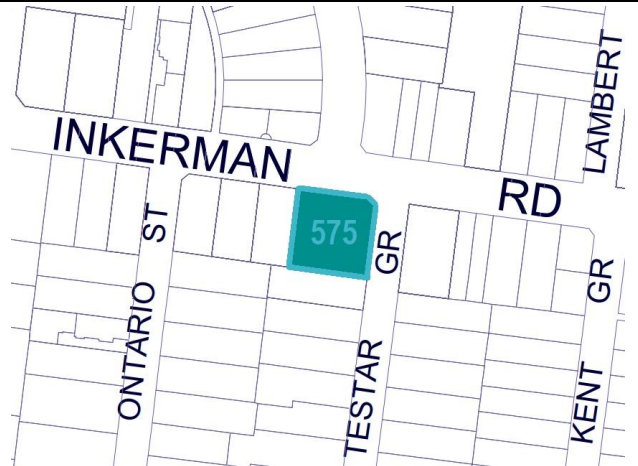


<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	FLATS	<b>Citation No</b>	HG06
<b>Other name/s</b>	<i>Linden Flats</i>	<b>Melway ref</b>	58 J11
<b>Address</b>	575 Inkerman Road CAULFIELD	<b>Date/s</b>	1937
<b>Designer/s</b>	T W Morris?	<b>Builder/s</b>	T W Morris



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, June 2019



Location map and extent of HO

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential building (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Flats	<b>Intactness</b>	Excellent

<b>Thematic context</b>	6.7 Making homes for Victorians
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<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as an individual heritage place		
<b>Controls</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> External Paint	<input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration	<input type="checkbox"/> Trees

## Statement of Significance

### *What is significant?*

*Linden* at 575 Inkerman Road, Caulfield North, is a double-storey rendered brick block of flats in a Streamlined Moderne style with parapeted roof, curved corners and a horizontal emphasis that is relieved by the contrasting vertical elements of entry bays to each street façade. Built in 1937 for a prominent radio manufacturer, the flats were erected by prolific local builder (and later Mayor of Caulfield), T W Morris, who may have also designed them.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire building, and the matching brick dwarf wall and gateposts and letterboxes that extend along both street boundaries.

### *How is it significant?*

The flats satisfy the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Glen Eira planning scheme:

- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

*Why is it significant?*

The *Linden* flats are aesthetically significant as an excellent and unusually large-scale example of a block of flats in the Streamlined Moderne style. An ambitious scheme to provide a complex of ten flats on a double-width corner block (forming part of a recent subdivision of some of the last remaining vacant land along Inkerman Road), it provided its as-yet unidentified designer with the rare opportunity to create a landmark building with unparalleled streetscape presence.

Characteristic of the Streamline Moderne style, its two stark and atypically elongated street facades are expressed as a continuous horizontal sweep with parapeted roofline, curving corners and incised shadowlines, with a contrasting vertical focus introduced by the three vertical entrance bays, distinguished by their stepped parapets, recessive vertical banding and curvilinear metal balustrades. Retaining its original dwarf wall along both street boundaries, this confidently conceived and atypically grand block of inter-war flats remains as a striking feature along this major thoroughfare. (*Criterion E*)

## History

*Note: Identifying details of property owners and their families have been deleted as per Council direction*

The *Linden* flats at 575 Inkerman Road, Caulfield North, were erected in 1937 as an investment property for a leading radio manufacturer who lived in nearby Armadale. The owner was the son of major city retailer whose chain of variety stores expanded considerably during the 1920s. The future owner of the *Linden* flats initially worked as an indentor but became involved in the radio business in the mid-1920s. By the late 1930s, he was involved in a number of radio manufacturing firms, including one that was well-known for its stylish range of console and table-top radio units in Bakelite or veneered timber, echoing the fashionable Art Deco and Moderne styles of the day.

It was around that time that the radio manufacturer acquired land at the corner of Inkerman Road and Testar Grove that formed part of a new estate created from the grounds of *Rosnay*, a Victorian-era mansion at the corner of Inkerman Road and Testar Grove, which was owned for many years by a prominent solicitor. In 1936, the vast property was carved up to create the *Eaves Estate*, with fourteen residential allotments that fronted Inkerman Road, Testar Grove and Ontario Grove.

Newspaper advertisements for the forthcoming auction emphasised that “this locality is the pick of this charming district, close to Grimwade House, Christian Brothers’ College and schools of all denominations, and surrounded by beautiful homes in all directions” (*Argus* 23/05/1936:2).

On 22 July 1937, the radio manufacturer acquired the title to Lots 8 and 9 of the *Eaves Estate*, which combined to form a generous square-shaped corner site with 100-foot (30 metres) frontages to both streets. A month earlier, on 23 June, a building permit was issued for a “ten flat building and garages, Inkerman Road”, citing also the name and home address of the new purchaser. No architect was named, but the builder was listed as T W Morris of 25 Neerim Road, Caulfield. This was Thomas Wilson Morris (1889-1980), a Sydneysider who had moved to Melbourne by the early 1930s, initially residing in Bentleigh before relocating to Neerim Road circa 1936. Evidence suggests that, during this early period, Morris worked as a designer/builder; this is hinted at by such projects as a group of “ultra-modern brick villas by T W Morris” in Brighton East, which were advertised for sale in 1938 (*Herald*, 03/09/1938:14). Active in his locality in both a professional and personal capacity, Morris served as a ward councillor from 1938 and as Mayor of the City of Caulfield in 1939-41, including a stint as ARP Warden. His construction business, latterly styled as T W Morris & Sons Pty Ltd and based in Murrumbeena, thrived well into the post-WW2 era.

A sheet of working drawings held by the City of Glen Eira, undated and bearing the title block of “T W Morris, master builder”, depicts the *Linden* flats with their current L-shaped footprint, massing and internal planning, but with the street elevations in a Tudor Revival mode. At some point, this was revised to a more progressive Moderne idiom.

Construction was completed by November 1937, when a newspaper advertisement noted the availability of “magnificent new flats, four and five spacious rooms, latest kitchens and bathrooms, gas stove, hot water service, double connect doors, charming outlook” (*Argus* 27/11/1937:22). The building first appeared in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* in 1938, belatedly listed as “flats being built” on the south side of Inkerman Road, between Ontario and Testar Groves. The following year, they were first definitively designated as No 575, and identified as the *Linden* flats.

Around the same time, the flats attracted attention from the national press, when a photograph appeared in the Sydney-based journal, *Building*. Although its address was erroneously cited as Balaclava Road, Caulfield, and neither the designer nor the builder was credited, the caption otherwise praised this “new and striking block of modern flats” for its progressive style, observing that “a horizontal motif is the predominating note of the design, which, however, is punctuated by the verticality of the entrance to the various flats. Graceful ironwork tends to provide contrast with the heaviness of the unadorned brick walls and parapets” (*Building* 25/07/1938:40).

## Description

*Linden*, at 575 Inkerman Street, Caulfield North, is a large two-storey block of brick flats with a low hipped roof concealed by parapets. Occupying a large corner site, the building presents elongated elevations to both street frontages. Conceived in a Streamlined Moderne style, these elevations are rendered with clinker brick plinths and curved corners. The innate horizontality is heightened by slightly recessed bays at each level, forming continuous shadowlines that follow the window sills and lintels. The windows themselves, wide and rectangular, contain metal-framed sashes (which, at the corner, are faceted to follow the curve). The horizontal emphasis of the street facades is relieved by the vertical elements in the form of tall chimney breasts and three prominent off-centre entry bays (two facing Inkerman Road and one on Testar Grove). These bays, which rise well above the parapet line, are delineated by tall piers with stepping edges that curved around at the top. At ground level, a recessed doorway marks the common entrance to the open stairwell, which has a taller vertical window at the upper level opening onto a curved balconette with a mild steel balustrade incorporating volute motifs. On the Inkerman Road side, the entry bay to the right (west) end is slightly wider, incorporating an additional pair of openings with matching metal balustrades.

Along both street frontages, there is a rendered brick dwarf wall that incorporates gateways marked by squat clinker brick piers with stepped caps and curving spur walls.

## Comparisons

As a residential building in the Streamlined Moderne mode, the *Linden* flats are quite distinct compared to the few counterparts currently on the heritage overlay schedule, which include similarly-scaled two-storey houses or duplexes at 4 Linlithgow Avenue, Caulfield (1938) [HO41], 4-6 Gladstone Parade, Elsternwick (1939) [HO22], and 705 North Road, Carnegie (1943) [HO143]. Of these, the Gladstone Parade building is perhaps most comparable, with its stronger horizontal emphasis punctuated by contrasting stepped vertical elements. In this regard, the *Linden* flats are also comparable to the slightly later *Olgita* flats at 440 Dandenong Road, Caulfield North (Leslie J W Reed, 1940), which makes similar use of curving corners (albeit of a more pronounced bulbous form) with horizontal mouldings, and the communal entry marked by a vertical bay that rises up above the parapet line to form a prominent tower-like feature with a stepped profile. Both buildings also use faceted steel-framed sashes (rather than continuous bent glass) where window bays curve around the corner, and are enlivened by ornamental wrought ironwork in typical symmetrical curvilinear patterns. The eye-catching entry bays of the *Linden* flats, with their irregular profiles and vertical stepped banding represents a more intricate version of a motif that recurs in contemporaneous Moderne buildings, demonstrated locally by a startling early example at 83 Lumeah Road, Caulfield North (architect unknown, 1933).

Aside from its style, *Linden* is notable for its scale. Providing a total of ten flats, it was one of the more ambitious apartment developments to be undertaken in the City of Caulfield in the 1930s, when blocks of flats generally comprised only four or six units. Although *Linden* is dwarfed by the even more enormous 25-unit *Craigellachie* flats at 273 Orrong Road, St Kilda East (W H Merritt, 1934-37), it was still uncommonly large for its time. Amongst its local comparators in this regard are the seven-unit *Meadows* flats at 10-12 Melby Avenue, St Kilda East (1940), an eight-unit block at 14 King Street, Elsternwick (1940) and the ten-unit *Toolangi Court* at 500-506 Glenhuntly Road, Elsternwick (1936), of identical size but laid out on a U-shaped courtyard plan rather than the L-shaped plan seen at *Linden*.

### References

Certificate of Title, Volume 6129, Folio 700, created 22 July 1937.

T W Morris, "Proposed block of flats to be erected corner Inkerman Road and Testar Grove, Caulfield", working drawings, undated [c1937]. City of Caulfield Permit No 2,238.

"Modern Victorians Flats, Balaclava Road, Caulfield", *Building*, 25 July 1938, p 40.

### Identified by

City of Glen Eira



Early published photograph of the Linden Flats, 575 Inkerman Road, Caulfield North  
Source: *Building*, 25 July 1938, p 40.