

## 129-131 Yarrbat Avenue, Balwyn Statement of Significance

<b>Heritage Place:</b>	129-131 Yarrbat Avenue BALWYN	<b>PS ref no:</b>	HO880
------------------------	----------------------------------	-------------------	-------



### What is significant?

'Silver Birches', formally known as 'Hillsborough', and garden, at 129-131 Yarrbat Avenue, Balwyn, built in 1936 on the Canterbury Park Estate, is significant. The house was designed by architects A S and R A Eggleston, and the garden by Edna Walling. Significant elements of the place include the house and garage, the original front and rear garden layouts and associated elements, including original capped sections of the front fence, curved drive wall and entrance gates, mature plantings (in particular the mature specimen Oak), and pond, low rubble stone walls and other hard landscaping features in the rear garden.

The raised section of the front fence and alterations made in 1970 are not significant.

### How is it significant?

The residence and garden at 129-131 Yarrbat Avenue, Balwyn, is of local architectural (representative), aesthetic and associative significance to the City of Boroondara.

### Why is it significant?

'Silver Birches' is a representative and externally intact example of a two-storey Georgian Revival dwelling. It embodies the principal characteristics of the style, including the understated restraint in detailing, cream brick walls, steep hipped slate roof, presentation of the pedimented entrance, and near symmetry in the arrangement of fenestration. (Criterion D)

The residence and garden at 129-131 Yarrbat Avenue is aesthetically significant as a particularly well designed and detailed architect-designed residence that is carefully sited within an extensive garden designed by Edna Walling. Tiled in slate, the roof's ridge lines have concealed transverse flashings under the slates removing the need for ridge capping. This heightens a sense of simplicity and clarity in the design and demonstrates the restrained and simplified detailing often evident in Georgian Revival architecture. The capped sections of the painted brick front fence, including the serpentine wall extending from the front drive gates towards the house's entrance, is part of this original garden design. The property's aesthetic significance is further enhanced by other remaining garden elements mature plantings (in particular the mature specimen Oak), and pond, low rubble stone walls and other hard landscaping features in the rear garden. (Criterion E)

The residence at 129-131 Yarrbat Avenue, Balwyn is significant for its association with Douglas Gray George, managing director of Georges department store in Melbourne, established in 1880 by brothers William and Alfred George. In 1889, the business moved to its famous location at 162-168 Collins Street. By 1901 Georges was a 'favoured spot with most of the smartest people in Melbourne', becoming an icon of genteel shopping and epitomising the exclusive image of Collins Street. It was a pioneer in Australian retailing, being one of the first stores to introduce lifts, a cash discount system, and a bargain basement 'on the American principle'. After William George died in 1935, his son Douglas Gray George became managing director of Georges Ltd for four years until his death in 1939. Georges closed its city and suburban stores in October 1995. (Criterion H)

#### **Primary source**

---

*Balwyn Heritage Peer Review Stage 2 Background report 12 April 2019*

*129-131 Yarrbat Avenue, Balwyn citation, September 2019*

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