

Statement of Significance: Former ABC TV Gordon Street Studios

Address:	8 Gordon Street, Elsternwick	Name:	Former ABC TV Gordon Street Studios
Place Type:	Government/Institutional	Grading:	Significant
PS ref no:	HO156	Constructed:	1956-1965



Exterior of Gordon Street Studios from car park. Photo by heritage ALLIANCE, 2018

What is significant?

The ABC TV Gordon Street studios are of cultural significance at the ~~National, State and~~ Local level as a place associated with public broadcasting by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) since 1956. It is a rare, surviving twentieth century television studio and the earliest ABC television studio left in Australia. The site and its fabric reflects technological developments in television from the nascent technology of 16mm film production to telecine, videotape, colour broadcasting and then digital broadcasting, from 1956 until 2017. The studios are associated with a medium which had far-reaching effects on Australian culture, ideas, identity and society from 1956 until 2017.

The following elements on the site are significant:

- The transmission tower and for the purpose of paint controls, its original colours;
- Stage 1, 2 and 3 buildings, particularly the facades facing the former car park, the facades facing the former engineering workshop, and the façade facing 2 Gordon Street, and the roof of both the stage 2 and 3 buildings to a minimum depth of 10 metres from the significant facades of those buildings.
- The significant internal areas are:
 - at ground floor: the former studios 31, 32, 33A and 33B, part of the scenery runway, the dressing rooms, studio 33 control room, store room and the area immediately surrounding the pylons of the transmission tower;

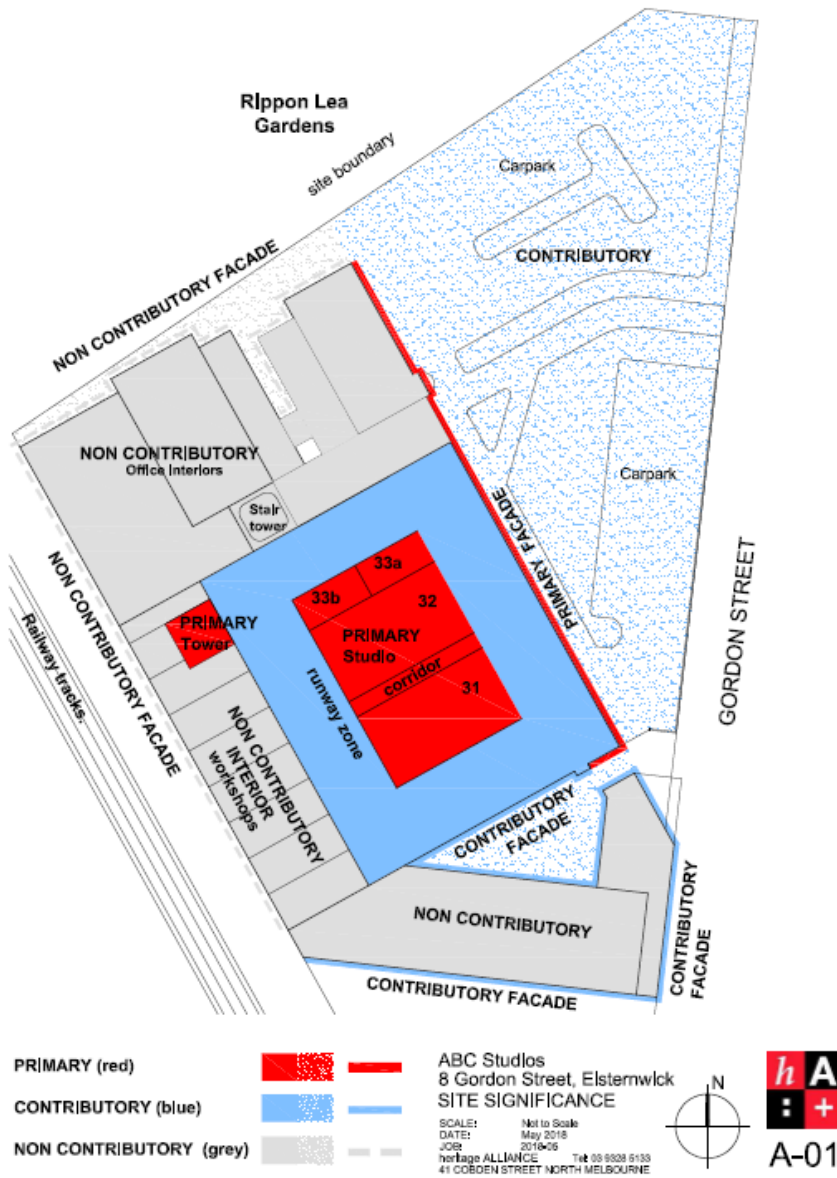
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- at first floor: Studio 31 audio suite, studio 31 control room, studio 31 & 32 equipment room, master control, edit suite 2, sport office (old) master control, store room, equipment room graphics and camera room;
- at second floor, studio 31 and 32 hoist room, high end and scenery hoist room;
- the important elements of the studios include the soundproofing, lighting, hanging boards and the relationship between the studio floor and the master control rooms above.
- Internal areas of significance include former Television Studios 31, 32, 33A and 33B (1958). The important elements of the studios include the soundproofing, lighting and some electrical elements and the relationship between the studio floor and the master control room above; the Scenery Runway, and the service areas surrounding the studio which house the former makeup, wardrobe, dressing rooms, toilets, green room and technical crew spaces with an intervening corridor.

Diagram A0-1 indicates the location of the Transmission Tower and the significant and contributory facades and internal-external areas.

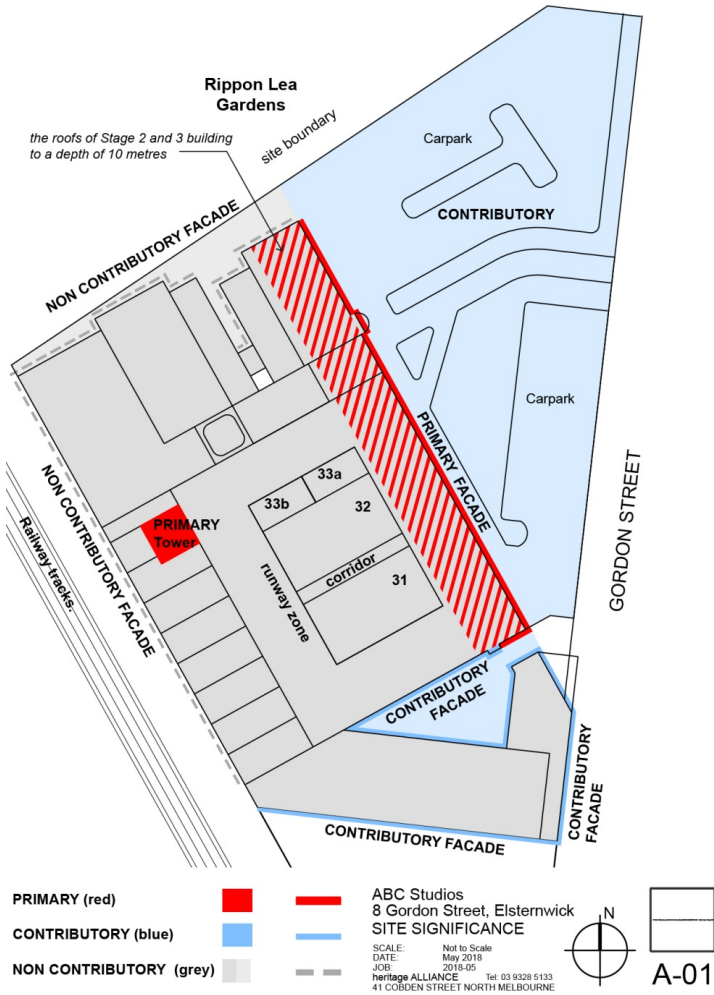
Areas of significance:



AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE DIAGRAM A-01

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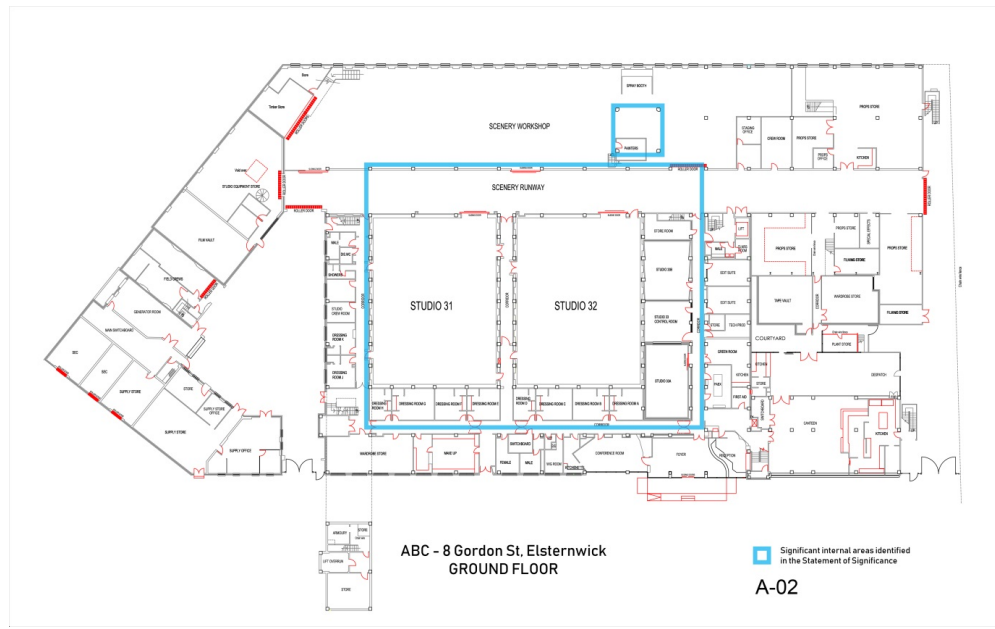
GLEN EIRA PLANNING SCHEME

[Diagram A0-2](#) shows the significant internal areas at the ground floor level of the building.

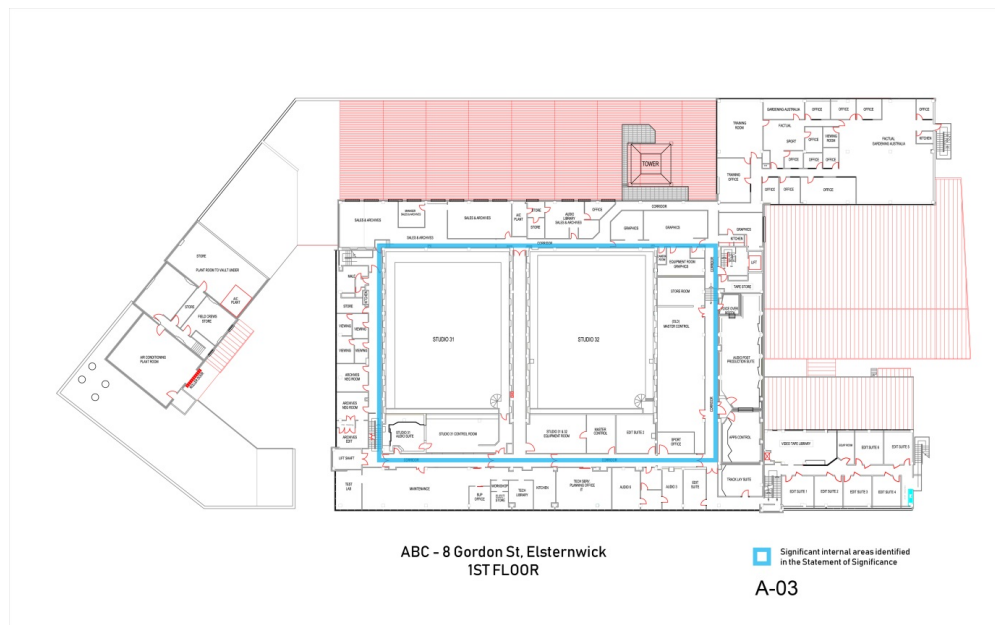
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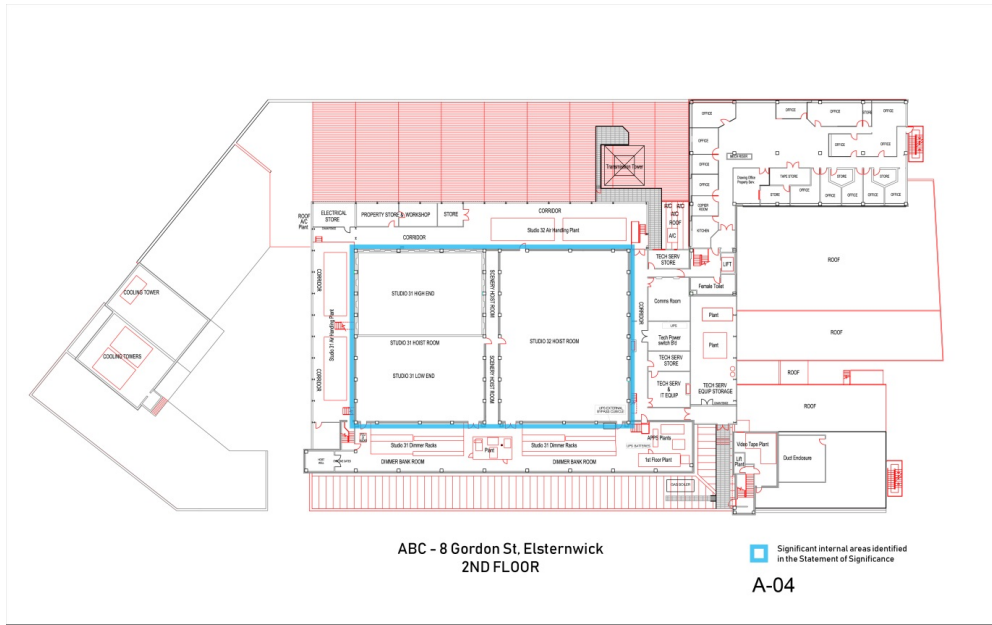


[Diagram A0-3](#) shows the significant internal areas at the first floor level of the building.



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Diagram A0-4 shows the significant internal areas at the second floor level of the building.



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How is it significant?

The ABC TV studios located at 8 Gordon Street, Elsternwick are significant at [National, State and the Local levels](#) for historical, [rarity, representativeness and aesthetic architectural, cultural, social and technological](#) reasons.

Why is it significant?

Criterion A: Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

- Association with the beginnings of television in Australia, with public broadcasting by the ABC since 1956 and the earliest ABC television studios still extant in Australia. ~~(Commonwealth)~~
- Association with a medium which had far-reaching effects on Australian culture, ideas, identity and society in the late twentieth century. ~~(National)~~
- The site of the first public television broadcast in Victoria. ~~(State)~~
- Association with the first Olympic Games held in Australia (Melbourne 1956). ~~(State)~~
- ~~Association with the development of a heritage conservation and advocacy movement and the nascent National Trust in Victoria. (Local)~~
- ~~Association with Rippon Lea Estate and the Jones family. (Local)~~

Criterion B: Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

- Earliest extant ABC television studio in Australia. ~~(National)~~
- Rare, surviving twentieth century television studio in Australia. ~~(National)~~
- One of only a few government/institutional buildings in City of Glen Eira with an aesthetic presence. ~~(Local)~~
- Rare Post-War International style building in [the](#) City of Glen Eira. ~~(Local)~~

Criterion D: [Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects \(representative significance\)](#)

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- Outstanding example of a purpose built television studio complex constructed following the introduction of television to Australia in the 1950s.
- The building is representative of television production facilities in the late 1950s reflecting its operation in both design and form.

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

- The design of the building demonstrates influence by the International style, which was in vogue between 1940 and 1960 and was popular in the Commonwealth Public Works Department at the time of its construction. It is one of the few buildings in the City of Glen Eira in the Post-War International style and at a substantially large scale. (Local)

Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

- Demonstrates the development of technological design and innovation in the nascent television industry of the 1950s and the influence of overseas experts on Australian technicians, designers and engineers. (National)
- Demonstrates changing technology in television production and broadcasting from film to video to digital broadcasting, between 1956 until 2017. (National)

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).

- Special association with generations of Australians who were influenced by ABC Television programmes and in particular the series *Bellbird*, *Countdown*, and *Sea Change*, current affairs and news programmes and the enormous cultural influence these programmes have had on Australian society. (State)
- Special association with staff of the ABC who worked in the building. (Local)

Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

- Special association with the development of a nascent entertainment and broadcasting industry, which went on to develop Australian talent in music, film, video, journalism, acting, direction, design and production and has directly contributed to the development and dissemination of a distinctive Australian culture. (National and State)

Primary source

Heritage Citation – Former ABC TV Studios, Elsternwick, 4 November/July 2019

Heritage Assessment – ABC TV Studios, 8 Gordon Street, Ripponlea for Glen Eira City Council June, 2018