

WHITEHORSE PLANNING SCHEME

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

FORMER AUSTRALIAN ROAD RESEARCH BOARD

490-500 BURWOOD HIGHWAY, VERMONT SOUTH

June 2023

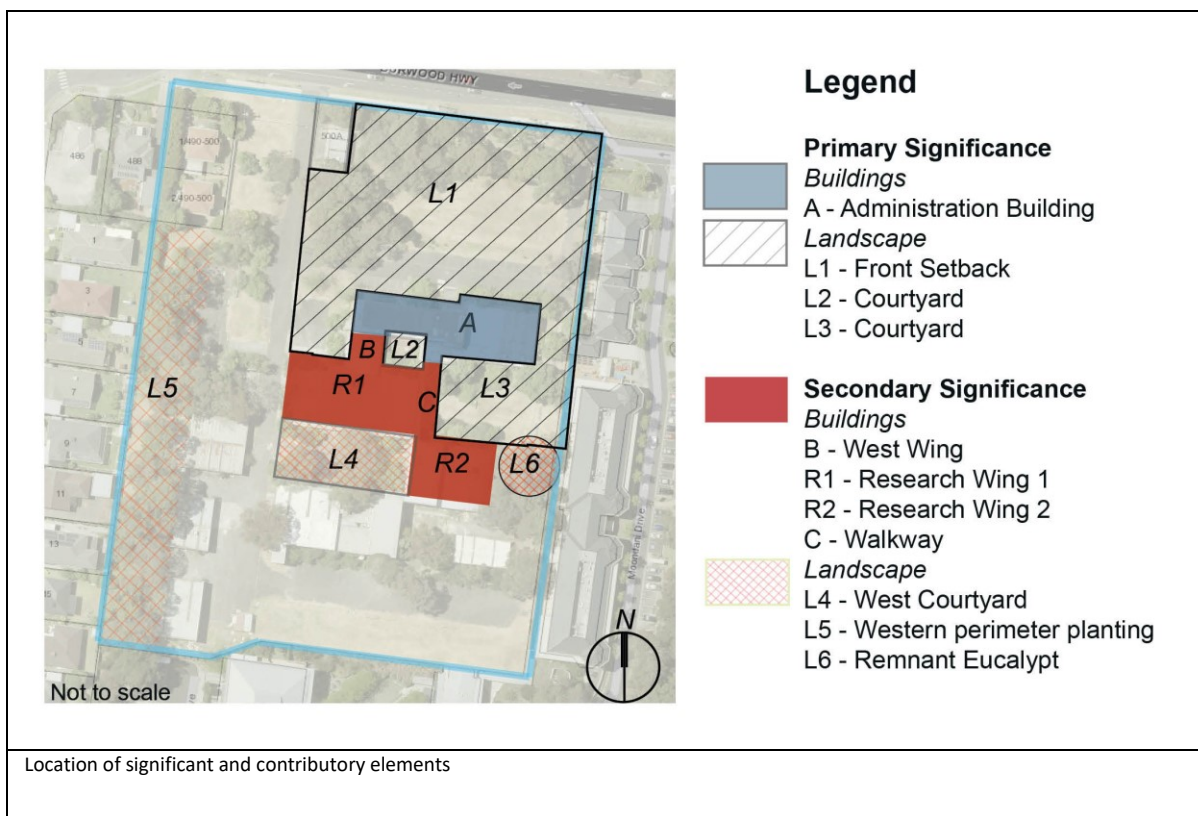
<p>Heritage Place:</p>	<p>Former Australian Road Research Board (ARRB) 490-500 Burwood Hwy, Vermont South</p>	<p>PS Ref No:</p>	<p>HO23</p>
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Administration Building, former Australian Road Research Board, 490-500 Burwood Highway, Vermont South (Source: *Former Australian Road Research Board, 500 Burwood Highway Vermont South, Conservation Management Plan, Revised February 2021*)



Heritage Overlay (to title boundaries)



What is significant?

The former Australian Road Research Board (ARRB) complex at 490-500 Burwood Highway, Vermont South, constructed in 1971-72 to the designs of architects Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell.

Significant elements include:

- The Administration Building (A),
- The landscaped setting around the Administration Building (L1), comprising the open space to the north in the front setback, and abutting to the west and east sides of the building.
- The courtyard (L2) between the Administration Building and Research Wing 1
- The courtyard (L3) to the south of the Administration Building

Contributory elements include:

- The West Wing (B)
- The planning concept using building modules (Research Wings R1 and R2) separated by courtyards (L2, L3 and L4) and connected by a main pedestrian spine (C).
- The west courtyard (L4) to the south of Research Wing 1 (R1)
- The surviving mature native plantings on the western boundary (L5) and the remnant *Eucalyptus melliodora* (Yellow Box) (L6) to the east of Research Wing R2.

How is it significant?

The former Australian Road Research Board complex is of historical, representative (architectural) and aesthetic significance to the City of Whitehorse.

Why is it significant?

The former Australian Road Research Board represents the move of institutions and organisations from the inner suburbs Melbourne in the post-war period, taking advantage of undeveloped rural land in the outer fringe of Melbourne. [Criterion A]

Constructed in 1971-72 to a design by Mockridge Stahle & Mitchell, the Administration Building of the former Australian Roads Research Board complex is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-war Modernist commercial building. Through its simple massing and composition, particularly the repetitive fenestration and assured use of face brickwork, the building is a confident example of the type of building

which typified institutional, and to a lesser extent commercial, architecture in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Administration Building demonstrates typical characteristics of later post-war structures including the rhythmic façade of regularly spaced, deep set windows with distinctive, sloping brick sills, and a strong horizontal emphasis. [Criterion D]

The site planning of the ARRB complex is an accomplished example of modular design allowing for flexibility and expansion that was in keeping with established principles of modernist architecture. The 'finger plan' layout provided the potential to expand the complex to the south and the courtyards separating the research laboratory 'modules' allow for light into the buildings on three sides, and an outlook into the landscaped spaces for the occupants. [Criterion D]

The former Australian Road Research Board complex is enhanced by its large, landscaped front setback and the landscaped courtyards separating the research wings, designed by noted landscape architect Beryl Mann. Although partially compromised by the loss of the eastern part of the site in the 1990s, the combination of open, grassed spaces, the retention of pre-existing eucalypts within the site, and the now-mature native perimeter planting to the northern and western boundaries, demonstrate the movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s to incorporate native trees and plants in landscape design for institutional complexes. [Criterion E]

Primary Source

Updated Heritage Citation: Former Australian Road Research Board (Coleman Architects, June 2021)