

CITY OF BOROONDARA

AMENDMENT C341boro

**[former] Wood House,
12-14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North**

STATEMENT OF EXPERT EVIDENCE

Prepared for
The City of Boroondara
7 June 2021



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A: INTRODUCTION

A1 BACKGROUND & BRIEF

This Statement of Expert Evidence (hereafter referred to as “this statement”) was commissioned by the City of Boroondara (hereafter abbreviated as “the Council”), for the Independent Panel appointed to consider submissions received in response to the exhibition of *City of Boroondara Planning Scheme Amendment C341* (hereafter referred to as C341boro).

This amendment proposes to apply a heritage overlay to the former Wood House at 12-14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North, designed in 1948-49 by architect Robin Boyd (who was also responsible for two subsequent phases of extension in 1959 and 1971). The house had been identified, researched and fully assessed as a potential heritage place in the *City of Boroondara Balwyn & Balwyn North Heritage Study* (2012-13), but the study was not adopted by Council due to ratepayer opposition.

I have been briefed to outline my methodology for identifying and assessing this place and to provide responses to specific issues raised by submitters who do not support the inclusion of this property in C341boro.

A2 STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

My name is Simon Reeves and I am the Director and Principal of Built Heritage Pty Ltd, a firm of architectural historians and heritage consultants based in Emerald, Victoria. I am an architecture graduate, holding the degrees of *Bachelor of Planning & Design* and *Bachelor of Architecture (Hons)* from the University of Melbourne, conferred respectively in 1994 and 1998.

Since 1998 I have worked full-time as an architectural historian and heritage consultant, initially with Allom Lovell & Associates (1998-2002) and then with Heritage Alliance (2002-2009). In January 2009, I established my own practice, Built Heritage Pty Ltd, to specialise in twentieth century heritage and, particularly, the heritage of the post-WW2 era.

Since forming my own practice in 2009, I have been commissioned to undertake several large-scale heritage projects for municipal councils, notably the *Shire of Bass Coast Heritage Study (Stage 2): Post-Panel Implementation* (2009), the *City of Boroondara Thematic Environmental History* (2011), the *Balwyn & Balwyn North Heritage Study* (2012-13), the *City of Whitehorse Post-1945 Heritage Study* (2013-14), Stage Two of the *Frankston City Post-War Heritage Study* (2014-15), the *City of Maroondah Heritage Review* (2017-18) and the *City of Glen Eira Post-War & Hidden Gems Review* (2019-2020).

I have completed individually commissioned heritage assessments (or other small-scale heritage projects) for the Cities of Ballarat, Bayside, Boroondara, Brimbank, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Port Phillip and Whittlesea, as well as the Shire of Mornington Peninsula. My experience in dealing with heritage issues in local government also encapsulates stints as regular heritage advisor to the Rural City of Swan Hill (2002-2009), Shire of Gannawarra (2002-2009), City of Brimbank (2003-2004) and Shire of Bass Coast (2002-2012). At various times, I have also provided casual or locum heritage advice to the Cities of Maribyrnong, Moreland and Maroondah (in the last case, as recently as 2018-2020).

I have appeared as an expert witness in heritage matters on many occasions, including at VCAT hearings, registration hearings before the Heritage Council, and independent panel hearings for planning scheme amendments for the Cities of Bayside, Boroondara, Glen Eira, Melbourne, Port Phillip, Whitehorse, Wyndham and the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

In addition to this involvement with local councils, I have also been commissioned to undertake heritage projects by Heritage Victoria, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), the Art Deco & Modernism Society, Beaumaris Modern, and for property owners.

I am currently a member of ICOMOS International, and have, at various other times, been a member of DoCoMoMo Australia, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), the Society of Architectural Historians of Australia & New Zealand (SAHANZ), the Art Deco & Modernism Society of Victoria, the Walter Burley Griffin Society, the Australian Garden History Society and the Robin Boyd Foundation.

A full *Curriculum Vitae* is included as in Appendix C of this statement.

A3 STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

This Statement, and the component tasks of historical research, fieldwork and analysis that underpins it, represents the work of Simon Reeves. There have been no other significant contributors to this statement. With the exception of those whose work or opinion has been quoted and referenced in the text to support my own viewpoint, no other persons have carried out any tests, experiments or investigations upon which I have relied.

A4 DECLARATION

I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.



7 June 2021

B: METHODOLOGY

B1 Balwyn & Balwyn North Heritage Study (2012-13)

B1.1 Project overview

In August 2012, the office of Built Heritage Pty Ltd (hereafter referred to as “the consultant”) was engaged by the Council to undertake the *City of Balwyn & Balwyn North Heritage Study*. This was conceived to as a ‘gap study’ to review those two suburbs (incorporating the smaller areas known as Deepdene and Greythorn), which were considered to be under-represented on the heritage overlay schedule. Completion of such a study had been identified as a high priority under the Council’s 2012 Heritage Action Plan.

The heritage study was to include the following components:

- Preparation of a chronological overview of development of the study area;
- A windscreen survey (street-by-street) of the entire study area;
- Review and re-assessment of 45 places in the study area that had previously been identified and assessed in Graeme Butler’s *Camberwell Conservation Study* (1991) but which had not yet been added to the heritage overlay schedule;
- Identification of new places and areas of potential significance via desktop research and consultation with stakeholders including the Balwyn Historical Society, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), the Art Deco Society and the Robin Boyd Foundation;
- Preparation of a master-list of places and areas of potential heritage significance, with each place or area given a preliminary score out of twenty that was calculated from sub-scores for physical integrity, rarity, vulnerability and potential significance at face value;
- Preparation of two-page appraisals (referred to as ‘outline citations’) for the top fifty places and areas, of which approximately half would be selected for more detailed assessment
- Preparation of full citations for a combined total of 25 places/precincts

In November 2012, the consultant submitted a draft report with ‘outline citations’ for seven places identified in the *Camberwell Conservation Study* and a further 43 places that were newly identified by the consultant and had scored the highest (generally, 17 or more out of 20) in the masterlist.

Following discussion with Council officers, full citations were ultimately prepared for 26 individual places and four small precincts. These formed the basis of the draft version of the study, which was submitted to Council in February 2013 and then twice re-issued, with minor revisions and reformatting, in May and June of that year.

B1.2 Project outcome

In early 2015, the Council undertook preliminary consultation with property owners. There were 137 submissions received, of which 94 (ie, 68%) were opposed to the proposed heritage overlays. The submissions were reviewed by Council officers and the consultant, and a number of minor revisions were consequently made to the report. Officers recommended that the Urban Planning Special Committee (UPSC) adopt the updated study and seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit a planning scheme amendment.

At a meeting of the UPSC in September 2015, there were fifteen speakers in opposition to the officer’s recommendation and only two speakers in support of it.¹ As a result, the motion was carried that the UPSC resolved to:

¹ City of Boroondara Urban Planning Special Committee Minutes, 7 September 2015, pp 8-9.

- Not proceed with the Balwyn and Balwyn North Heritage Study (incorporating Deepdene and Greythorn);
- Remove all identified individual properties and precincts identified in the Balwyn and Balwyn North Heritage Study (incorporating Deepdene and Greythorn) from Council's list of possible heritage properties.

Notwithstanding the second resolution, the study has not been entirely abandoned and has since been subject to (at least) two subsequent phases of re-visitation:

- In 2016, the consultant was commissioned to prepare an additional six citations for places (predominantly pre-WW2) that had been identified as higher priorities in the masterlist;
- In 2017, another firm of consultants was engaged to undertake a peer review of the *Balwyn & Balwyn North Heritage Study*, which encapsulated the additional citations prepared in 2016. However, all of the post-WW2 places were specifically omitted from the review, so the subject property in Tannock Street was not reconsidered at that time. The outcome of the peer review underpinned Amendments C276boro and C318boro.

B2 12-14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North

B2.1 Initial assessment (2012-13)

The former Wood House at 12-24 Tannock Street (hereafter referred to as “the subject property”) was an early inclusion in the consultant’s initial masterlist of places of potential significance, as I was already well aware of the existence of the house, and its status as an early residential project by a pre-partnership Robin Boyd. I also owned a copy of the October 1951 issue of the *Australian Home Beautiful*, in which the house was profiled.

During the desktop research phase of the project, other material on the subject property was consolidated, including copies of the working drawings for all three phases of Boyd’s work, which were kindly provided by Mr Tony Lee, then Executive Director of the Robin Boyd Foundation.

During the windscreen survey phase, the subject property was inspected from the street on 5 October 2012, with a number of digital photographs taken.

In the final masterlist, the subject property scored four-out-of-five for integrity, rarity and vulnerability, and five-out-of-five for its *prima facie* case for local significance. With a total score of 17 out of 20, it was designated as *Priority 1* (“highly likely candidate for an individual HO”).

As such, the subject property was then subjected to preliminary assessment in the form of an ‘outline citation’, which drew from the fieldwork, desktop research and investigation undertaken to date. A copy of the outline citation is included as Appendix A to this evidence.

Following submission of the draft report with outline citations, the subject property was one of the places selected for more rigorous research and assessment in the form of a full citation. Primary sources consulted during historical research including aforementioned architectural drawings and journal article, as well as other newspaper articles, electoral rolls, postal directories, land records (including Certificate of Title) and civil registration records. Comparative analysis was informed by the consultant’s own knowledge of Boyd’s work, as well as reference to the various published Boyd monographs and catalogues, and additional information provided by the Boyd Foundation.

A copy of the full citation is included in Appendix B to this evidence.

B2.2 Review and re-assessment (2020)

During 2020, plans for the redevelopment of the subject property prompted community outcry, including an online petition that received over 6,000 signatures. After the petition was presented to the UPSC, it was resolved to pursue an individual heritage overlay.

As the original author of the *Balwyn & Balwyn North Heritage Study*, the consultant was engaged in October 2020 to review, update and reformat the citation.

In reviewing the citation, the consultant considered that it still provided a sound argument for application of an individual heritage overlay, and did not really require extensive rewriting or further historical research. After making a site inspection on 2 November 2020, it was confirmed that the building's exterior and setting had not significantly changed in the prior seven years, so there was no need to update the physical description.

It was otherwise considered that the citation might be improved by expanding the comparative analysis to place the subject building in the context of Boyd's work across the entire City of Boroondara, rather than just in the Balwyn / Balwyn North area. A number of minor revisions or additions were also suggested by Tony Lee, based on additional research he had completed since 2013. This included his recent interview with the daughter of the property's original owners, Don and Joan Wood, and his identification of a number of hitherto unrecorded pre-partnership Boyd projects (which allowed the chronological context of the subject property to be tweaked). Lee also provided the names of the builders involved in all three stages of the construction.

Ultimately, the changes made to the citation can be summarised as follows:

- Reformatting the material into the citation template currently used by Council, including dedicated sections for Assessment against Criteria and Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay, in a standard tabulated form;
- Replacement of the citation's photograph (taken on 5 October 2012) with a similar view of the property of much more recent date (taken on 2 November 2020);
- Insertion of the sketch plan and contemporary interior/exterior photographs that were published in the *Australian Home Beautiful* in October 1950;
- Insertion of a colour-coded diagram that clarified the three phases of construction;
- Inclusion of a few minor factual points, and clarification of project chronology, based on more recent research undertaken by Tony Lee since 2013;
- Expansion of the comparative analysis, including photographs of selected comparators;
- Reformatting the Statement of Significance into the current standard tripartite format (ie, explaining *what*, *how* and *why* a place is significant);

In updating and reformatting the citation, it increased in size from four pages of dense text (with one illustration) to ten pages of less dense text (with nineteen illustrations and one table), which is now the typical length for an individual citation at the City of Boroondara.

The updated and reformatted citation was submitted to Council on 5 November 2020.



C: DETAILED RESPONSES

C1 SUBMISSION 1

C1.1 Landscaping and curtilage

Submitter's issue

Protect the garden and it's setting. The house is set on a sloping block and designed to sit in the hillside amongst the rocks and bushes. It is part of the design concept.

Consultant's Response

The submitter has provided no documentary or other evidence to support their assertion that the garden plantings formed “part of the design concept” by Robin Boyd, either as part of his original scheme for the 1948-50 dwelling or its two subsequent phases of addition in 1959 and 1971.

During his career, Robin Boyd rarely sought input from professional garden designers. During Boyd's periods in partnership with Roy Grounds and Frederick Romberg, Gordon Ford was engaged to design the landscaping for the Black Dolphin Motel in Merimbula, NSW (1961), while Lindsay Prior did the same for the Academy of Science Building in Canberra (1956-58), and John Stevens at the ETA Factory at Braybrook (1957-61). It is worth noting, though, that the two latter projects were largely the responsibility of Grounds and Romberg respectively, rather than Boyd.

There are only two confirmed cases where Boyd engaged a professional landscape designer for a single private residential commission. Both involving John Stevens, these were the Pearce House in Vermont (1957-58) and the Myer House at Frankston (1958-59). Although another leading landscape designer of the day, Ellis Stones, was responsible for the garden at Boyd's Stone House at Heidelberg (1953), he was engaged directly by the owners themselves rather than by Boyd.

Extensive research by Tony Lee, founding Executive Director of the Robin Boyd Foundation, has not located any evidence (eg landscaping drawings, correspondence or oral testimony) that a professional landscape designer was engaged to prepare a garden scheme for the Wood House, in any of its three stages of development. Boyd's original working drawings (1948) do not indicate any development of the site around the house. Later drawings depict hard landscaping elements, such as the new concrete driveway and paths (1959) and subsequent driveway widening, new concrete steps, extension of concrete path to the street, and new timber sleeper steps (1971). However, none of these three sets of drawings indicate any proposed garden layout or plantings.

In the updated heritage citation, the aforementioned hard landscaping elements are already identified as elements of Boyd's design concept that should be protected as part of the proposed heritage overlay. The garden plantings, with which Boyd was not involved, are not.

Submitter's issue

The land associated with the garden and house should be included in the overlay. The garden is important because it is integral to the view of the house which juts out and down the steep hill setting.

Consultant's Response

The citation already recommends that the heritage overlay should extend entirely to the title boundaries of the site (ie, “the land associated with the garden and house”). This tends to be the standard methodology in recommending an individual heritage overlay to be applied to a single private dwelling in a suburban context.

While the garden plantings may well provide a pleasant setting for the house, this is not considered an adequate basis for the garden to be specifically identified as an element worthy of protection as part of the proposed heritage overlay.

C2 SUBMISSION 29

C2.1 Extent of alteration

Submitter's issue

The house had been repainted three times by the previous owner, they also changed the driveways which has substantially changed the look of the house overall. Thus it's no longer represent the original house

Consultant's Response

Overpainting of a previously painted surface represents typical cyclical maintenance work for any building. In this case, it is not considered to be an alteration that has defaced or disfigured the building, nor compromised its ability to be interpreted as an example of Boyd's work. The current colour scheme is not considered to be unsympathetic or intrusive.

It is noted that the citation has not ascribed any significance to the current colour scheme, nor has it recommended that external paint controls be applied as part of the heritage overlay.

The consultant does not concur that the driveway has been altered to the extent that it has "substantially changed the look of the house overall". When the current driveway configuration (Figure 1) is compared to the working drawings from Boyd's 1971 works (Figure 2), it is apparent that little has changed. The distinctive retaining walls of volcanic rock remain evident, although the wall along the left (north) side of the driveway has apparently been straightened, as the kink indicated on the 1971 plans is no longer evident. This is of no consequence: the rock wall had already been altered once during Boyd's period, when the new steps were formed in 1971.

The most obvious change has been the replacement of the concrete finish to the driveway and footpath with recycled brick paving (in the former case, in a radial pattern). This potentially reversible change is not considered to be an unsympathetic or intrusive alteration that that has "substantially changed the look of the house overall". If anything, the re-configuration of the driveway's north wall has served only to expose more of the building's façade to public view.

C3 SUBMISSION 30

C3.1 Lack of rigour in identification process

Submitter's issue

As one of Robin Boyd's earlier works, the house has been said to be "not [Boyd's] best work" by many architects. Boyd already has properties that are indeed of state significance and deserving of protection listed as heritage properties. However, in this case, it is simply a blind scramble to list all Boyd homes as heritage properties merely due to his legacy without any regard for features specific to this house.

The submitter has not disclosed the names of the "many architects" alleged to have stated that the house is not one of Boyd's best, nor have they provided any verifiable source for such statements. As such, these comments must be dismissed as hearsay.

The consultant stands by the assessment contained in the citation that the house is an important example of Boyd's work, both for its early original date and for the fact that it included several well-considered phases of addition made by the same architect over the following 25 years.

The methodology summarised in Section B clearly explains the house was not initially identified as part of a "blind scramble" to recommend a heritage overlay for every building that Robin Boyd designed, merely because he was the architect. In the original *Balwyn & Balwyn North Heritage Study* (2013), only two hitherto unprotected Boyd houses in the study area were recommended for a heritage overlay, despite the fact that there were a three additional Boyd houses investigated as part of the study. Another Boyd house in Balwyn North, hitherto unknown to scholars, was rediscovered during 2013 and separately assessed by Council's heritage advisor.

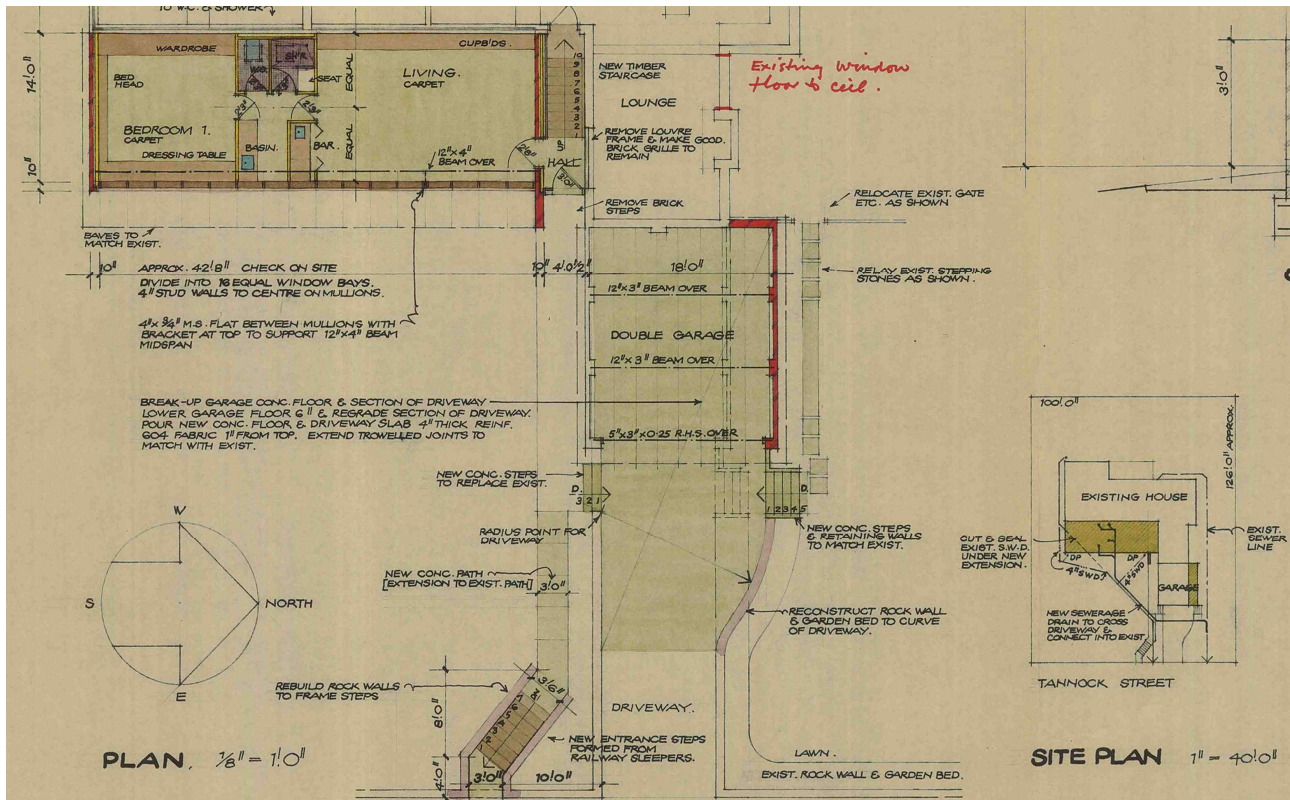


Figure 1: Excerpt of Boyd's working drawings for 1971 alterations, showing the expansion of the garage (to the left side), the consequent widening of the driveway, and the new footpath and angled steps
Source: Courtesy Tony Lee, founder of Robin Boyd Foundation



Figure 2: View of the driveway in 2020, showing rock retaining walls to street frontage and driveway, timber sleeper steps, and non-original brick paving to driveway and pedestrian path to front door
Source: www.realestate.com.au

The citation's comparative analysis outlines quite clearly why the subject building is considered to be a superior example of Boyd's work in comparison to less intact and/or less important local examples, typified by the Pat Boyd House in Fortuna Avenue, the Latchford House in Longview Road (which was already re-assessed and downgraded as part of an earlier heritage review), and the Brown House in Woodville Street. The fact that none of these three Boyd houses has been recommended for an individual HO puts paid to any assertion that there has been a "blind scramble" to protect everything that Boyd ever designed.

C3.2 Extent of alteration

Submitter's issue

Secondly, the relevance of the phrase "architectural heritage" is questionable - the property is no longer similar to what it was designed to be in 1948, which anyone can clearly see if they only compared the two time periods.

Consultant's Response

The consultant does not concur that the house has been altered to an extent that the 1948 dwelling can no longer be interpreted. One of the most distinctive elements of the original house, namely its massive full-width plate glass window and slatted eaves (memorably recorded in photograph published in the *Australian Home Beautiful* in 1950; see Figure 3), still dominates the street frontage (Figure 4). The fact remains that, as the additions made in 1959 and 1971 were carefully conceived by Boyd himself, they contribute to the significance of the place rather than detract from it.

C4 SUBMISSION 31

C4.1 Degree of correlation to original design

Submitter's issue

In regards to the house being one of "the few surviving examples from this phase of Boyd's career", and reflecting "a young architect on the cusp of an illustrious career", my question is: how much reflection can it possibly exude, when it was renovated multiple times following the construction?

Consultant's response

The point previously made under section C3.2 can only be re-iterated. Namely, the consultant stands by his opinion that the original 1948 house can still be readily interpreted, and that the two phases of subsequent addition are of significance in their own right for their ability to demonstrate Boyd's skills and sensitivity in the sympathetic enlargement of one of his own buildings over a period of several decades.

C4.2 Extent of alteration

Submitter's issue

There were more revisions written in records than appear in news articles, which I perceive to be misleading.

Consultant's response

As the submitter has not provided specific details of any alleged further alterations (imprecisely referred to as "more revisions written in records"), the consultant is unable to provide a response.

The consultant maintains that the primary documentation that was consulted for the citation, which included three separate sets of working drawings as well as a contemporary journal article from 1950, a newspaper article from the property's sale in 1985, and online coverage (including many photographs) of more recent sales in 2018 and 2020, provide an adequate basis for charting the physical development of the house. It is unclear how such reliance on fully verifiable primary sources could possibly be perceived as "misleading".



Figure 3: Two-page magazine spread showing the -catching plate glass window and timber slatted eaves
Source: Australian Home Beautiful, October 1950



Figure 3: Comparable view from the street in 2020, with plate-glass window and slatted eaves still visible
Source: Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd

C5 SUBMISSION 32

C5.1 Degree of correlation to original design

Submitter's issue

I believe that the merit of Robin Boyd's earlier work is better demonstrated by other houses in Boroondara, such as 46 Fortuna Avenue and the Gilson [sic] House.

Consultant's response

The consultant defers to the comparative analysis in the citation (in both its original and expanded versions). This outlines why the subject building is considered an excellent local example of Boyd's work, and specifically why it is superior to the Pat Boyd House at 46 Fortuna Avenue, which, although comparable in many respects (namely, its date and the fact that it was extended in several phases also to Boyd's design), is cannot be as legibly interpreted as the subject property.

In establishing a case for local significance, it is not necessary to "prove" that the Wood House is superior to the Gillison House, which is an exceptionally important early example of Boyd's residential work that has been on the heritage overlay schedule since the 1990s.

C5.2 Representation of architect in study area

Submitter's issue

His work is not under-represented in the Balwyn area.

Consultant's response

The heritage citation does not infer that Boyd's work is underrepresented in the Balwyn area. While *Criterion B* ("rarity") has been invoked, this is not because of any suggestion that Boyd's work is intrinsically rare in the study area, but, rather, that this specific house is

Rare, as one of relatively few surviving examples of Robin Boyd's brief and only period in sole practice, between his partnerships of Associated Architects (1946-48) and Grounds, Romberg & Boyd (1953-60; later Romberg & Boyd).

Significance has thus been ascribed on the basis that it is a particularly outstanding example of Boyd's work, amongst at least half a dozen projects that he undertook in the Balwyn and Balwyn North area, not to mention others elsewhere in the former City of Camberwell and in the broader City of Boroondara (ie, Hawthorn and Kew).

When an architect has been notably active within a particular locality, this circumstance can often contribute to the significance of his work therein, rather than detract from it. This is especially true when, as in Boyd's case, he was himself a local resident (living in Camberwell for a decade, encapsulating the very period in which the subject property was designed and built).

C5.3 Level of significance

Submitter's issue

The property does not demonstrate significant heritage value on a state, regional or local basis, so I do not believe that changes to the planning controls would be appropriate.

Consultant's response

The consultant maintains that the heritage citation provides an adequate assessment to underpin the case for local significance. At no point was it ever asserted by the consultant that the house was of regional or state significance.

C6 SUBMISSION 33

C6.1 Extent of alteration

Submitter's issue

The property no longer represents the original Boyd's design in 1948, which is clearly see if compared the two time periods.

Consultant's response

This issue has been raised by others, and responses provided. See sections C3.2 and C4.1.

C7 SUBMISSION 34

C7.1 Extent of alteration

Submitter's issue

Robin Boyd's work is well represented throughout Boroondara and the wider Melbourne area and the building cannot be said to be rare or under-represented.

Consultant's response

This issue has been raised by another, and a response provided. See section C5.2.

It might also be noted that, as the citation is arguing a case for significance at the local level, Boyd's body of work in "the wider Melbourne area" does not need to be taken into consideration.

C7.2 Extent of alteration

Submitter's issue

The building has been more heavily altered than described in the citation.

Consultant's response

This issue has been raised by another, and a response provided. See section C4.2.

C7.3 Representativeness modernist architecture

Submitter's issue

The building represents a typical example of a building in the Modernist style, which is not rare or under-represented in Boroondara or the wider Melbourne area.

Consultant's response

While the consultant agrees that dwellings in the modernist style are not rare or under-represented in either a municipality-wide (ie, City of Boroondara) or metropolitan context, it is maintained that the Wood House can hardly be considered as a "typical example". The citation articulates how and why the building is considered to be exceptional, both as an early post-WW2 modernist dwelling and as an example of Robin Boyd's work.

Balwyn and Balwyn North are two suburbs that are strongly associated with intensive residential development in the post-WW2 period (from the mid-1940s to the early 1970s). One of the aims of the *Balwyn & Balwyn North Heritage Study* (2013) was to consider the entirety of the study area's surviving stock of modernist houses, and to identify and assess those deemed to be exceptional specimens for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule. The Wood House was one of fifteen exceptional (ie, not typical) modernist houses to be recommended for such protection.

C7.4 Representativeness of typology

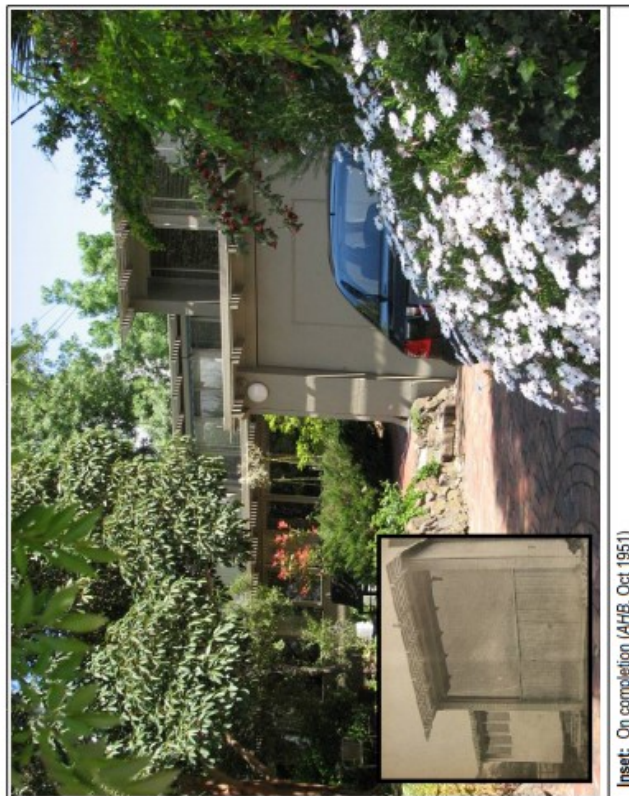
Submitter's issue

The dwelling is not locally significant by virtue of being a rare surviving example of a specific building type.

Consultant's response

The heritage citation did not ascribe significance to the place on the basis that it was a "rare surviving example of a specific building type". Typologically speaking, the building is a single family residence, which is indisputably the most ubiquitous and well-represented building type, not only in the localised (suburban) context of Balwyn North, but also in the broader municipality-wide context (ie, City of Boroondara) and even broader metropolitan context. By definition, this particular single family residence could never be considered a rare example of its type, much less as a "rare surviving example". It is noted that citation never made such claim.

IDENTIFIER HOUSE	
Other/s	Wood Residence (former)
Address	12-14 Tannock Street BALWYN NORTH
Designer/s	Robin Boyd Grounds, Romberg & Boyd; Romberg & Boyd
Theme/s	6.3.4 Suburban infill after Second World War 6.7.2 Making homes for the middle classes 9.3.2 Designing fine buildings
Intactness	Good (sympathetic extensions by Robin Boyd)
Condition	Good
Date/s	1950 (original house) 1959, 1971 (additions by Boyd)
Builder/s	
Heritage Group	Residential Building (Private)
Heritage Category	House
Heritage status	-
Significance	Local
Recommendation	



Inset: On completion (AHB, Oct 1951)

Extent	To title boundaries
Survey date	01/10/12

APPENDIX A: OUTLINE CITATION (2012)

History

Designed for Mr and Mrs D C Wood in 1950 by architect Robin Boyd. The house was published in the *Australian Home Beautiful* in October of that year, in which it was described as "an unusual small house in North Balwyn", noted for its "free planning" that "takes full advantage of space and outlook and most of the work out of housework".

Occupied by the Wood family for many years, the house was extended in two stages, both to the design of the original architect, Robin Boyd. In 1959, Boyd (then in partnership with Grounds and Romberg) added a wing to the south, containing extra bedrooms and a recreation room, and a new flat-roofed garage that projected below the large full-height window to the street. Then in 1971 (by then in partnership only with Romberg), Boyd designed a new wing, stepped down along the street front, providing another bedroom, living area and bathrooms, and extended the garage.

Description and Integrity

Brick house on L-shaped plan with low-pitched roof and distinctive slated eaves, with huge picture window above projecting garage wing.

Historical Context

Associated with the first wave of post-war residential settlement in Balwyn North, in the late 1940s/early 1950s.

Comparative analysis

Notable early project by architect Robin Boyd prior to entering into partnership with Roy Grounds and Frederick Romberg in 1953. Boyd, who lived in nearby Camberwell in a house that he designed for himself in 1946, carried out a number of residential commissions in Balwyn over the next few years. These include a house for his cousin, Pat Boyd, at 46 Fortuna Street and another for local chemist D C Wood at 12-14 Tannock Street (both also 1950).

Assessment against Criteria

Grading and Recommendations

Statement of Significance

One of three notably early Robin Boyd houses in Balwyn North. While all quite different in planning and external appearance, these houses collectively provide a unique snapshot of Boyd's early architectural career, prior to his celebrated partnership with Roy Grounds and Frederick Romberg.

The Wood House is especially notable for the way in which it demonstrates Boyd's capability to undertake subsequent phases of addition and extension to his own projects (in this case, up to twenty years later) in a sympathetic manner.

Identified by

Built Heritage Pty Ltd

References

"Two level living", *Australian Home Beautiful*, October 1950.

Information (including working drawings) provided by Tony Lee, Executive Director of the Robin Boyd Foundation.



IDENTIFIER HOUSE		
Other/s	Wood House (former)	
Address	12-14 Tannock Street BALWYN NORTH	Date/s 1948-49 (original house) 1959, 1971 (additions by Boyd)
Designer/s	Robin Boyd Grounds, Romberg & Boyd; Romberg & Boyd	Builder/s
Theme/s	6.3.4 Suburban infill after Second World War 6.7.2 Making homes for the middle classes 9.3.2 Designing fine buildings	Heritage Group Residential Building (Private) Heritage Category House Heritage status -
Intactness Good	Good (sympathetic extensions by Robin Boyd)	Significance Local Recommendation Include in HO as individual place



Inset: *Australian Home Beautiful*, Oct 1951

Extent	To title boundaries	Survey date	10/01/12
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History

This house was built in 1950 for pharmacist Don Wood, to the design of architect Robin Boyd. Born in Lilydale, Donald Charles Wood (1920-1987) was living in Kew with his wife, Lilian Mary "Joan" Wood (1923-2008) by September 1942, when he enlisted to serve in the Second World War. Attached to the 217 Field Regiment, he was discharged on 8 November 1945 with the rank of Lieutenant. Barely three weeks later, Wood (identified as a "student") acquired the consolidated title to two adjacent blocks of land in Balwyn North. Located on the west side of Tannock Street, these comprised Lots 422 and 423 of a huge subdivision. The Woods, however, did not develop the land immediately. According to electoral rolls, they lived in Morang Road, Hawthorn in 1949, by which time Wood's occupation was definitively recorded as "chemist". Directories confirm that his business premises was located at 235 High Street, Kew.

To design their new house, the Woods turned to architect Robin Boyd (1919-1971), who, at that time, had only recently established his office as a sole practitioner. Although well-known in Melbourne's tightly-knit architectural fraternity, Boyd was still three years away from forming his celebrated partnership of Grounds, Romberg & Boyd, and honing his craft as an astute critic and architectural writer, which, within a decade, would make him a household name. It has not been established exactly how Donald Wood came to commission Robin Boyd to design his new house. The two men were almost exact contemporaries, and both had served in the Second World War. Wood, who had previously lived in both Kew and Hawthorn, may have been aware of earlier projects that Boyd (then in partnership with Kevin Pethebridge and Frank Bell) undertook in the area, namely the Pettigrew House (1945) and the Dandy Frock factory (1946). The project for the Woods' new house at Balwyn North has been cited as Robin Boyd's first independent commission after leaving the partnership of Pethebridge and Bell. The working drawings, although bearing the title block of "Robin Boyd, 58 Riversdale Road, WF7950", are dated November 1948. By that time, Boyd had already undertaken two other projects under his own name: the White House in Mentone (late 1947) and the Nichol House in Warrandyte (early 1948).

Completed in 1949, the Woods' house was belatedly published in the *Australian Home Beautiful* in October 1950. The author noted that "free planning in this unusual small house in Balwyn North takes full advantage of space and outlook and most of the work out of housework". Attention was drawn to the split-level planning (still unusual at that time), the projecting living room with huge north-facing plate glass window, and the subtle but effective colour scheme of olive yellow, amethyst grey, pale grey-blue and off-white. The interior was described in detail: raked ceilings with exposed rafters and knotty pine lining boards, a painted brick chimney, built-in furniture and a modern lighting scheme that included wall-mounted lamps in spun aluminium, and pendant lights with tulip-shaped glass shades.

The Woods were sufficiently pleased with their architect that, over the next two decades, they engaged him four more times to undertake projects for them – rendering them as Boyd's most frequently recurring private clients. In 1953, Wood commissioned him to design a new pharmacy in the developing commercial strip along Doncaster Road, at the foot of Tannock Street. The premises, with its boldly angled glazed facade, built-in fittings and stylised graphics, also attracted much publicity as benchmark in modernist retail design. In 1959, the couple turned to Boyd to enlarge the Tannock Street house. He proposed a large addition to the south end (providing two more bedrooms and a recreation room) and a new flat-roofed garage that projected from the living room, just below the sill of the huge window. With the original designer at the helm, the additions were conceived in a wholly sympathetic fashion, with brickwork, fenestration and low-pitched roofs that seamlessly connected to the existing fabric. Three years later, Wood engaged Boyd to make changes to the chemist's shop on Doncaster Road and then, in 1971, to further enlarge the house. This time, Boyd proposed an addition across the street frontage (at a slightly lower level so that the original windows remained exposed, and enlarged the garage by extending its north wall. Again, these changes were carefully detailed to match the original building, forming a smooth integration between the old and the new. While the working drawings for the additions are dated June 1971, Boyd is said to have given final instructions for the project from his hospital bed on the night before he died on 19 October that year – making it the final project with which he was personally involved before his death.

When the Woods finally sold their house in late 1985, the estate agent labelled it as "timeless", noting that "when you enter the house, you find it very hard to believe that it was built 36 years ago. It is an outstanding work of contemporary design". The couple subsequently moved to Ringwood, where Don Wood died in 1987. His widow retained a soft spot for the work that Boyd had done for them, and, in 1993, donated a collection of memorabilia relating to the house and chemist's shop (including photographs, drawings, press cuttings and ephemera) to the State Library of Victoria.

Description and Integrity

The house at 12-14 Tannock Street is a split-level skillion-roofed early modernist house, of brick construction with a bagged and painted finish. Occupying a double width allotment, the house has an elongated rectilinear plan that spreads out across the entire block. As originally built in 1949, the house had a slender L-shaped plan form, with a long north-south portion and a projecting east wing at the north end. Two subsequent phases of expansion in 1959 and 1971 have increased the length and width of the north-south portion, and extended the east wing by the addition of a flat-roofed double garage. Designed by the original architect, these additions are sympathetic in scale, form and materials. While they can, to some extent, be perceived as later additions (due to the stepping of floor and roof levels), they otherwise closely follow the fabric of the original house in their detailing and finishes. The overall plan form still remains generally L-shaped, albeit with some smaller projecting elements to the north and west.

Seen from the street, the house has an elongated, asymmetrical and stepped facade. To the rear, the original north-south wing (with 1959 addition at one end) is partly concealed by the 1971 addition, set down at a lower level. Both parts have continuous bays of timber-framed sash windows with slatted timber eaves. At the north end, the living room has a huge plate glass window with slatted timber eaves. To the left is the present front entrance, which formed part of the 1971 works. Set back into a alcove defined by a wing wall, it has a timber door with tall fanlight that aligns with the big living room window. The double garage, projecting forward from the sill of the living room window, is expressed with a single lift-up panel door between brick piers, with and another slatted eave. A retaining wall of volcanic rocks extends across the front property line and up the driveway. This incorporates an angled flight of steps with timber sleepers, also dating from 1971. The concrete path and driveway shown on the 1971 plans have been replaced by brick paving.

Externally, the house remains notably intact to the extent of its original Boyd fabric – that is, the 1949 house and subsequent phases of addition in 1959 and 1971. The additions, made by the original architect, cannot be considered unsympathetic or intrusive; rather, they add an additional layer of significance for the way in which they demonstrate how Boyd, at various later stages of his career, approached the problem of extending one of his earliest houses.

Historical Context

Dating from 1948-49, this house is associated with the emergence of post-war homebuilding in Balwyn North – that is, the period from the late 1940s to the early 1950s. Large parts of that suburb had remained notably undeveloped until 1938, when the extension of the electric tram route to Doncaster Road spurred a significant residential boom. This, however, was soon cut short by the onset of the Second World War, and it would not resume until the later 1940s. Even then, private homebuilding was still hampered by restrictions on labour and materials that had been imposed during the War. As a result, the initial burst of post-war homebuilding in Balwyn North was relatively modest compared to the massive influx that took place from the early 1950s, when these wartime restrictions were finally relaxed.

Comparative analysis

Resuming private architectural practice after the Second World War, Robin Boyd designed a house for himself and his wife in Riversdale Road, Camberwell (1946) and subsequently undertook a number of commissions in the suburbs that now constitute the City of Boroondara. In an early partnership with Kevin Pelhebridge and Frank Bell (1945-47), he designed two houses in Kew and a factory in Hawthorn. Opening his own office in 1948, Boyd designed a number of houses in the developing Balwyn/Balwyn North area. The Dunstan House in Yandilla Avenue (1948-49) was the first of these, soon followed by a house for the architect's cousin, J P Boyd, at 46 Fortuna Avenue (1948-49), the Wood House in Tannock Street (1949-50) and the Gillison House in Kireep Road, Balwyn (1952). After entering into partnership with Roy Grounds and Frederick Romberg in 1953, Boyd maintained his connections with Balwyn North, designing the Richard Latchford House at 72 Longview Road and the Alan Brown House at 39 Woodville Street (both 1953-54) and, over a period of years, undertaking several phases of addition to all three of his earlier pre-partnership houses there.

Today, the six Boyd houses in the study area survive in varying degrees of intactness. The Brown House has been altered virtually beyond recognition, while the Latchford House (identified in an earlier heritage study, but since reviewed and downgraded) has similarly been subject to a number of unsympathetic alterations. The J P Boyd House in Fortuna Avenue has been enlarged on three occasions: twice to Boyd's design (in 1955 and 1966) and, more recently, by others. As seen today, it is somewhat difficult to interpret the various stages of construction.

By contrast, the Dunstan House and the Wood House are notably intact: neither has any significant post-Boyd additions, and both stand out for the clarity in which original buildings, and their subsequent phases of addition, can be clearly interpreted. Although of similar date, the two houses are markedly different in their composition: while the Dunstan House is a low-cost compact brick dwelling with broad gabled roof and large multi-paned window walls, the Wood House has a elongated spreading plan with skillion roof, continuous window bays and huge single-pane picture window. Together, these two houses (and the Gillison House in Balwyn, which already has a HC) provide a valuable snapshot of the early solo architectural career of this eminent and influential designer prior to his more celebrated partnership with Roy Grounds and Frederick Romberg.

Assessment against Criteria

One of relatively few surviving examples of Robin Boyd's early work prior to his celebrated partnership (*Criterion B*)

An excellent example of modern residential architecture dating from the austere early post-war period (*Criterion F*)

A noted and intact example of the work of Robin Boyd, who had a recurring association with the study area (*Criterion H*)

Grading and Recommendations

The house at 12-14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North, is a significant heritage place in the City of Boroondara.

Statement of Significance

Architecturally, the house is significant as an early and notably intact example of the work of the eminent designer and writer Robin Boyd. Documented in late 1948, the house was one of the first projects undertaken by Boyd when he left the partnership of Kevin Pelhebridge and Frank Bell to open his own sole practice. Today, it remains as one of relatively few surviving examples from this seminal phase of Boyd's career, prior to his celebrated partnership with Roy Grounds and Frederick Romberg. Along with the Gillison House in Kireep Road, Balwyn (1951) and the Dunstan House in Yandilla Road (1950), it is one of three outstanding early and substantially intact houses by Robin Boyd in the study area, which, considered collectively, provide rare and valuable evidence of the innovation, boldness and fresh design approaches of a young architect on the cusp of an illustrious career.

Architecturally, the house is also significant as an notable achievement in modern homebuilding at a time when materials and labour were still due to wartime restrictions. The house encapsulated many ideas, such as open-plan, split-levels and window walls (in this case, an improbably large plate glass window), that were extremely innovative at the time. Later adopted by others, they would also recur notably throughout Boyd's own subsequent career. In contrast to the contemporaneous Dunstan House in Yandilla Road, conceived as a three-stage project (gradually realised in 1949-50, 1951 and 1962), the Wood House was a stand alone dwelling subsequently enlarged in two stages, both to Boyd's design, in 1959 and 1971. These provide evidence of Boyd's high level of sensitivity in making additions to his own work, simultaneously demonstrating a continuity of form, finishes and details while still being readily identifiable as later accretions.

Identified by

Built Heritage Pty Ltd

References

"Two level living", *Australian Home Beautiful*, October 1950.

"Boyd house sells for \$175,000", *Age*, 16 December 1985, p 27.

Information (including working drawings) provided by Tony Lee, Executive Director of the Robin Boyd Foundation.

APPENDIX C: CURRICULUM VITAE

SIMON REEVES

Qualifications

1996-97	Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) (University of Melbourne)
1991-93	Bachelor of Planning & Design (University of Melbourne)

Full-time Professional Experience

2009-	Director and principal, Built Heritage Pty Ltd
2002-2009	Architectural historian and heritage consultant, Heritage Alliance, Melbourne
1998-2002	Architectural historian, Allom Lovell & Associates, Melbourne

Other experience

2013-2017	Lecturer, <i>Architectural History & Theory 2: Australian Architecture</i> School of Architecture & Design, RMIT University
2011	Tutor, <i>Architectural History & Theory 2: Australian Architecture</i> School of Architecture & Design, RMIT University
2010	Tutor, <i>Modern Architecture: MoMo to PoMo</i> Faculty of Architecture, University of Melbourne
2010	Guest editor, <i>Architect Victoria</i> (Journal of AIA Victorian Chapter) Special issue on post-WW2 Heritage Places (Autumn 2010)
2000	Research assistant to Dr Philip Goad [Post-War Sydney Housing project] Faculty of Architecture, University of Melbourne
1999	Archivist and curator of architectural drawings (Walter Burley Griffin) Newman College, University of Melbourne
1998	Architectural historian [Stephenson & Turner archive project] State Library of Victoria
1998	Tutor, <i>History of Building Construction</i> Faculty of Architecture, University of Melbourne
1995-1998	Assistant to the Building Project Co-ordinator State Library of Victoria
1995	Teaching assistant to Jeffrey Turnbull Faculty of Architecture, University of Melbourne
1994	Research assistant to Jeffrey Turnbull & Peter Navaretti [Griffin catalogue project] Faculty of Architecture, University of Melbourne

Current (*) and former affiliations

Australia ICOMOS*

DoCoMoMo Australia

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

Society of Architectural Historians of Australia & New Zealand (SAHANZ)

Art Deco & Modernism Society of Victoria*

Walter Burley Griffin Society

Australian Garden History Society

Robin Boyd Foundation

Selected published work

Books:

Beaumaris Modern. Melbourne: Melbourne Books, 2018. [with Fiona Austin & Alison Alexander]
- winner of Bates Smart Award for Architecture in Media, AIA (Victoria) Awards, 2020

Gentle Modernist: The Nine Lives of Anatol Kagan. Fremantle [WA]: Vivid Publishing, 2014.

Conference papers:

"Paradise Lost/Regained/Lost: The Uneven History of Melbourne's Tiki Restaurants",
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Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, No 33 (2016), pp 568-577.

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"The Walmsley House at Royal Park: La Trobe's 'other' cottage", *La Trobeana: Journal of the
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"Heritage Overlooked", *Architect Victoria*, Autumn 2005, pp 22-25.

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