

159-179 Heidelberg Road, Northcote (Former Fairfield Hat Mills Complex (later Department of Aircraft Production branch) Statement of Significance, September 2021

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|------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Heritage Place: | 159-179 Heidelberg Road, Northcote | PS ref no: | HO321 |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|

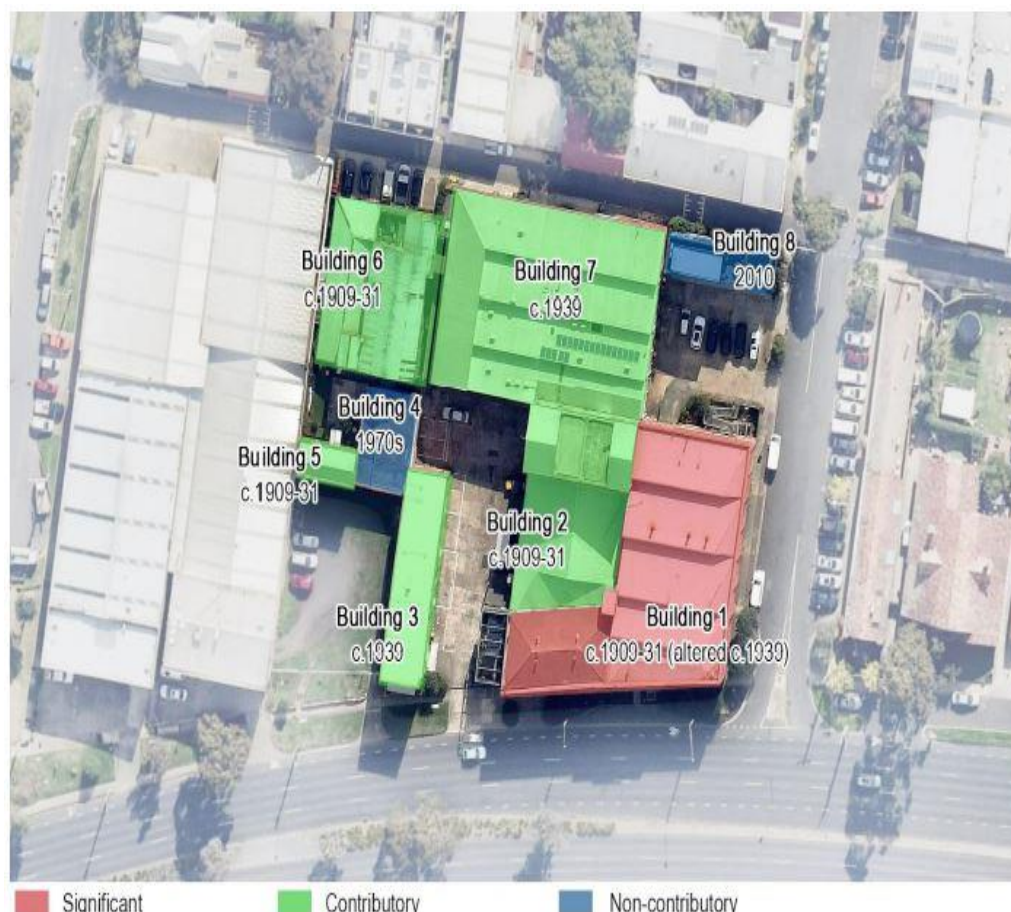


Figure 26. Significance of individual elements of 159-179 Heidelberg Road, Northcote. (Source: Nearmap, with Context overlay)

What is significant?

159-179 Heidelberg Road, Northcote, comprising buildings built between 1909 and 1939 for the Fairfield Hat Mills and the subsequent owner Spry's Corn Flakes Pty Ltd, is significant.

Significant fabric includes the:

- Two-storey main building at the corner of Heidelberg Road and Westfield Street built c.1939, including its original built form and scale, and materiality including the rendered finish over loadbearing brickwork (street frontages) and face brickwork with concrete lintels (rear elevation);
- Main building's architectural detailing including the original fenestrations, multi-pane steel-frame windows, bays with pilasters and spandrels and other elements influenced by Moderne style such

as the stepped parapet and distinctive oversized stepped architrave around the front entrance that is inset with tiled edges;

- Overall representation of the site as an industrial complex evidenced in the assemblage of early brick buildings developed between c.1909 and c.1939; and
- Original or early built form and scale, loadbearing face brickwork, and the utilitarian characteristics of the existing c.1909-39 buildings, including: concrete lintels, original openings with intact large multi-pane metal-frame windows, timber loading doors and hoist.

The c.1970s single-storey building and the 2010 exposed concrete building at the corner of Albert and Westfield streets are not significant.

How is it significant?

159-179 Heidelberg Road, Northcote, is of local historic and representative significance to the City of Darebin.

Why is it significant?

The complex at 159-179 Heidelberg Road, Northcote, is historically significant for its continued industrial use and development over time under the management of various businesses. The complex was originally established and expanded between 1905-07 and the 1930s for the Fairfield Hat Mills, and substantially renovated in 1939 for Spry's Corn Flakes Pty Ltd. The Moderne style main building at the corner of Heidelberg Road and Westfield Street was completed during the 1939 renovation and extension. The Commonwealth of Australia acquired the property in 1941, after when the buildings were used by the Department of Aircraft Production (1941-c.1960) and the Postmaster-General's Engineering Division Depot (c.1960-1986). By 1986, the site was owned by the Australian Telecommunications Commission until 1994.

The industrial complex is significant for its demonstration of the development of manufacturing businesses in Darebin in the early twentieth century, when light industry, including garment and hat making and food production, became the key industries of the municipality.

The site's association with the production of military hats during the Fairfield Hat Mills era in 1912, and its later operation as a Department of Aircraft Production branch from 1941 to c.1960 is also an important demonstration of Darebin's wartime efforts in the past. (Criterion A)

The complex comprising the Moderne style main building and other utilitarian brick buildings at 159-179 Heidelberg Road, Northcote, is of representative significance as an industrial complex consisting of a group of low-rise loadbearing brick buildings constructed in the first half of the twentieth century. It is one of a small group of surviving and intact industrial complexes established in Darebin during this period. With its distinctive Moderne office building and supporting group of more utilitarian industrial buildings, the complex provides important tangible evidence of Darebin's industrial in its early built form, massing and materiality. (Criterion D)

Primary source

Context Heidelberg Road Heritage Assessment report - Final Report, September 2020

| Building Number | Address | Grade |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | 159-179 Heidelberg Road, Northcote | Significant |
| 2 | 159-179 Heidelberg Road, Northcote | Contributory |
| 3 | 159-179 Heidelberg Road, Northcote | Contributory |
| 4 | 159-179 Heidelberg Road, Northcote | Non-contributory |
| 5 | 159-179 Heidelberg Road, Northcote | Contributory |

| | | |
|---|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 6 | 159-179 Heidelberg Road, Northcote | Contributory |
| 7 | 159-179 Heidelberg Road, Northcote | Contributory |
| 8 | 159-179 Heidelberg Road, Northcote | Non-contributory |

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