Some have intrusive upper-level additions.

HO846 Stonyhurst and Athol Estates Precinct, Hawthorn East — The precinct comprises a collection of medium and smaller sized houses from the interwar period in a range of interwar architectural styles including Californian Bungalow and interwar Old English, Mediterranean and Spanish Mission revival styles. Clusters of houses built to the same and similar designs enhance the visual cohesiveness of the precinct. A relatively high proportion of single-storey duplex and triplex housing of high architectural quality and detailing distinguishes the precinct.

In style, size, architectural quality and intactness, the subject precinct is most comparable to HO767 Maud Street Maisonette Precinct, Balwyn. Although the Maud Street precinct consists entirely of maisonettes, both precincts represent the more modestly scaled and detailed residential development that occurred during the interwar years in Balwyn in the block bounded by Burke Road, Whitehorse Road, Balwyn Road and Doncaster Road. This is distinguished from residential development in the Reid Estate, Balwyn (HO192) and Riverside Estate and Environs, Balwyn North (HO885) which, although also developed during the interwar years, contains more substantial houses frequently designed by architects.

Further afield, the subject precinct is similar in style and architectural detailing to the Home Farm Estate and Environs Precinct, Ashburton (HO918), Goodwin Street and Somerset Road Precinct, Glen Iris (HO226) and Stonyhurst and Athol Estates Precinct, Hawthorn (HO846). Although larger than the Gordon Street Precinct, these precincts all contain a similar collection of medium and smaller houses from the interwar period with architectural styling popular at the time.

Overall, the Gordon Street Precinct is a good example of the more modestly scaled and detailed middle-class residential development that occurred in the section of Balwyn bounded by Burke Road, Whitehorse Road, Balwyn Road and Doncaster Road. The precinct illustrates a development pattern and type of dwelling which are not well represented in the Heritage Overlay in the area. The precinct provides a cohesive streetscape between Nott Street and A.I.F. Street of late interwar dwellings that exhibit a particularly consistent expression in terms of their form, brick and weatherboard



construction, low roofs, common setback, and general articulation of façades with large picture windows, asymmetrical entry porches and distinctive detailing.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criteria are those referred to in *Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay*, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, August 2018, 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 Gordon Street Precinct is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of the extensive residential development in this section of Balwyn during the interwar and early postwar period, which was the result of improved transport connections established in the first decades of the twentieth century and the development of infrastructure (such as electricity from 1920 and sewage from 1927). It reflects the significant expansion of residential development in the middle suburbs of Melbourne during this period. Modest in scale, this small group of houses and maisonettes is representative of the interwar and early postwar housing stock that once proliferated throughout this area of Balwyn, bounded by Burke Road, Whitehorse Road, Balwyn Road and Doncaster Road, but which is now increasingly rare due to development pressures. (Criterion A)

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

Houses in the Gordon Street Precinct are significant as a highly intact group of dwellings that represent typical domestic architectural styling popular during the 1930s, which carried over into the immediate postwar years, and which were once prevalent throughout this area. Constructed of brick or timber, all have a simple asymmetrical built form with low-pitched tiled hip roofs, each pair of maisonettes being designed to appear as a single dwelling. Features across the houses which are typical of the era include recessed entry porches; rendered brick walls with contrasting face brick work often utilising roman or tapestry bricks; flashes of face brick at the buildings' edges suggesting the decay of age-old stucco and limewash; tripartite timber double-hung sash windows, frequently with leadlight in the upper panes and large fixed 'picture' windows; and simple rendered, unadorned chimneys with face brick cap detailing.

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

Aesthetically, the precinct is significant as a cohesive group of intact late interwar to early postwar houses that exhibit a particularly consistent expression in terms of their built form, low pitched hipped roof lines, common setback and general articulation of facades with large picture windows and asymmetrical planning. At the same time, the houses and maisonettes express a lively sense of



individuality through their contrasting façade articulation which display stylistic eclecticism applied to the standard hipped roof houses of the late interwar period. This is evident in the different treatment of window surrounds (such as sills, heads and jambs brick details), finishes (weatherboard or different permutations of rendered brickwork with face brick details utilising different brick types) and detailing (including diamond and Adamesque leadlighting, curved corners and entry porch detailing). The distinctive interwar character of the precinct is enhanced by the retention of low front fences (although not original) and some early concrete paths and driveways.

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

N/A

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).

N/A

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).

N/A

Statement of Significance

What Is Significant?

The Gordon Street Precinct, comprising 133–141 Gordon Street, Balwyn, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the precinct include:

- The house and maisonettes constructed between 1937 and 1950, as shown on the precinct map.
- The overall consistency of single-storey built form and materials of timber or brick walls, tiled hipped roofs, asymmetrical planning, and integrated entrance porches.
- Consistent street setbacks.
- Expression of individual detailing across the group, which includes rendered brick walls, face brick detailing including base brick work, roman and tapestry brick detailing, exposed brick flashes and window sill, head and jamb details (numbers 133, 133A, 135, 135A, 139), weatherboard walls with brick entry porches (numbers 137 and 141), double-hung sash windows, picture windows, leadlighting, curved walls (numbers 133A, 133 and 141) and all extant chimneys.
- Early concrete paths and drives at numbers 135, 135A and 141.

Contributory buildings include 133, 133A, 135, 135A, 137, 139 and 141 Gordon Street, Balwyn.

Features that do not contribute to the significance of the precinct include non-original alterations and additions to individual properties. Although none of the front fences are original, their low height (with the exception of no. 133) enhances the distinctive interwar character of the precinct.

How Is It Significant?

The Gordon Street Precinct, Balwyn, is of local historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why Is It Significant?

The Gordon Street Precinct is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of the extensive residential development in this section of Balwyn during the interwar and early postwar period, which was the result of improved transport connections established in the first decades of the twentieth century and the development of infrastructure (such as electricity from 1920 and sewage from 1927). It reflects the significant expansion of residential development in the middle suburbs of Melbourne during this period. Modest in scale, this small group of houses and maisonettes is representative of the interwar and early postwar housing stock that once proliferated throughout this area of Balwyn, bounded by Burke Road, Whitehorse Road, Balwyn Road and Doncaster Road, but which is now increasingly rare due to development pressures. (Criterion A).

Houses in the Gordon Street Precinct are significant as a highly intact group of dwellings that represent typical domestic architectural styling popular during the 1930s, which carried over into the immediate postwar years, and which were once prevalent throughout this area. Constructed of brick or timber, all have a simple asymmetrical built form with low-pitched tiled hip roofs, each pair of maisonettes being designed to appear as a single dwelling. Features across the houses which are typical of the era include recessed entry porches; rendered brick walls with contrasting face brick work often utilising roman or tapestry bricks; flashes of face brick at the buildings' edges suggesting the decay of age-old stucco and limewash; tripartite timber double-hung sash windows, frequently with

leadlight in the upper panes and large fixed 'picture' windows; and simple rendered, unadorned chimneys with face brick cap detailing. (Criterion D).

Aesthetically, the precinct is significant as a cohesive group of intact late interwar to early postwar houses that exhibit a particularly consistent expression in terms of their built form, low pitched hipped roof lines, common setback and general articulation of facades with large picture windows and asymmetrical planning. At the same time, the houses and maisonettes express a lively sense of individuality through their contrasting façade articulation which display stylistic eclecticism applied to the standard hipped roof houses of the late interwar period. This is evident in the different treatment of window surrounds (such as sills, heads and jambs brick details), finishes (weatherboard or different permutations of rendered brickwork with face brick details utilising different brick types) and detailing (including diamond and Adamesque leadlighting, curved corners and entry porch detailing). The distinctive interwar character of the precinct is enhanced by the retention of low front fences (although not original) and some early concrete paths and driveways. (Criterion E).

Grading and Recommendations

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

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

PRECINCT GRADINGS SCHEDULE

Name	Number	Street	Grading	Built Date
House	133	Gordon Street	Contributory	1938
House	133A	Gordon Street	Contributory	1938
House	135	Gordon Street	Contributory	1938
House	135A	Gordon Street	Contributory	1938
House	137	Gordon Street	Contributory	1938
House	139	Gordon Street	Contributory	1937
House	141	Gordon Street	Contributory	1950

External paint controls

Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface? No

Internal alteration controls

Is a permit required for internal alterations? No

Tree controls

Is a permit required to remove a tree? No

Outbuildings and fences exemptions

Are there outbuildings or fences which are not exempt from notice and review? No

Victorian Heritage Register

Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register? No

Prohibited uses may be permitted

Can a permit be granted to use the place for a use which would otherwise be prohibited? No

Aboriginal heritage place

Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006? No

Incorporated plan

Does an incorporated plan apply to the site? No

Identified by:

Context 2021



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