

Victorian Heritage Database Report
Burke Road And Camberwell Junction - Historic Area



Location:

Burke Road,, CAMBERWELL VIC 3124 - Property No B7266

Heritage Status / Level of Significance:

Regional

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number:

Listing Authority: HI

Statement of Significance:

What is significant? Camberwell Junction was, during the nineteenth century, the commercial, civic and ecclesiastical centre of Camberwell/East Hawthorn. Burke Road was initially the continuation of the line drawn on the west side of Elgar's Special Survey, and later became the boundary between the old Boroondara and Hawthorn Shires, but was not an important commercial strip in the nineteenth century. When the rail line was extended past Hawthorn in 1882 it crossed Burke Road at a level crossing well north of the Junction. The coming of the railway made Camberwell a popular suburb. Commercial development began to occur around the station in the 1880s, and then spread along Burke Road between the Junction and the station, though the junction remained the main commercial centre until well into the twentieth century. Burke Road became a major shopping and commercial strip only in the early twentieth century. Its growth was stimulated by the electric trams that began to run in 1916-7 along Riversdale and Burke Roads, and by the electrification of the train lines in 1916. Burke Road boomed in the 1920s: shop numbers continued to increase even during the Great Depression, and the centre was fully developed by WWII. Throughout this period the shops of Camberwell formed the only large field of local employment. By the 1960s the nature of the shops began to change, reflecting the new wealth and leisure of the population.

Burke Road between the Junction and Victoria Road and Camberwell Junction make up a low to medium rise retail, business, institutional and ecclesiastical centre. The location is enhanced by the topography, with the land falling from Burwood Road down to the Junction, and rising again to the church precinct on Reserve Road. Burke, Camberwell and Riversdale Roads are largely lined with one and two storey late nineteenth and

early twentieth century commercial buildings. These are interrupted towards the top of the Burke Road hill by the cutting for the railway line and Camberwell Station. The streetscapes have a strong horizontal form associated with the parapets, balconies and awnings of the Victorian, Edwardian and 1920s and 1930s buildings. The most important buildings along Burke Road include the Davies Building (no 718-22), the shops at nos 708-10 and 831, the former ironmongery at no 694, Kings Building at no 672-4, the Palace Hotel (no 893), the State Savings Bank (no 851), and the early timber shop at no 831. Camberwell Junction is the focus of civic, school and institutional activities in the area. Important buildings at the Junction include the former E S & A Bank (705 Burke Road), Camberwell Primary School No 888 (290 Camberwell Road), the Rivoli Theatre (196-200 Camberwell Road), Our Lady of Victories Church (548 Burke Road), Camberwell Police Station (311-7 Camberwell Road), the Uniting Church and its Manse (300 & 316 Camberwell Road), Simpsons Buildings (222-6 Camberwell Road) and Charing Cross Buildings (202-10) Camberwell Road. The prosperity of the area has resulted in changes to the shopfronts and facades, but some early twentieth century shop fronts remain in Camberwell Road, for example at nos 253 and 373-9).

How is it significant? Burke Road and Camberwell Junction are significant for architectural, historical and social reasons at a Regional level.

Why is it significant? The Burke Road and Camberwell Junction area is architecturally significant as a substantially intact late nineteenth and early twentieth century suburban shopping and institutional area.

The Burke Road and Camberwell Junction area is historically significant as a reflection of the suburban residential and commercial growth that occurred in the 1880s, 1910s and 1920s as a result of the development of the suburban public transport systems. It is one of the largest of the traditional shopping areas of Melbourne, and is unusual for spreading beyond a simple strip into the six streets of the junction, and for incorporating as well a large civic and religious precinct, and a major interwar cinema and large tram depot.

The Burke Road and Camberwell junction area is socially significant as the most important shopping strip for Camberwell residents for more than a hundred years, and an important shopping area for a much wider catchment for much of the twentieth century.

Classified: 27/09/2004

Description

The Burke Road and Camberwell Junction streetscape is enhanced by the topography, with the ground falling from north of the railway line down to Camberwell Junction, then rising again to the church precinct to the south. This provides fine vistas south along Burke Road and also west towards the city from the railway bridge. The railway bridge and Camberwell Railway Station form prominent features towards the top of the Burke Road hill, accentuated on the Hawthorn side by the boom period Italianate three storey Palace Hotel (1888, by William Wolf) with its prominent circular corner tower. The vista towards the south is dominated in the distance by the relatively large mass of the Byzantine Revival Our Lady of Victories (1913-18), south of the Junction at 548 Burke Road. The vista east down Camberwell Road is dominated by the spire of the 1880s Town Hall, and in the other direction by the neon signs of the Rivoli Theatre.

Burke Road is now an almost continuous one and two storey commercial strip. Little remains from the earliest days of development and most surviving buildings are from the 1880s and later. Most date from the Victorian era (mostly 1888-93), Edwardian era (especially 1900-1905) and from 1920-1930s. Each important phase of building activity has resulted in a distinctive set of stylistic features and façade types, but all are consistent in the dominant lines of parapets, balconies and awnings. Most shopfronts and awnings however have been modernised.

Little survives of the early buildings on Burke Road. No 831, a two storey timber residence and shop, originally with a cast iron verandah, was built c1884. The ground floor has been drastically altered, but it is the last remaining example of a traditional shop and residence design that was common prior to 1890 along the street. It is an important example of the sort of shops once common here.

The boom period shops have a distinctive character, with heavily ornamented facades, decorated parapets and often wide verandahs over the footpaths. Residences were often on the first floor. Prominent boom period

shops include the pair of two-storey brick shops and residences at 668-670 Burke Road (c1889), used originally as a chemist shop and drapers, which have prominent gabled pediments decorated with swags and inset with windows with decorative aedicules. At no 680 is another two-storey stuccoed shop and residence (1895) with Italian Renaissance detailing and iron balustrading on the balconettes. At no 694 Burke Road is an unusual three-storey parapeted and stuccoed building (c1891) that was originally Thomas MacAlpine's ironmongery.

The former State Savings Bank (no 851, c1906) is an important streetscape element, a distinctive and attractive two storey brick building by Sydney Smith & Ogg with prominent art nouveau detailing.

Many early shops have new cantilevered awnings. A notable exception is 782-794 Burke Road (1910), north of the station, a row of eight parapeted stuccoed shops and residences, whose Italian Renaissance revival style was most conservative for its time, which retains its original timber framed post-supported verandahs and most of the original shopfronts. A number of early shopfronts survive opposite the Town Hall, at 253 Camberwell Road (maker's name not legible), and also at 373-9 Camberwell Road, which are by Brooks Robinson.

There are in Burke Road number of row shops, for example at nos 780-94, 756-68, 718-22 (Davies Building), 672-4 (Kings Buildings), 630-8, 554-64 (Dillons Buildings), 941-57, 921-7, 909-13, 859-61 (The Hub Building), 745-55 (Fulton Buildings), and 721-3 (Central Buildings). In Camberwell Road are groups at nos 222-6 (Simpson's Buildings) and 202-10 (Charing Cross Buildings).

The dominance of 1920s shops in Burke Road reflects the boom following the transport changes that began in 1916. The W J P Davies Buildings (718-722 Burke Road, on the corner of Cookson Street opposite the railway station) is one of the most prominent (another important example, now demolished, was Adairs Buildings, once at the south end of the Junction at 504 Riversdale Road). Others are no 746, a typical 1920s commercial building with interesting detailing and an original shop front; Kings Buildings (nos 672-4); no 654; nos 630-8, Dillons Buildings (nos 554-76, on the corner of Riversdale Road, and the Camberwell Market, with its attractive rendered parapet.

Contrasting buildings include the notable Tudor Revival row at 796-8 Burke Road (1936) and 630-638 Burke Road (1924) where the roof form has been exposed rather than concealed behind a parapet, and which is unusual for a suburban commercial building.

This area is unusual as there is only one hotel, a type which dominates other suburban strips. This is due to the 'dry' area controls established in Camberwell in the 1920s, which saw the closure of all the nineteenth century hotels, and prevented the construction of any more. Large areas of Camberwell are still 'dry', and the granting of liquor licences requires a local plebiscite. The only hotel is the Palace, located on the Hawthorn side. Also relatively unusual are the 1920s brick MMTB buildings: the Office at 2-8 Council Street, the Depot at 160-170 Camberwell Road, and the substation at 46 Station Street.

While the Camberwell and Hawthorn areas are largely middle class, there are a few remnants, for example at 1-11 Council Street, of the small workers' cottages that were once more common in the Junction area.

There have been some modern intrusions into the mainly low scale late nineteenth and early twentieth century precinct. These are most obvious towards the borders of the precinct. At the north end of Burke Road (nos 969-89), is the 1960s six storey brick Telstra building, with other higher scale late twentieth century buildings to the north of this. In Camberwell Road south-east of the Junction are also some medium scale late twentieth century intrusions.

The shopfronts and awnings of most early shops have been altered.

Heritage Study / Consultant	
Construction Date Range	

Architect / Designer	
Municipality	BOROONDARA CITY
Other names	
Hermes number	71567
Property number	B7266

This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to [Planning Schemes Online](#)