Marjilone, 46–56 ManninghamStreet, Parkville Statement of Significance (GML Heritage, September 2025)

Heritage Place:	Marjilone 46-56 Manningham Street, Parkville	**PS ref no:**	HO1436





What is significant?

Marjilone at 46–56 Manningham Street, Parkville, built in 1941–43, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include the building's:

- original external form, fabric and detailing; and
- high level of integrity to the original design; and
- original, asymmetrical H-shaped plan with integrated central courtyard; and
- pattern and size of original fenestration; and
- treatment of the façades with a combination of tan and clinker brick and decorative brick courses; and
- original Moderne elements and detailing, including wide horizontal windows with timber mullions, curved balconies to the interior courtyard, tubular metal balustrades and handrails, and decorative brickwork; and
- exterior fence and landscaping.

More recent alterations and additions, including the replacement of some window panes and the introduction of later pipes and services, are not significant.

How is it significant?

Marjilone at 46–56 Manningham Street, Parkville, is of local historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why is it significant?

Marjilone is historically significant as a highly externally intact example of an early 1940s block of flats with Moderne detailing. It was designed by Ray Johnson, a prolific Melbourne architect who was responsible for the design of numerous blocks of flats in suburban Melbourne from the 1920s, and who would later become a councillor and mayor of St Kilda. The building is significant as a later example of his designs for flats. It demonstrates the balance between the growing popularity of high-density inner-city accommodation, and the importance placed on spacious modern living. It is historically representative of flat development during World War II, when land in inner-city suburbs was at a premium and flats were developed on land subdivided from Victorian-era estates, or replacing earlier houses. Marjilone is a key extant example of wartime flat design in Melbourne, showcasing the use of design solutions to respond to available land, and to offset the lack of materials and wartime austerity. (Criterion A)

The design and plan of Marjilone have representative significance, demonstrating the enduring design principles of the interwar and wartime period and the continued popularity of the Moderne style. The building forms part of a wider tradition of flats in the inner city, providing convenient, modern accommodation to attract a professional, middle-class audience to inner-city living, while maximising the use of space. It is a notable example of its typology as an asymmetrically shaped block of flats with an integrated central courtyard. The building displays an asymmetrical H-shape that appears to be highly uncommon in the Melbourne area, yet is clearly derived from the popular U-shaped plan of flats that emerged in the 1930s, and is seen at earlier interwar flats along Royal Parade in Parkville. These plans were designed to maximise the use of narrow or irregular lots, offering privacy and access to natural light and pleasant views, while minimising outside noise. This plan type is representative of the focus placed upon health and wellbeing that emerged in the 1930s, and the growing awareness of the benefits of sunshine and open green spaces. However, the design of Marjilone is somewhat unusual, with this courtyard situated to the rear of the property and so facing away from the street, whereas the convention was to have the courtyard facing towards the public domain. This design is representative of the evolution of the form, with greater emphasis placed upon the privacy of the residents towards the 1940s. Constructed in 1941–43, it serves as ahighly intact example of later interwar and wartime interpretations of the Moderne style. Its use of pale brick and restrained detailing is representative both of the lack of materials and the effects of wartime austerity. It showcases typical elements of the style and is representative of the widespreadand enduring popularity of the typology towards the end of its period. (Criterion D)

Marjilone has aesthetic significance as an excellent example of an early wartime interpretation of the Moderne style. The 1941–43 building is highly externally intact to its original design, retaining its original form and much of its original fabric. Although its design is restrained, typical of the early 1940s, its asymmetrical plan and projecting bays create a visually dynamic form. Its plan responds to both the shape of its lot and its position on the bend of the road, incorporating angular, projecting bays that create a faceted character to the primary, western elevation. The building is designed to be viewed from different angles, with visual interest created along the projecting bays through brick courses and bold window designs. Although new landscape plantings have been introduced, their design enhances the presentation of the property and it makes a positive contribution to the surrounding streetscape. Marjilone illustrates enduring Moderne motifs across the façades visible in the public domain and within the private courtyard, with a strong emphasis on the interplay of horizontality and verticality. This is evident in the columns of glazing and rectangular bays that are juxtaposed against the line of the brick courses and windows. Its material palette is limited, yet the design is highly effective, with the incorporation of typical Moderne details, such as the timber

mullions to the windows, and the curved balconies and tubular metal balustrades, enhancing its presentation. The use of pale brick is characteristic of later Moderne buildings and compares well with similar properties throughout the City of Melbourne and surrounding municipalities, demonstrating a consistency and finesse of detail. It evinces the evolution of the Moderne style throughout the interwar period and is an excellent interpretation of wartime design. It is a strong example, and arguably one of the best representations, of Harry 'Ray' Johnson's later work in the Moderne style, which is uncommon in the Parkville area. (Criterion E)

Primary source

Parkville Heritage Review (GML Heritage, October 2023)