

SUMMARY OF AREA FINDINGS

SPECIAL CHARACTER AREAS: BUSINESS

Area details

Name	HELENSVILLE CENTRAL
Suburb(s)	Helensville
NPS-UD priority	Other locations
Summary conclusion	The area (or parts thereof) continues to exhibit the special character values identified in the Auckland Unitary Plan Operative in Part (AUP (OIP)). The area has potential to be of significance as a historic heritage area.
Development pattern(s) and/or historical theme(s)	Early rural settlement. Traditional main street. Railway development.
Key period(s) of significance	Victorian, Edwardian and Interwar periods (1870-1939) (Secondary phase ¹ : WWII-Post war period (1940-1959))
AUP (OIP) Historic heritage places	Helensville Post Office (ID 00473); Bank of New Zealand (ID 00475); Malolo House (ID 00458); Methodist Church (former) (ID 00469); Church of Christ/Forester's Hall (former) (ID 00468); Union Bank of Australia/Australia and New Zealand Bank (ID 00452); Helensville Railway Station (ID 00477); Grand Hotel (ID 00472); Regent Theatre (ID 00476); Cameron Shops (ID 00451); Kaipara Medical Centre ² (ID 00471)
AUP (OIP) Zone(s)	Business – Town Centre Zone (principal) Business – Light Industry Zone (northern section) Open Space - Informal Recreation Zone (central)
Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga listings	None

¹ A secondary phase of development has been added to align with the key periods of significance identified in the Character Statement for Helensville Central in Schedule 15 of the AUP (OIP) (15.1.6.7. Special Character Areas Overlay – Business: Helensville Central). In Helensville Central, buildings from this later period have the potential to *support* the character of the area due to their historical associations with the centre's commercial progress and provision of community services. However, to be assigned 'character supporting', the buildings also need to demonstrate the physical and visual qualities that characterise the area, with greater emphasis placed on integrity, architectural quality and building type/use.

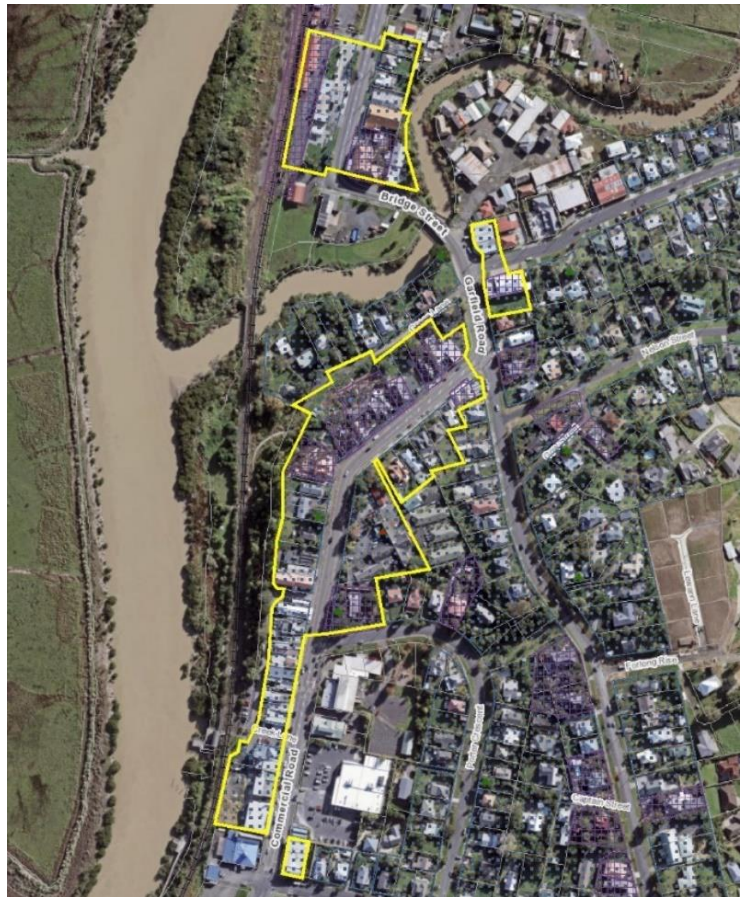
² This building is a former residential building that is now owned by the Kaipara Medical Centre and used as an administrative block. The name on the AUP (OIP) Schedule 14, being 'Kaipara Medical Centre' is being flagged for correction.

Spatial extent and context

The map shows the AUP (OIP) spatial extent of the Helensville Central Special Character Areas Overlay: Business (SCA).

The area is focused along Commercial Road, between Rata Street to Garfield Road, and continues across Bridge Street to Railway Street. It has been divided into three main sub-areas. The first area is the northern sub-area which is separated from the town centre by the Awaroa Stream and incorporates the earliest development in Helensville. The second is the central sub-area which includes the shops in Garfield Street and the northern section of Commercial Road. The southern sub-area includes the lower part of the town centre generally developed in the first quarter of the 20th century.

The town runs adjacent to the Kaipara River to the west and is surrounded by residential streets to the east and south, which are covered by the Special Character Areas Overlay: Residential Helensville.



Key survey data

Survey date(s)				December and January 2022		
Level of survey	Field survey			N/A		
	Desk top survey			100%		
Total number of records				64		
Total number of buildings				54		
Breakdown	Street-facing buildings			53		
	Contributing ³ buildings	AUP (OIP)	36 ⁴	Character defining	22	
				Character supporting	14	
		Survey results	35	Character defining	18	
				Character supporting	17	
Number of variations between AUP (OIP) and survey results				15 ⁵		
Number of historic heritage flags ⁶				2 places (marked  on maps)		
Historic heritage area flag ⁷				Yes		

³ Identified as 'character defining' or 'character supporting' buildings.

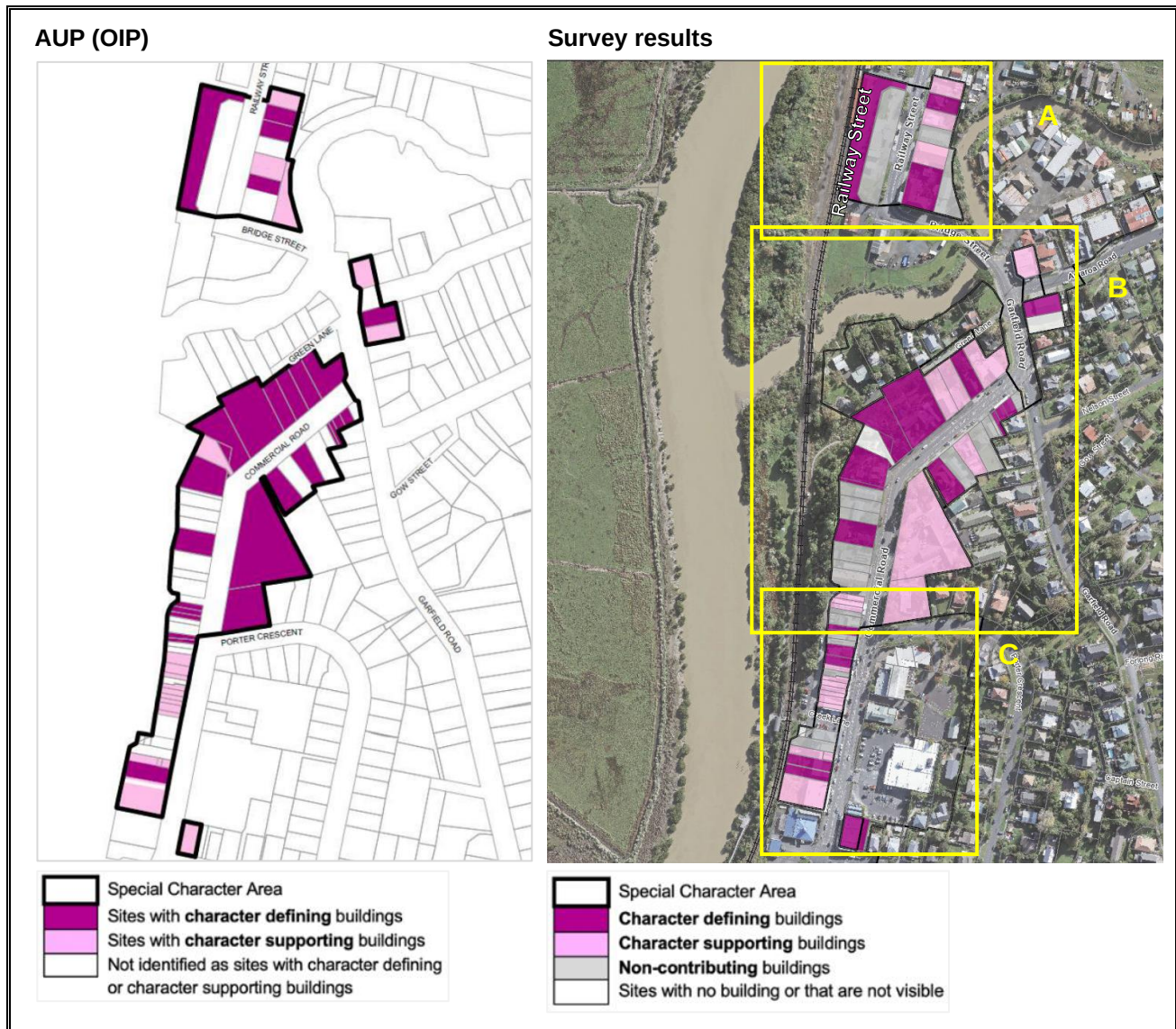
⁴ There are 39 contributing sites in the AUP (OIP), but only 38 contributing buildings. The additional site consists of a reserve.

⁵ This total number does not include variations between sites with no character defining or character supporting buildings in the AUP (OIP) and buildings identified as non-contributing or no building-not visible in the survey results, as these continue to be regarded as sites/buildings that do not contribute to the character of the area.

⁶ Buildings identified as being of potential historic heritage significance.

⁷ Does the area or part of the area have potential to be a historic heritage area?

Comparisons: mapping 'contribution'



In comparing the AUP (OIP) with the survey results, 15 variations have been identified. Of these, four buildings (or sites) are found to have an increased level of contribution⁸ while eleven have a reduced level of contribution⁹. The variations are largely attributed to the following issues: differences in assessment, changes to the building or site, and/or the way in which sites/buildings have been recorded. Further details are provided in the observations and outcomes section below.

Despite the number of variations identified between the AUP (OIP) and survey results, the overall number of 'contributing' buildings remains largely unchanged.

It should be noted that the AUP (OIP) identifies each site that is occupied by a character defining or character supporting building. In contrast, the survey results record (where visible) each building. This allows for the contribution of each building to be accurately recorded, including where two or more buildings with varying levels of contribution share a single site. In some cases, one building may occupy more than one site. Sites with no buildings and sites or buildings that are not visible have also been identified.

⁸ From 'not identified' or 'character supporting' to 'character supporting' or 'character defining'.

⁹ From 'character defining' to 'character supporting' or 'non-contributing' or 'no building-not visible' OR from 'character supporting' to 'non-contributing' or 'no building-not visible'.

It should also be noted that there are discrepancies between the AUP (OIP) Helensville Central SCA Character Statement¹⁰ and the identification of places in the associated Special Character Area Map¹¹. This relates to the Grand Hotel at 1 Railway Street, which is listed in the character statement as one of the character defining buildings that make an important contribution to the area. However, the associated map only identifies a small part of the site as character defining, which does not include the building. The survey has identified the building as character defining.

There is also an inconsistency in relation to the periods of significance. The Character Statement identifies the key periods of development as being late 19th century to 1930s, yet the associated map identifies several buildings that date from the WWII – Post War (1940-1959) period as character defining or character supporting.

General observations and variations in outcomes

Sub-area A: Northern sub-area



Observations

- Contributing (character defining or character supporting) buildings dominate this sub-area, which includes the 1881 railway station and some early residential mixed with light industrial and commercial buildings.
- A small number of non-contributing buildings post-date the area's period of significance.
- There are few differences between the survey results and the AUP (OIP) in this sub-area, with only one building assessed as no longer contributing.

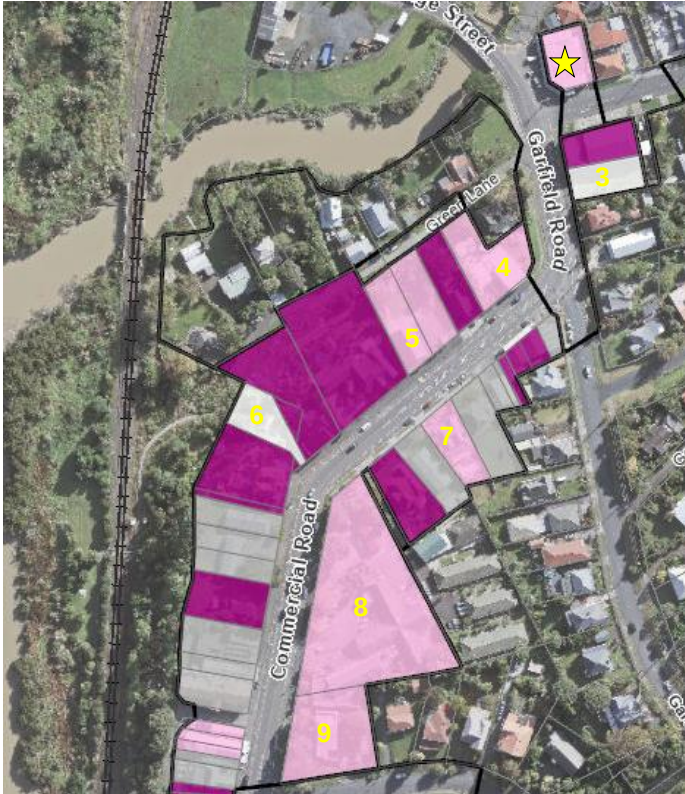
Variations

- | | | |
|---|------------------|--|
| 1 | 9 Railway Street | ‘Character defining’ to ‘Character supporting’
(Modified residential building, makes a no greater than moderate contribution) |
| 2 | 1 Bridge Road | ‘Character supporting’ to ‘Non-contributing’
(Early Oddfellow Hall with a later (c1950s) addition at the front. Heavily modified compromising its value). |

¹⁰ AUP (OIP) 15.1.6.7. Special Character Areas Overlay – Business: Helensville Central

¹¹ AUP (OIP) 15.1.6.7.1. Extent of area

Sub-area B: Central sub-area



Observations

- Contributing buildings feature throughout this sub-area and are a mix of both character defining and character supporting buildings.
- The majority of non-contributing buildings are scattered along the eastern side of Commercial Road.
- There are some differences between the survey results and the AUP (OIP) in this sub-area. They are mainly a result of a lower level of contribution being attributed to a few buildings on both sides of Commercial Road.
- The Coronation Buildings at 4-12 Garfield Road have an historic heritage flag.

Variations

3	16 Garfield Road	'Character supporting' to 'N/A – Not visible' (Vacant lot. Former building on site demolished)
4	Union Bank of Australia/ Australia and New Zealand Bank 130 Commercial Road	'Character defining' to 'Character supporting' (Modified, making a no greater than moderate contribution)
5	Methodist Church (former) 118 Commercial Road	'Character defining' to 'Character supporting' (Modified, making a no greater than moderate contribution)
6	106 Commercial Road	'Character supporting' to 'N/A – Not visible' (Council reserve)
7	73 Commercial Road	'Character defining' to 'Character supporting' (Modified residential building making a no greater than moderate contribution)
8	Kaipara Medical Centre 53 Commercial Road	'Character defining' to 'Character supporting' (Originally the Helensville Obstetric Hospital (from secondary phase of development built in 1954), this is now a hospital complex of which the original hospital building still dominates the site, despite later additions. The hospital is still used as a birthing centre.)
9	Kaipara Medical Centre (part of) 51 Commercial Road	'Character defining' to 'Character supporting' (A former residential building from secondary phase of development (c1945-46), which makes a no greater than moderate contribution)

Sub-area C: Southern Sub-area**Observations**

- Contributing buildings feature throughout this sub-area with character supporting buildings dominating.
- A small number of non-contributing buildings are located in this sub-area, which post-date the area's period of significance.
- The Progressive Buildings at 35 Commercial Road have an historic heritage flag.
- The SCA's boundary cuts through the rear portion of the Progressive Buildings at 35 Commercial Road (circled yellow).

Variations

10	86 Commercial Road	'Character defining' to 'Character supporting' (Early 20 th century billiard hall with later façade. No greater than moderate contribution.)
11	84 Commercial Road	'Character defining' to 'Character supporting' (Modified former garage from secondary phase of development (dating from the 1950s). No greater than moderate contribution)
12	68 Commercial Road	'Character supporting' to 'Character defining' (Interwar building with greater than moderate contribution)
13	Thos Cohen 64 Commercial Road	'Character supporting' to 'Character defining' (Interwar building with greater than moderate contribution)
14	34 Commercial Road	'Character supporting' to 'Character defining' (Interwar building with greater than moderate contribution)
15	Progressive Buildings 35 Commercial Road	'Character supporting' to 'Character defining' (Interwar building with greater than moderate contribution)

Review of special character values

Extent of area	The AUP (OIP) extent of the Helensville Central SCA captures buildings within the area of the underlying Business – Town Centre zone that most strongly convey the area's special character values.	
Special character values present	Historical: The Helensville Central SCA is of significance as a good example of a late 19th/early 20th century rural town centre. With the Kaipara River being a source of transport for trading, the town was first established in the 1860s, northwest of the Awaroa Stream, with the introduction of a sawmill. A regular boat service from 1870 from Riverhead (connected to Helensville by a horse bus) to Auckland, was followed by the opening of the Riverhead-Helensville railway line in 1875. In 1881 an Auckland direct railway line to Helensville marked a significant period of development and expansion in the town. The opening of the rail station on Railway Road that same year shifted the centre of the settlement from north of the Awaroa Stream to its current location along Commercial Road. Late 19th century, farming, fisheries, timber, flour, soap and canning industries followed by the establishment of the dairy industry in the early 20th century, facilitated Helensville's development with residential lots being subdivided to the east of Commercial Road. The area's collection of building types clearly demonstrates the connection between the development of this rural industrial town and its residential neighbourhood. Physical and visual qualities: The Helensville SCA is of significance for its collection of buildings that reflect the types and architectural styles associated with its progressive development as a rural town centre. The distinctive and eclectic mix of building types, including commercial, civic, religious, and residential, demonstrates the period of considerable expansion and growth that occurred in the late 19th century through to the 1920s and 1930s and again in the 1940s and 1950s. The town centre runs adjacent to the Kaipara River to the west and the railway line that follows the river. The Awaroa Stream runs from the Kaipara River to the east, dividing the early northern development from the rest of the town centre.	
Does the area (or parts of the area) still reflect the physical and visual characteristics identified in the AUP (OIP)?	Built form	Yes. The key periods of development are evident in the number of buildings that date from the early 1880s to 1930s. However, there are also a number of properties in the SCA that date from the 1940-50s that have been identified in the AUP (OIP) as sites with character defining or character supporting buildings. As a result, a secondary phase of development (WWII – Post War 1940-1959) has been identified for Helensville Central. The scale of development is generally single storey, with the exception of a few more prominent two storey buildings such as the former Post Office, the Regent Theatre and the Grand Hotel. In the northern sub-area, buildings are freestanding on individual sites and vary in form and relationship to the street. These include early residential, industrial, and commercial (the Grand Hotel). The railway station is in this section and is set well back from the street. The central sub-area is an eclectic mix of civic, religious, commercial, institutional and residential properties. Houses are set back from the street, while commercial, churches and civic buildings are built to the street edge. Traditional retail blocks are characterised by verandahs and parapets. The larger two storey buildings in this mix have a distinctive presence on larger sites setting them apart from other buildings in this sector. The southern sub-area comprises the main retail section of the SCA with fine grained single-storey shops built to the street edge on the western side of Commercial Road. Similar in scale, the shops are generally characterised by parapets and verandahs.

	Architectural values	Yes. The majority of street facing buildings in the Helensville Central SCA demonstrate the architectural styles associated with the area's periods of development. Contributing commercial buildings are of masonry construction, with a plaster rendered, painted and exposed brick finish. Examples of more modest timber, fibre cement and corrugated steel-clad shops are also present. Classical Victorian and early to mid-20th century stripped classical shops are mixed with modest early traditional vernacular buildings with modest parapets and verandahs. There is a diverse mix of styles for the more substantial buildings in the Helensville Central SCA including: the Edwardian Baroque former Helensville Post Office; the Stripped Classical former Bank of New Zealand; the Georgian Revival Grand Hotel; and the Moderne-styled Regent Theatre. Other architectural examples that add to the eclectic nature of the area are the Victorian Vogel-designed Railway Station and two simple Gothic Revival churches. An institutional style hospital building is included in the town centre. Residential buildings in the SCA are predominantly of timber construction with architectural styles including Victorian, Edwardian and transitional timber villas along with bungalows. Railway cottages from the late Victorian and early 20th centuries, important for their association with the development of rail transport, are also evident in the SCA. One masonry Moderne styled residence is included in the eclectic architectural mix.
	Urban structure	Yes. The varied pattern of building type, lot size, street frontages and scale reflects the town's progressive development as the centre of a rural community. The southern sub-area of Helensville Central demonstrates a fine-grained urban character with a sense of enclosure provided by a traditional main street configuration of continuous building frontages and verandahs over the footpath. The central sub-area displays the greatest diversity of form with no one dominating style. A combination of grand civic and commercial buildings on larger lots, early churches and smaller traditional shopping blocks, provide prominent street edge frontage. They are complemented by substantial residences that are set back with front gardens and mature trees. The hospital, although set back from the street, being on a slight rise and large site, has a dominant presence in the SCA. The smaller northern sub-area combines the dominating presence of the Grand Hotel with small workers cottages set close to the street and an early light industrial building. The railway station, set well back from the street, is partially concealed by other structures facing Railway Street. Bluestone kerbs, mature trees (some being notable)¹², traditional residential fencing, and remnant basalt walls all contribute to the area's special character.

¹² A number of trees in the SCA are listed on the AUP (OIP) Schedule 10 - Notable Tree Schedule.

Overall findings

As shown in the above maps and review of character values the Helensville Central SCA continues to demonstrate the historical values and physical and visual qualities identified in the AUP (OIP).

The area is defined by a mixed group of contributing buildings collectively illustrating Helensville's development as a rural town centre servicing the surrounding farming community. Whilst these values are evident throughout the area, they are especially prevalent in the northern and central sub-areas, which feature a number of contributing buildings that strongly reflect the area's early and ongoing commercial development. However, the southern sub-area still presents a cohesive traditional retail sector that clearly supports the character values of the area.

Buildings that do not actively contribute to the special character values are spread throughout the SCA.

As one of Auckland's early rural town centres, evident in its diverse collection of commercial buildings and landmark structures from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Helensville Central SCA also has potential to be of significance as a historic heritage area.

Representative photographs (desk-top survey results)**'Character defining' buildings**

Figure 1: Grand Hotel, 1 Railway Street (Google Street View, July 2020)



Figure 2: Regent Theatre, 14 Garfield Road (Google Street View, July 2020)



Figure 3: Cameron Shops, 81 Commercial Road (Google Street View, July 2020)



Figure 4: Helensville Post Office, 102 Commercial Road (Google Street View, July 2020)

'Character supporting' buildings



Figure 5: Screenshot Buildings, 34 Commercial Road (Google Street View, July 2020)



Figure 6: 84 Commercial Road (Google Street View, July 2020)



Figure 7: Methodist Church (former), 118 Commercial Road (Google Street View, July 2020)



Figure 8: Union Bank of Australia/Australia and New Zealand Bank, 130 Commercial Road (Google Street View, July 2020)

'Non-contributing' buildings



Figure 9: 92 Commercial Road (Google Street View, July 2020)



Figure 10: 88 Commercial Road (Google Street View, July 2020)



Figure 11: 4-16 Railway Street (Google Street View, July 2020)



Figure 12: 87 Commercial Road (Google Street View, July 2020)