

Flats

Prepared by: Context

Address:

7 Mangan Street, Balwyn

Name: Flats	Survey Date: October 2018
Place Type: Residential	Architect:
Grading: Significant	Builder: Frederick James and Frank Le Leu
Extent of Overlay: To title boundaries	Construction Date: 1932-33



Figure 1. View of flats at 7 Mangan Street, Balwyn. (Source: Context, November 2017)

Historical Context

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

Interwar development

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 'Idylwyde' 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. The textile company Holeproof Ltd established a large factory in Whitehorse Road, Deepdene, in the early 1940s.

History

The subject site is located on the west side of Mangan Street, between Jurang Street to the north and Whitehorse Road to the south. The block comprised lot 15, section 3, of the Canterbury Park Estate ('Canterbury Park and Township' 188-). The Estate's first sale was held in 1883 and a subsequent sale held in 1887 where prices for blocks fronting Mangan Street reached 7 to 15 shillings per foot (*Herald* 4 April 1883:4; *Age* 17 October 1887:4). The Estate was well serviced, with the Balwyn General Post Office located on the corner of Balwyn and Cotham (now Whitehorse) roads, and the Canterbury Railway Station nearby ('Clearing sale of Canterbury Park and Township 1887'). Most of the estate allotments sold during the first sale, including the subject site, and the remaining allotments were advertised in a clearing sale several months later ('Clearing sale of Canterbury Park and Township' 1887). Allotments continued to be sold into the early twentieth-century ('Canterbury Park Estate Balwyn' 190-). By 1929, there were only two vacant allotments remaining on Mangan Street, (MMBW 2969, 1929).

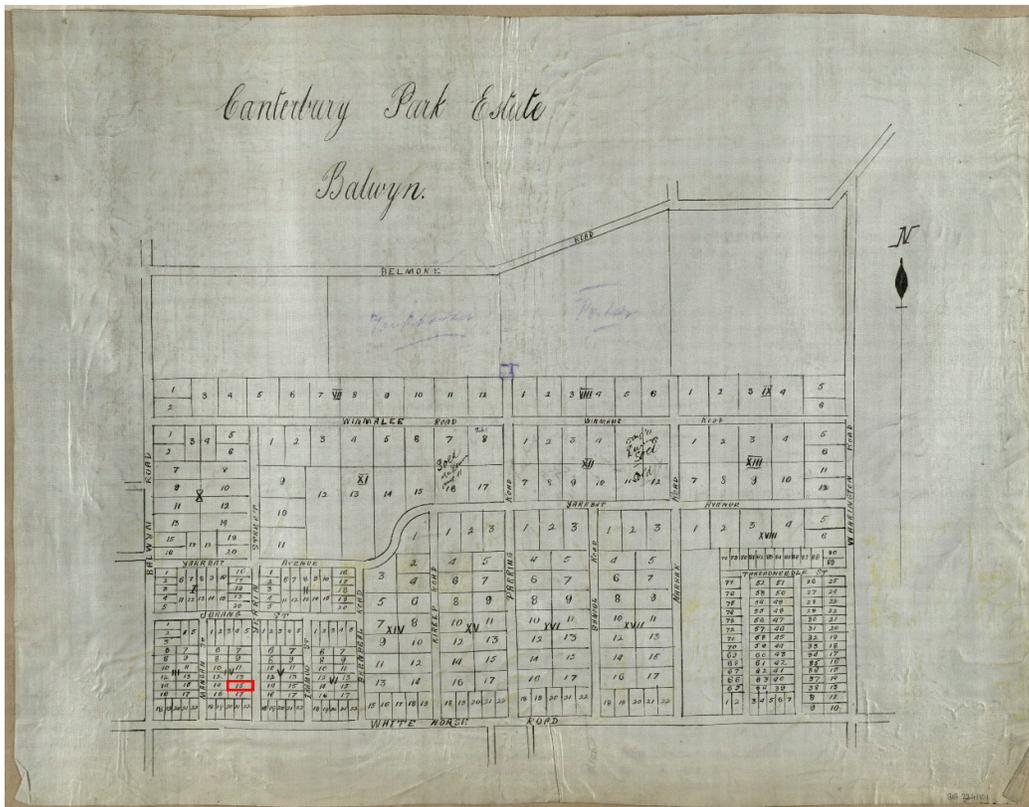


Figure 2. 'Canterbury Park Estate Balwyn' 190- residential subdivision with subject allotment outlined in red. (Source: State Library Victoria)

Brothers Frederick James and Frank Le Leu built the Mangan Street flats in 1932 (BP 1932). It appears that these were some of the first, if not the first, block of flats built in Balwyn. According to an article in the *Herald* published in 1935, the first flats in Balwyn were built in 1933, the article claims that '[f]lats are successful in Balwyn because only limited number have been built because the Camberwell building governing the erection of flats are so strict and because the average tenant in Balwyn stays longer than tenants in more restless suburbs' (*Herald* 10 July 1935:18). The Le Leu brothers lived on Whitehorse Road and leased out the Mangan Street flats out to tenants (BHS 2010). The compact two-storey flats reflect the development of Balwyn in the interwar period as the area's population increased.

The Le Leu brothers were part of a prominent Balwyn family who actively contributed to the development of the area in the early-to-mid twentieth century. Their father, Edwin Leleu (who spelt his name without a space), was a builder and contractor with a timber yard in Collins Street, Balwyn; he was also a member of the Boroondara Progress Association (*Box Hill Reporter* 21 March 1901:1; *Box Hill Reporter* 14 December 1906:2). Frank and Fred Le Leu were proprietors of multiple shops, a hall named 'Le Leu's Hall', and timber yard, all on Whitehorse Road (*Hawthorn, Kew, Camberwell Citizen* 14 June 1918: 2; *Argus* 3 March 1947:4). In 1924, the saw mill employed 30 workers, making the Le Leus reputedly the largest employer in Balwyn at the time (BHS 2010). Fred Le Leu figured strongly in Balwyn society, as the honourable secretary of the Balwyn Progress Association and as a councillor, and later, mayor of Camberwell (*Herald* 24 February 1928: 3; *Argus* 8 July 1944:12). He ran as the endorsed Liberal candidate for Evelyn in the 1945 state elections (*Healesville Guardian* 3 November 1945:4). As a councillor for Camberwell, he was generally supportive of development in the area. In response to a deputation of 100 ratepayers, concerning bylaws relating to the construction of flats, Le Leu proposed that when buildings were single-storied, 75 per cent of the land should not be built upon, and when they were of two storeys over 80 per cent of the land should be reserved (*Argus* 23 March 1938:4). The following year Le Leu expressed support for the conversion of Rivoli Theatre on Burke Road, Camberwell, into a shopping arcade. Camberwell Council ultimately rejected plans for the conversion of the theatre to which Le Leu suggested the applicants revise their plans, and objected to(?) Council's decision, stating that 'a bald refusal was not getting the Council anywhere and tended to check progress in the municipality' (*Age* 11 October 1939:6).

The subject flats first appear in the Sands and McDougall directory in 1935, when the listing records the residence only as 'flats' without naming their tenants (S&Mc 1935). A garage was erected adjacent to the flats in 1972 (BP 1972). In 1983 the flats were listed for sale as recently refurbished, separate strata title flats (*Age* 21 May 1983:55). The advertisement described flats 1, 2 and 4 as 2 bedrooms units, and flat 3 as a three-bedroom unit with two bathrooms, a separate dining room and private garden (*Age* 21 May 1983:55). A building permit from January 1983 detailing external and internal alterations and repairs to flats for then owner, Mrs G I Blackwood, indicates that minor internal alterations and the addition of carports were carried out prior to the sale (BP 1983).

Description & Integrity

7 Mangan Street, Balwyn, consists of four brick flats built in 1932-3. Located on the western side of Mangan Street, the flats are in close proximity to a commercial shopping strip along Whitehorse Road. The adjacent allotment, to the property's immediate south, is now an asphalted car park. The land falls south to north. Constructed in red blue clinker bricks with a terracotta tile roof, the flats display a simple Old English style with restrained detailing.

Configured as a pair of duplexes, one behind the other, the flats are designed to appear as a single-family home, set within a garden. The flats share communal concrete paths and driveway with courtyard spaces to the rear.

Each duplex building is asymmetrically arranged with a stepped transverse gabled roof intersected by a dominant street facing gable. This provides a picturesque broken massing that is reminiscent of the English vernacular.

The front and rear east facing elevations are mirror images but have subtle differences in the arrangement of shared elements. The ground floor flats are accessed through recessed porches whilst the flats on the top level are reached via external concrete stairs leading to porch landings. Porch openings are rectangular on the ground floor with those above having round arch heads. Balustrades are of solid rendered masonry and are in stark contrast to the otherwise picturesque quality of the facades.

Carefully articulated chimneys with corbelled brickwork break up the front facades and are capped with terracotta chimney pots.

Windows are six-over-six double-hung sashes with either straight or round arched heads. At the apex of each gable end three arrow slits in the brick work are inset with timber louvres acting as ventilators to the roof space.

The north and south elevations share a similar level of attention to detail with matching windows and gable ends. Timber stairs lead to recessed porches which are accessed through round arch openings. These act as secondary entrances to the flats on the upper level.

The back building has a large single storey addition with skillioned roof at its rear which is visible from the neighbouring carpark but not from Mangan Street.

The flats sit within an established garden of lawn and shrubs. Set behind a low stepped clinker brick front fence which appears early, a concrete strip drive runs down the southern boundary and has later concrete pavers set down its centre. A simple cantilevered carport runs along the southern boundary.

7 Mangan Street, Balwyn is of very high integrity with very few changes to original or early elements. The building remains almost as built and retains its original built form, roof forms, clinker brickwork and fenestrations. The integrity of the building is enhanced by the high level of intactness of these main elements, which include the timber framed sash windows, paned glazing, terracotta roof tiles, masonry and concrete stairs, detailed chimneys with chimney pots and gable end ventilators.

The integrity of the rear building is only slightly diminished by its rear skillioned extension as this is barely visible from the adjacent carpark.

The integrity of the place as a whole is enhanced by its setting within an established garden behind a low clinker brick fence which appears early. The integrity of the place is slightly diminished by the cantilevered carport on its southern boundary and by the adjacent public carport.

Comparative Analysis

Many of the early flats in Melbourne, built during the period from c.1915 to c.1920 were in the Arts & Crafts style, with some demonstrating the transition to the California Bungalow style that became popular after World War I. From the mid-1920s onwards Old English, Spanish Mission and Georgian Revival became the most fashionable styles for residential architecture in Victoria, particularly in well-heeled suburbs of Boroondara.

This progression of styles is demonstrated by the surviving interwar flats in Boroondara. The earliest known examples of purpose-built flats in Boroondara date from the early 1920s on Riversdale Road between Power Street and Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, comprising a representative sample of interwar flats dating from the early 1920s to the late 1930s.

The Old English style, sometimes also known as Tudor Revival, sought to marry the respectability of age with a spirit of progress, whereby rubbed brickwork, ancient oak, and leaded glass casements were deftly turned out in pressed reds and clinkers, veneered beams, and double-hung sashes.

The Old English style, although sometimes adopted for commercial premises, found most favour in Australia (as elsewhere) in residences for the middle classes, often sitting with smug comfort amid rows of Spanish Mission, Moderne, and occasional Georgian Revival interwar dwellings.

The Old English style harked back to the Tudor period of the late fifteenth to early seventeenth centuries (which included the late period of the Elizabethan reign) at a time when late medieval architecture was moving away from centuries of dominance by Gothic architecture.

This was not the first revival of Old English architecture: architects of the mid and late nineteenth century had been attracted to its charms, but the interwar revival was the one that produced such a great impact on Australia's suburbs and assumed its greatest prominence during the 1930s.

Hallmarks of the Old English style included asymmetrical forms, the low pointed Tudor arch, half-timbered construction (especially of upper floors or gable ends), steeply pitched (and generally tiled) roofs, prominent chimneys, and snug porches under the main roof sweep. By the 1930s there was less use of half-timbering, and a dominance of brick walling, often enlivened by decorative brick patterning or colours.

There are few flats in the wider former City of Camberwell that are currently included in the Boroondara Heritage Overlay, whether within a precinct or an individual HO. In part, this is because there were fewer flats developed in the suburb until the post-war era. For this reason, flats in established residential streets were often massed to resemble a single-family dwelling.

Some examples are cited below:



HO371 Stratford, 87-87A Bowen Street, Camberwell (c.1934) (Source: VHD)

Stratford, the house at 87-87A Bowen Street Camberwell, is of local historical and architectural significance. In terms of its size, form, and general composition the house is typical of many comfortable middle-class interwar Camberwell residences. Whilst built as a house the building was converted to flats in 1950. This differs to our example which was purpose built as a block of four flats designed to appear as single dwellings.



HO450 Berwyn Flats, 7 Glenroy Road Hawthorn (c.1935-6) (Source: VHD)

Berwyn Flats, 7 Glenroy Road, Hawthorn, is of local historical and aesthetic significance. It is a good and relatively intact example of a finely articulated interwar complex of flats in the Old English Tudor style, which although containing four flats was designed to appear as a single large house.



HO291, Cotham, 340 Cotham Road Kew (c.1937) (Source:VHD)

Cotham is of local aesthetic and ... significance as a fine, representative and externally intact example of a flat block of the late interwar period. To the extent that its external form expresses the layout of the flats within, the design reflects the new acceptability and prestige of apartment life in the later 1930s. This differs to 7 Mangan Road, Balwyn which was designed to appear as single dwellings.



HO288 Tanfield Lea, 221-229 Cotham Road, Kew (c.1912, altered 1940) (Source: VHD)

Tanfield Lea, at 221-229 Cotham Road, Kew, is of local historical and architectural significance. It comprises a substantial Arts and Crafts attic-style house built in 1912 which was converted and enlarged to create a block of six Old English-style flats in 1940. Architecturally, it is one of a small number of stylistically conservative - even regressive - apartment blocks appearing in Melbourne suburbs at the end of the interwar period. This differs to 7 Mangan Street which were purpose built to resemble a single dwelling.

Discussion

Compared to the above examples 7 Mangan Street, Balwyn is a plain example of the Old English style in the Boroondara context. The flats demonstrate a high level of intactness across both building blocks and present as a good representative example of their type. This is strengthened by extant garden elements including the original front fence and concrete paths and driveway.

Importantly the flats represent an unusual building type within the former City of Camberwell. Whilst flats made an important innovation in the character of inter-war Melbourne, few were built in Camberwell. Resisting flat building was for many years a sign of Camberwell's determination to preserve its suburban character with flats in established residential streets often massed to resemble a single dwelling. For this reason, 7 Mangan Street, Balwyn compares particularly well to 7 Glenroy Road, Hawthorn (HO450). Although these represent a more elaborate expression of the Old English Style this is in response to the scale and detailing of adjacent houses.

7 Mangan Street, Balwyn stands alone as an early example of a flat complex built in Balwyn. It is an externally intact example of a block of four flats designed to resemble a pair of two-storey Old English dwellings. It appears that these were some of the first, if not the first, block of flats built in Balwyn, as no other pre-World War II flats have been found to exist in the locality.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criteria referred to in *Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay*, Department of Planning and Community Development, revised 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 flats at 7 Mangan Street, Balwyn, built in 1932-33 on the Canterbury Park Estate, are of historic significance as an early example of higher density accommodation built in Balwyn. Constructed by brothers Frederick James and Frank Le Leu, the compact two-storey flats reflect the pattern of development of estates during the land boom of the 1880s and the later increase in population in Balwyn in the 1930s. It appears that these were some of the first, if not the first, block of flats built in Balwyn.

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 to an understanding of 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).

The flats at 7 Mangan Street, Balwyn, are representative of an unusual building type within the municipality, flats massed to resemble single dwellings. They are a good though restrained and highly intact example of the Old English style, and this is enhanced by extant garden elements including the original front fence, concrete paths and driveway.

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

N/A

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).

The flats at 7 Mangan Street, Balwyn, were built by brothers, Frank and Fred Le Leu, members of a prominent Balwyn family who actively contributed to the economic development and community of the area in the early-to-mid twentieth century. Their father, Edwin Leleu, was a builder, contractor and owner of a timber yard in Balwyn and a member of the Boroondara Progress Association. Frank and Fred Le Leu were proprietors of multiple shops, a hall named 'Le Leu's Hall', and timber

yard in Balwyn. Fred Le Leu served as the honourable secretary of the Balwyn Progress Association and as a councillor, and later, mayor of Camberwell. As a councillor for Camberwell, he was generally supportive of development in the area. In response to a deputation of 100 ratepayers, concerning bylaws relating to the construction of flats, Le Leu proposed that when buildings were single-storied, 75 per cent of the land should not be built upon, and when they were of two storeys over 80 per cent of the land should be reserved.

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The flats at 7 Mangan Street, Balwyn, built in 1932 by brothers Frederick James and Frank Le Leu, are significant.

The front fence is contributory. The parking structures are not significant.

How is it significant?

The flats at 7 Mangan Street, Balwyn, are of local historic, architectural (representative) and associative significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

The flats at 7 Mangan Street, Balwyn, built in 1932-33 on the Canterbury Park Estate, are of historic significance as an early example of higher density accommodation built in Balwyn. Constructed by brothers Frederick James and Frank Le Leu, the compact two-storey flats reflect the pattern of development of estates during the land boom of the 1880s and the later increase in population in Balwyn in the 1930s. It appears that these were some of the first, if not the first, block of flats built in Balwyn. (Criterion A)

The flats at 7 Mangan Street, Balwyn, are representative of an unusual building type within the municipality, flats massed to resemble single dwellings. They are a good through restrained and highly intact example of the Old English style, and this is enhanced by extant garden elements including the original front fence, concrete paths and driveway. (Criterion D)

The flats at 7 Mangan Street, Balwyn, were built by brothers, Frank and Fred Le Leu, members of a prominent Balwyn family who actively contributed to the economic development and community of the area in the early-to-mid twentieth century. Their father, Edwin Leleu, was a builder, contractor and owner of a timber yard in Balwyn and a member of the Boroondara Progress Association. Frank and Fred Le Leu were proprietors of multiple shops, a hall named 'Le Leu's Hall', and timber yard in Balwyn. Fred Le Leu served as the honourable secretary of the Balwyn Progress Association and as a councillor, and later, mayor of Camberwell. As a councillor for Camberwell, he was generally supportive of development in the area. In response to a deputation of 100 ratepayers, concerning bylaws relating to the construction of flats, Le Leu proposed that when buildings were single-storied, 75 per cent of the land should not be built upon, and when they were of two storeys over 80 per cent of the land should be reserved. (Criterion H)

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	Yes—front fence

<i>Are there outbuildings and fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	
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

Built Heritage Pty Ltd, 'Balwyn and Balwyn North Heritage Study (incorporating Deepdene & Greythorn)', August 2015

References

Age, as cited.

Balwyn Historical Society (BHS) 2010, 'The Leleu* – Balwyn Timber Merchants and Builders', *A Compilation of Newsletter Articles*, <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~balwynhs/>.

'Balwyn Township Estate' 1888, State Library of Victoria (SLV) Batten and Percy Collection, accessed online 18 September 2018.

Box Hill Reporter, as cited.

Building permit (BP) card for '7 Mangan Street, Balwyn'.

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

Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2012. 'City of Boroondara Thematic Environmental History'. Prepared for the City of Boroondara. May 2012.

Canterbury Park and Township 188-?, Auctioneer's plans, Melbourne and suburbs, State Library of Victoria, <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/382411>.

'Canterbury Park Estate, Balwyn' 190-, Houghton Collection, State Library of Victoria, <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/169748>.

Hawthorn, Kew, Camberwell Citizen, as cited.

Healesville Guardian, as cited.

Herald, as cited.

O'Hanlon, Seamus 2008, 'Flats' in *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au>, accessed 26 November 2018.

Sands & McDougall (S&Mc), *Melbourne and Suburban Directories*, as cited.