

3 Presentation of officer reports

3.1 Heritage Nominations - McIntyre Partnership, 2 Hodgson Street and 25 Swinton Avenue, Kew

Abstract

The purpose of this report is to inform the Urban Planning Delegated Committee (UPDC) of the outcomes of the heritage review prepared by Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, heritage consultants, of the properties owned by Mr Peter McIntyre and family at Nos. 2 Hodgson Street and 25 Swinton Avenue, Kew. Officers are also seeking a resolution from the UPDC to seek authorisation to prepare and exhibit a planning scheme amendment to implement the heritage controls as recommended by the heritage consultant.

Mr McIntyre, Director McIntyre Partnership, approached Council in late 2020 to request a review of the heritage significance of the properties owned by himself and his family at Nos. 2 Hodgson Street and 25 Swinton Avenue, Kew. The property consists of multiple houses and buildings, including the offices of McIntyre Partnership, constructed over multiple allotments and set within a densely wooded, riverside landscape in Kew.

The site includes the River House, Mr McIntyre's most famous architectural work constructed in the 1950s. River House is included in a Heritage Overlay in the Boroondara Planning Scheme as an individually significant heritage place (HO72). The property was included in the Heritage Overlay as part of the *Kew Urban Conservation Study 1988*. Mr McIntyre has further developed the site with the Summer House and Cliff House together with other buildings and infrastructure on the site, since that time. Today, the property tells a story of the evolution of Mr McIntyre's post-war architectural expression since the 1950s.

Council's heritage consultants have reviewed the property in its entirety and have visited the site on two separate occasions. Officers have also visited the site. Council's heritage consultant is recommending the application of heritage controls as follows:

- River House – Retain in HO72 as an individually significant heritage place with a revised heritage citation and an expanded curtilage for the building. Council's heritage consultant has recommended the activation of external paint controls, internal alteration controls, tree controls, and outbuilding and fence exemptions (jetty and landing) in the Heritage Overlay schedule. A revised heritage citation River House is provided at **Attachment 1**.
- Summer House and Cliff House – Include both houses and associated landscape in the Heritage Overlay as an individually significant heritage place based on the new citation. Council's heritage consultant has recommended the activation of external paint controls and tree controls in the Heritage Overlay schedule. A new heritage citation for Summer House and Cliff House is provided at **Attachment 2**.

No heritage controls are recommended for any buildings on Lot 1 comprising the Greenhouse, Archives, Phoenix, Boathouse, Birdhouse and Barn.

Officers recommend a planning scheme amendment be initiated under section 20(2) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act). This is based on the affected property owners supporting the application of heritage controls to the land. A planning scheme amendment progressed under section 20(2) of the Act provides the opportunity for Council to apply for exemptions from notice based on an amendment having minimal implications on planning in Victoria. Officers recommend seeking an exemption from publishing a notice in the Victorian Government Gazette and a local newspaper generally circulating in the area. Officers will also seek to reduce the statutory timeframe for notice from 1 month to two weeks, with direct notice being given only to Prescribed Ministers and the affected property owners. This recommendation has been informed by discussions with officers of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Officers recommend the UPDC resolve to commence a planning scheme amendment to apply the Heritage Overlay to the properties as recommended by Council's heritage consultant.

Officers' recommendation

That the Urban Planning Delegated Committee resolves to:

1. Adopt the heritage citations prepared by Extent Heritage for the River House, and Cliff House and Summer House contained in **Attachments 1 and 2**.
2. Write to the Minister for Planning to request authorisation to prepare an amendment to the Boroondara Planning Scheme in accordance with Section 4B, 8A(4) and 20(2) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* to include the properties in the Heritage Overlay in accordance with the heritage citations prepared by Extent Heritage.
3. Following receipt of authorisation from the Minister for Planning, exhibit the amendment in accordance with directions issued by the Minister for Planning or his delegate.
4. Authorise the Director City Planning to undertake administrative changes to the amendment that do not change the intent of the amendment or any changes required under the Minister for Planning's Authorisation prior to the commencement of exhibition.

Responsible director: Shiran Wickramasinghe, Director Urban Living

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- Advise the Urban Planning Delegated Committee (UPDC) of the heritage review undertaken by Extent Heritage of the McIntyre Estate at Nos. 2 Hodgson Street, Kew and 25 Swinton Avenue, Kew at the request of the McIntyre Partnership and the McIntyre family.
- Advise the UPDC of the recommendations arising from the heritage review with respect to the River House, Summer House and Cliff House.
- Seek a resolution from the UPDC to request authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit a planning scheme amendment to implement the Heritage Overlay in accordance with the heritage citations prepared by Extent Heritage.

2. Policy implications and relevance to community plan and council plan

Council Plan 2017-2021 and Boroondara Community Plan 2017-27

The Boroondara Community Plan 2017-27 sets out the 10 year vision for Boroondara's future based on values, aspirations and priorities important to the community.

The heritage citations implement Strategic Objective 4 of the Plan: *Protect the heritage and respect the character of the City to maintain amenity and liveability while recognising the need for appropriate, well-designed development for future generations.*

Specifically, the heritage citations implement the following strategy:

- **Strategy 4.6** - Engage with owners and developers to achieve a balance between development and protection of neighbourhood character, heritage and amenity.

Heritage Action Plan 2016

The Heritage Action Plan was adopted by Council on 2 May 2016 and establishes the framework to guide Council's heritage work program as it relates to the identification, protection, management and promotion of Boroondara's heritage assets.

The heritage citations are consistent with the following purpose of the Heritage Action Plan 2016:

- *The assessment of, and updates to, the grading of identified heritage places are identified as ongoing actions in the Heritage Action Plan 2016.*

Boroondara Planning Scheme

The heritage citations are consistent with the objectives of the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) and Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF). In particular, it addresses the following Clauses:

- Clause 15.03-1 *Heritage Conservation* which seeks to ‘*ensure the conservation of places of heritage significance*’ by identifying, retaining and protecting places with identified heritage significance;
- Clause 21.04-5 - *Built Environment and Heritage* of the Municipal Strategic Statement which includes the objective ‘*to identify and protect all individual places, objects and precincts of cultural, aboriginal, urban and landscape significance*’; and
- Clause 22.03-2 *Heritage Policy* which seeks to ‘*preserve ‘significant’ heritage places, protecting all significant heritage fabric including elements that cannot be seen from the public realm*’.

Both the SPPF and LPPF seek to ensure the HO is applied to protect places of heritage significance in the City of Boroondara.

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050

The identification, assessment and protection of places of local heritage significance are supported by Outcome 4 of *Plan Melbourne* which seeks to ensure that ‘*Melbourne is a distinctive and liveable city with quality design and amenity*’. Direction 4.4 recognises the contribution heritage makes to Melbourne’s distinctiveness and liveability and advocates for the protection of Melbourne’s heritage places.

In particular, Policy 4.4.1 recognises the need for ‘*continuous identification and review of currently unprotected heritage sites and targeted assessments of heritage sites in areas identified as likely to be subject to substantial change*’.

The heritage citations are consistent with these *Plan Melbourne* directions and initiatives.

Planning and Environment Act 1987

The heritage citations are consistent with the objectives of planning in Victoria, in particular the objective detailed in Section 4(1)(d) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act), being:

To conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value.

This means that Council has a statutory obligation to continuously identify and protect places of heritage significance through the Heritage Overlay.

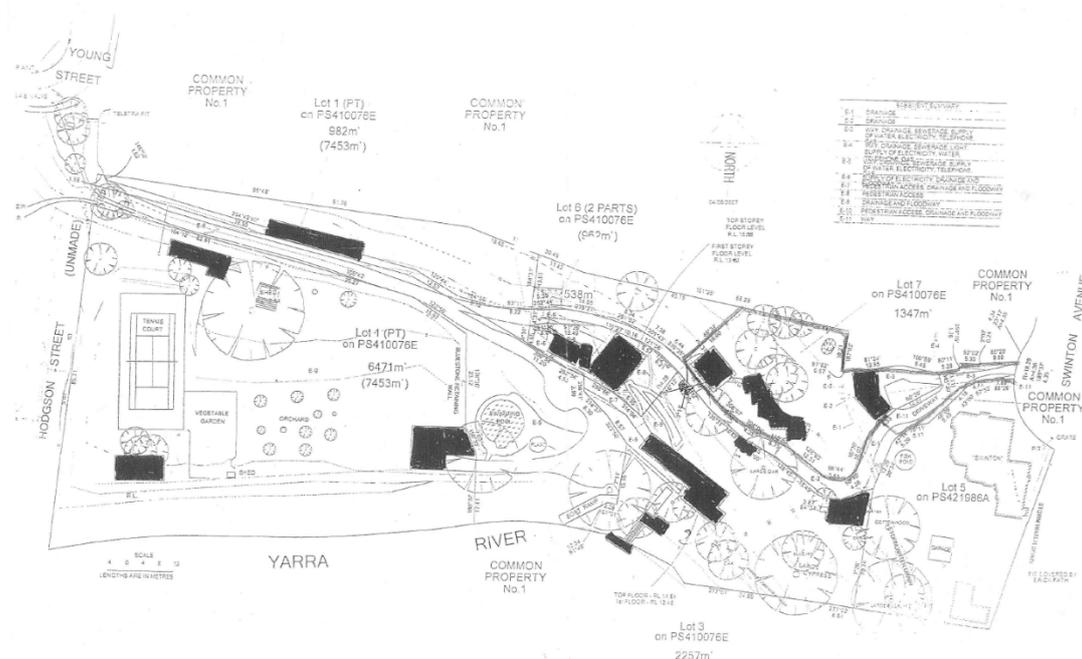
3. Background

Site and lot configuration

The subject site is located at 2 Hodgson Street and 25 Swinton Avenue, Kew and comprises several lots within Plan of Subdivision PS410076E, owned individually by members of the McIntyre family. The site is a complex over 2.3 hectares in size comprising a number of dwellings and structures generally built for family members, associated outbuildings, the offices of McIntyre Partnership, a tennis court, pool, vegetable gardens, landing and Yarra River jetty.

The site is accessible via an internal network of roads and walking tracks and includes access to the river. All structures and lots are located within a wooded setting adjoining the Yarra River corridor.

Figure 1: Site and Lot Configuration



Request for heritage assessment and appointment of consultant

In late 2020, Peter McIntyre, Director McIntyre Partnership, made a request to Council to carry out a review of the heritage significance of the properties owned by himself and his family.

Following the request from Mr McIntyre, officers visited the site and commissioned Extent Heritage to review the property in its entirety and to recommend a strategy for the application of heritage controls as appropriate.

Extent Heritage prepared a heritage assessment of all buildings, trees and landscape and recommended no heritage controls be applied to any of the buildings on Lot 1 comprising the Greenhouse, Archives, Phoenix, Boathouse, Birdhouse and Barn. The heritage assessment then focussed on the buildings located towards the eastern part of the site comprising 'River House', 'Summer House' and 'Cliff House'.

The River House (Lot 3) is included in the Heritage Overlay in the Boroondara Planning Scheme as an individually significant heritage place (HO72). The citation was drafted as part of the *Kew Urban Conservation Study 1988*, and does not conform with the requirements of new format heritage citations as required by *Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay*, introduced after the original citation was prepared. The existing citation lacks a full history and physical description, comparative analysis, mapping and a statement of significance. The citation also does not reference Cliff House which exists within the extent of HO72 and was built subsequent to River House. A revised citation has been prepared.

4. Outline of key issues/options

Findings and Recommendations

River House

Council's heritage consultant recommends the property be retained as an individually significant heritage place in the Boroondara Planning Scheme on the basis of Criterion A (historical significance), Criterion D (representativeness), Criterion E (aesthetic significance), Criterion F (technical significance), and Criterion H (associative significance). A revised citation has been drafted consistent with the Practice Note and is provided at **Attachment 1**.

Council's heritage consultant noted River House has been partially altered over time, however the primary original structure remains highly intact. Further, most of the internal alterations made by the McIntyres to accommodate the family at the time have been reversed. The building remains in good condition and retains its key fabric, form and setting. On this basis, the building retains the historic, aesthetic and associative significance as described in the original citation. As part of the revised citation, Council's heritage consultant has recommended the activation of external paint controls, internal alteration controls, tree controls, as well as outbuilding and fence exemptions (jetty and landing) in the Heritage Overlay schedule, recognising its significance and level of intactness.

It is also proposed to extend the curtilage of River House to the west beyond the boundary of Lot 3 to encompass more of the views to (and from) the place from the river and the opposite riverbank. This approach will isolate River House as the most significant building on the site with its own curtilage, thereby simplifying its management as a heritage place.

In addition, Council's heritage consultant has stated River House has strong potential for heritage significance at the State level. This is based on past recommendations for the house in the *Kew Urban Conservation Study 1988* and a previous nomination of the house for listing on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) from the National Trust. A preliminary assessment by Council's heritage consultant against the criteria suggests River House meets Criterion A (Historical significance), B (rarity), E (aesthetic significance), F (technical significance) and H (associative significance) at the State level. This further reinforces the need for River House to be managed separately with its own heritage controls and curtilage in the Boroondara Planning Scheme.

This would assist in the management of the place should the building be listed in the VHR. While Council's heritage consultant has noted the River House has strong potential for heritage significance at the State level, a VHR nomination has not been prepared or considered within scope of this report.

Summer House and Cliff House

Council's heritage consultant recommends Summer House and Cliff House and the associated landscape elements be included in the Heritage Overlay as an individually significant heritage place in the Boroondara Planning Scheme. Council's heritage consultant recommends the buildings on the basis of Criterion E (aesthetic significance) and Criterion H (associative significance). A new citation has been prepared for Cliff House and Summer House consistent with the Practice Note, and is provided at **Attachment 2**.

Whilst telling the story of the site's evolution over time, Council's heritage consultant recommends both Summer House and Cliff House be treated separately from River House with respect to the application of heritage controls. Summer House and Cliff House were both designed by Mr McIntyre in the late twentieth century period, with both houses representing the evolution of Mr McIntyre's design philosophy over time. River House is more associated with the post-war Melbourne Regional Style and advances in steel technology in the 1950s.

The property owner is seeking to subdivide Cliff House from River House (Lot 3), which presents an opportunity to delineate a new boundary for heritage controls to be applied between River House and Cliff House. On this basis, it is proposed to introduce heritage controls to Summer House and Cliff House under a single heritage citation, reflecting the more recent era of the two buildings. This would be separate from the revised citation recommended for River House with an expanded curtilage retained in HO72.

As part of the citation for Summer House and Cliff House, Council's heritage consultant has recommended the activation of external paint controls and tree controls in the Heritage Overlay schedule.

Process for applying heritage controls consistent with the recommendations

Officers have discussed the nomination and the approach recommended to the application of heritage controls to the properties with officers of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). The lots, which are subject of the heritage recommendations, are owned by the nominator and another immediate family member, respectively. Both the nominator and associated family member have lodged letters of support for heritage controls to be applied to the subject land.

On the basis of discussions with DELWP officers, Council officers are recommending a request for authorisation to prepare and exhibit a planning scheme amendment be lodged with the Minister for Planning under Section 20(2) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act). Under this process, Council may seek exemptions from all forms of notice except for direct notification to the respective property owners and Prescribed Ministers. Officers are also recommending an exemption be sought from the Minister for Planning to reduce the standard one month public exhibition period, to two weeks.

A planning scheme amendment under Section 20(2) of the Act would expedite the process of applying permanent heritage controls to the affected lots in the form recommended by Council's heritage consultant.

Interim heritage controls

The River House and Cliff House are located within HO72 and are not under imminent threat of demolition. The Summer House is not within a Heritage Overlay and is also not under imminent threat of demolition. Officers are not recommending interim heritage controls be sought for the land.

5. Consultation/communication

Council officers have visited the subject property on two separate occasions with Council's heritage consultants and have met with the nominator on both occasions. The draft citations were provided to the nominator for review. The citations were further refined following feedback provided through this preliminary consultation process.

The affected property owners and occupiers were notified of this meeting in writing.

If the UPDC resolves to proceed with a planning scheme amendment in the form recommended by officers, notification exemptions will be sought from the Minister for Planning to limit notice to the affected property owners, and Prescribed Ministers.

6. Financial and resource implications

Costs associated with the preparation and implementation of the planning scheme amendment will be funded through the Strategic and Statutory Planning Department recurring budget for the 2021/2022 financial year.

7. Governance issues

The officers responsible for this report have no direct or indirect interests requiring disclosure.

The implications of this report have been assessed and are not considered likely to breach or infringe upon, the human rights contained in the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

8. Social and environmental issues

The implementation of the recommendations based on the advice of Council's heritage consultants would have positive social and environmental effects by contributing to the continual protection and management of the City's heritage.

Manager: Simon Mitchell, Manager Strategic and Statutory Planning

Report officer: Robert Costello, Senior Project Planner



RIVER HOUSE

Prepared by: Luke James, Extent Heritage (incorporating and updating 1988 citation by Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd)

Address: 2 Hodgson Street, Kew

Name: River House	Survey Date: 18 March 2021
Place Type: Residential	Architect: Peter McIntyre
Grading: Significant	Builder: McKinna Bros
	Engineer: Bill Irwin
Extent of Overlay: As per curtilage map below.	Construction Date: 1955 (altered 1958; 1960s)



Historical Context

Modern day Kew is bounded to its west and north by the river known in the Woi-wurrung language of the Wurundjeri people as *Birrarung* (or 'river of mists') and also known as the Yarra River, who were among the people of the eastern Kulin nations who inhabited the land until European colonisation and remain its Traditional Owners.

The following general historical summary is reproduced from Context Pty Ltd 2018: 32-33.

The first survey of the Kew area was by government surveyor Robert Hoddle, who divided the 1400 acres (570 hectares), the Parish of Boroondara, into 150 blocks of different sizes in 1837 (Morrissey 2008). Kew was divided into large



allotments to encourage the establishment of small farms and market gardens to supply the growing settlement of Melbourne. These larger allotments meant that future subdivision proceeded in a piecemeal way (Sanderson 1988:4/2).

Access to Kew was originally via a bridge to Hawthorn, opened in 1852, and by the privately owned Studley Park Bridge (nicknamed the Penny Bridge), opened in 1857. Direct access to Kew was gained when the Johnston Street Bridge was built in 1858. In 1856 the Boroondara Road Board District, comprising Kew, Hawthorn and Camberwell, was proclaimed (Victorian Places 2015).

The first houses in Kew were built in the 1850s around the area now known as the Kew Junction. During the gold rushes of the 1850s, speculation on land purchases increased and the region experienced rapid expansion. As Jane Carolan writes, Kew became a 'suburb of British expatriates who built their homes and gardens to replicate those left behind.' Many of the villas and mansions were built to overlook the city of Melbourne and were set in acres of land (Carolan 2003:3).

Subdivision of land to form residential estates in the Kew area occurred from the 1860s, although plans from the 1860s and 1870s suggest that the scale of subdivision was quite small. In the 1880s, Melbourne's land boom was influential in establishing Kew's residential street pattern (Sanderson 1988:4/7-9).

Subdivision slowed with the economic depression of the 1890s. However, by the end of 1897, housing construction had begun anew. In 1903, Kew was described by the Australian Handbook as a 'very favourite place of residence for the merchants and upper tradesmen of the city, and is dotted with their elegant mansions, villas, and well-kept gardens' (cited in Victorian Places 2015).

From 1920 Victoria experienced the highest marriage rate in its history and families sought homes away from the crowded inner suburbs of Melbourne. Following the tramlines, new estates were established in Kew. The pattern of expansion continued through the rest of the decade, and was reflected in the construction of War Service Homes, a scheme administered by the State Bank from July 1922, with houses in Kew built mostly on subdivisions in the north and east of the suburb. New subdivisions in the 1920s changed the rural nature of north Kew, as housing and large recreation reserves began to replace dairy farms and market gardens. Estates were also established on the grounds of former mansions. Between 1921 and 1933, Kew's population increased by 46.62% and its house numbers by 62.73% (Sanderson 1988:4/11-17). As a result of council policy to limit industry, Kew had only 29 factories in 1927 compared with Hawthorn's 140 (Morrissey 2008), further reinforcing its reputation as a genteel residential suburb.

Today, Kew retains evidence of this historical growth and development. As the City of Kew Urban Conservation Study states:

To the north and east twentieth century housing predominates, the result of the suburban expansion that followed both World Wars. In the rest of the suburb the housing is more mixed, a legacy of constant subdivision. For this reason Kew does not have significant nineteenth century streetscapes, but in the mixture of housing styles numerous important buildings remain, and in the individual examples both old and new, Kew's built heritage is almost a compendium of domestic architecture in Melbourne, from smaller family houses through to grand mansions (Sanderson 1988:4/25).



The historical context for this part of Kew also includes a history of flooding, and of notable architects'-designed own homes, set out in the *Boroondara Thematic Environmental History* (Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2012: 24, 149, citations omitted) as follows:

It was not until the early twentieth century that the first official measures were taken to deal with the recurring problem of flooding. Four years after the flood of 1916, when the river rose to a height of 41.50 feet, the City of Kew set that figure as the minimum level for which building permits would be issued for new dwellings in the municipality. However, this figure would be revised twice over the next few years, when two more floods – each more serious than the one before – saw the municipal flood level increased to 44.6 feet (in 1923) and then 48.8 feet (in 1924). This proved satisfactory until the Great Flood of 1934, when the river rose to a record height of 60.6 feet. Eight years later, in February 1942, the Council officially adopted that height as the new municipal flood level below which no new subdivisions would be approved, and no building permits would be issued. An exception, however, was allowed if the low-lying site could be raised to a level approved by the MMBW, so that the sewerage could be connected to the main metropolitan system.

As Vaughan records, the increasing of the municipal flood level of 60.6 feet created hardship for property owners who, over the intervening two decades, had built dwellings (or merely purchased allotments) that were above the old flood level of 48.8 feet, but below the new one. Council dealt with diminished property values by acquiring much of this low lying land, which was redeveloped as riverside parks. The decision to increase the flood line was vindicated when, in October 1953, the Yarra River rose “almost to flood level”. During the early post-war era, as suburban infill began to spread across hitherto underdeveloped parts of the study area, remaining lots of low-lying land caught the attention of a new (and more adventurous) generation of homebuilders [including Peter McIntyre].

...

Kew's western fringe ... seemed to attract the most resident architects in the 1950s. Many in particular, were drawn to the booming Studley Park area; not only did this represent one of the last undeveloped suburbs close to Melbourne, but the site conditions – steep slopes, odd-shaped allotments, flood lines and web of drainage easements – represented a design challenge that architects found irresistible. The first architect to build his own house in Studley Park was John Colbourn, who designed a fine flat-roofed modernist house in Milfay Avenue in 1943. Others who followed included Stanley M C Evans (of the leading city firm of Tompkins, Shaw & Evans) in Yarravale Road (1949; demolished), Kurt Elsner in Stawell Street (1950) and Geoffrey Danne in Yarra Street (1954). South of Studley Park Road, in a small residential area bounded by Raven Street, Hodgson Street and the Yarra River, no fewer than four important and influential Melbourne architects built their own homes during the 1950s: Raymond Berg (1954; demolished), Peter McIntyre (1955), Ernest Milston (1956) and Don Hendry Fulton (c.1957). During this period, architect James Earle also designed a house for himself in Ridgeway Avenue, Kew (1954; since relocated). ... [John] Kenny's house [1978], in Raven Street, was built in the vicinity of those houses erected two decades earlier by Berg, Milston, McIntyre and Fulton. With the subsequent addition of Sean Godsell's own award-winning house on Hodgson Street (1997), this small area can be considered one of the most concentrated precincts of notable architect's own houses in the metropolitan area.



History

The land is located on a low ridge below the floodline of the eastern bank of *Birrarung* (Yarra River) just downstream from its confluence of the *Merri Merri* (Merri Creek). This confluence of waterways, today known as the site of the historical Dights Falls, was both a river crossing and important ceremonial location for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people who have inhabited the area for tens of thousands of years (Day 2020; Fitzgerald and Ducrou, u.d.). The earliest known European occupant in the vicinity of the site was Scottish emigrant John Buchan, who in 1847 constructed 'Finhaven', a grand Victorian mansion located above the River House site, which was later demolished in 1940. This was joined by a number of other large Victorian mansions, including 'Swinton' (1859, later additions 1860s and 1880s, Boroondara HO129) (Day 2020; Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd 1988).

In 1947, 19-year-old architecture student Peter McIntyre, surveying a site in or around Hodgson Street, Kew for his father's architectural practice, decided to explore further down the site closer to the river, finding what he later recounted as 'the most beautiful piece of land' (Day 2020). The land adjoined the river in which McIntyre had spent formative moments of his Kew childhood swimming and exploring. In an unlikely series of events, the 19-year-old discovered the land was privately owned as a part of the former 'Finhaven', and had been inherited by John Buchan's descendants who had earmarked the flatter, higher parts of the site for development but had been advised by their surveyor that the section closest to the river was too steep and flood-prone to be developed. McIntyre nevertheless agreed verbally with the owners to purchase the riverside portion for £200—an amount the young McIntyre did not have immediately to hand. Delighted with his success, McIntyre began to survey the site and was noticed by an adjoining neighbour, who went on to learn McIntyre's plan and attempted to gazump the purchase with an offer of £1000, with plans to pool funds with his neighbours and subdivide the land so each could achieve absolute river frontage. Finally, however, the owners agreed to sell to McIntyre for £300. Wisely, McIntyre told his father subsequent to the purchase, which his father belatedly prohibited then funded, with a loan to be repaid through service to his firm (McCartney 2007: 65; Day 2020).

The romance at the heart of the site's evolution continued when, some years later, McIntyre asked an architecture student working at his first practice to assist on the project—via a marriage proposal (Goad, 2012: 444). Dione McIntyre, who married Peter in March 1954, supplied a painted sketch of the River House that shows its original distinctive colour scheme that caused the building to be likened by *Vogue* magazine to a 'Paul Klee butterfly (National Trust of Australia (Victoria)), demonstrating her important role in its design conception and giving life to its early moniker 'Butterfly House'.



Figure 1. Drawing by Dione McIntyre, 1953, McIntyre Collection, reproduced from the Australian Institute of Architects Nationally Significant 20th Century Architecture citation, at https://repository.architecture.com.au/download/notable_buildings/vic/mcintyre-housef6a0.pdf.

While construction was completed in 1955, the design of the River House was the product of a long gestation. McIntyre reportedly began working on the design in 1948, shortly after the sites purchase, with a documented reference to the distinctive design found in Peter McIntyre's tutor and mentor Robin Boyd's correspondence in 1952 (Day 2020). This timing is important, for as Day (2020) recounted, the concept of a house using a suspended 'coathanger' to achieve minimum interference with what was the edge of a rocky precipice 'preceded design work on the Olympic Pool', the iconic design by McIntyre with Kevin Borland and John & Phyllis Murphy (1952-56):

Design principles were similar in intent, a lean steel frame would support a lightweight cantilevered structure, which reduced expensive site works, and employed the minimum amount of materials for the maximum volume of construction.

The design was influenced by engineer Norman Mussen, who was lecturing on structures at Melbourne University, the time of Peter's final year. He championed the importance of being able to analyse the stresses in a building structure and he introduced notions of pre-tensioned and post-tensioned reinforced concrete which is the structural principle of counter balancing forces.

This structural system was later employed for the more complex Olympic Pool design.

Like the Olympic Pool, the River House was constructed in an era in which post-WW2 austerity had not yet lifted. For both buildings, construction techniques were influenced by the need to keep the use of scarce materials, especially steel, to a minimum. In the Olympic Pool, an engineering technique that harnessed counterbalancing forces enabled the building to use merely 1/3 of the material cost of competing entries. McIntyre describes the River House as an 'A-frame double cantilevered truss. Cantilevered in one direction and then balancing that cantilever with the other direction.' (McCartney 2007: 67). For the young Peter McIntyre building his own house with the advice of engineer Bill



Irwin, this technique not only reduced cost but more importantly made construction physically possible on a sharply constrained site. The site not only had a very limited buildable footprint, but required elevation of habitable areas above a flood level of which McIntyre would have been very aware, not only from childhood memories of the great flood of 1934, but the more recent October 1953 floods which would have vindicated the emerging design. McIntyre described the design for the River House as firstly and fundamentally a 'structural solution', designed from the 'outside in' (Pers. comm during site visit).

McIntyre recounted that no planning permit was required for the building (in 1953), and that he simply had to satisfy the Council that he need not be required to build in brick, as was otherwise stipulated for this part of the suburb. The building permit process involved furnishing a single A1 sheet of paper, with plans, elevations and a section, which revealed the two 40 foot cantilevers. Despite this, he recalled walking into the building surveyor's office only to emerge half an hour later with his building permit (Pers. comm during site visit).

The very same site factors that constrained the design went on to do the same for the construction method. Precast, pre-tensioned/post-tensioned concrete was used for the supporting structure and footings, with other structural members fabricated and assembled on site. As McIntyre recalled, because of the difficult site access 'there was no structural member of the cantilever truss any larger than 3 inches (7.5cm). We were able to fabricate it on the ground in small sections, bring it up by hand, lay it on the side of the hill, bolt it together then stand it up and roll it out' (McCartney 2007: 67). This combination of radical engineering applied to domestic architecture incorporating hand-construction techniques shows a degree of craft and ingenuity that belies the 'machine aesthetic' often associated with modernism.

While designed by a young bachelor, the River House came to be inhabited by Peter and Dione McIntyre and their growing family, ultimately including four children—three of whom became architects themselves—over four decades. This was enabled by external and internal additions and alterations over time, none of which altered the fundamental design expression or materiality, and many of which have been reversed. After ceasing to be the family's primary residence, River House was used to house the practice of McIntyre Partnership, Peter and Dione McIntyre's practice. Today both functions have moved elsewhere on the site, and it appears likely that the River House will return to a residential function.

Central to the original selection of the site and the building's design response is its landscape environment. The introduced, deciduous species within the landscape not only form an important part of attenuating climate extremes—affording sunlight in winter and shade in summer—but also played an important visual role in how the house alternately blends and contrasts with its landscape. Norman Day (2020) has described the site as having a 'theatrical scope, even cinematic', and to extend this metaphor the deciduous foliage forms a stage curtain, completely obscuring the house in summer only to reveal it each autumn and winter. As noted in McCartney (2007: 68), this led to some unexpected attention. 'Finished in December [1955] when the foliage protected the house, it was a different story come autumn. Suddenly it was exposed and highly visible from the tram that passed over Victoria Bridge. People would rush to the tram windows to speculate on what sort of building it was'. Dione McIntyre (Pers. Comm.) confirmed that this attention played a large role in the McIntyre's decision to alter the colour scheme.

Earthworks in the 1950s enabled driveway access to the site, and subsequent landscaping followed. The River House stood for many years without surrounding built form, but in recent years it has been joined by a complex of buildings dispersed across the broader site housing accommodation and workspaces for the extended McIntyre



family, friends and associates. While Peter McIntyre's fondness for the landscape was a major part of the site selection, in the mid-20th century this section of the river was dominated by industrial and horticultural uses on its western bank, with the River House looking over the Carbon Dry Ice Factory and, presumably below the flood line, Chinese market gardens. The river itself was far from pristine, with both liquid and rubbish pollution. The site itself featured a stand of weeping willows which was later removed by the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works. Today's river landscape on and in the vicinity of the site can thus be seen largely as part of the site landscaping and development during the McIntyre era, and a result of Melbourne's turn to the river for recreation and amenity—a trend this site anticipated by some 40 years.

Description & Integrity

The multi-level house is supported on a central steel tower rising from a 14 foot (4.27m) square concrete plinth, from which is cantilevered a steel A-frame comprising two triangular steel frames each cantilevered 40 feet (12.19m). The walls are set within this framework leaving the structure exposed, and infilled with compressed strawboard panels (a product known as Solomit). At the outer extent of the frame the walls give way to open decks. Originally externally painted tomato red and cadmium yellow in a Mondrian-inspired colour scheme devised by Dione McIntyre, the house was externally reclad in hardwood and deliberately repainted in a more inconspicuous shade of Brunswick green tinted with creosote in the 1960s (McCartney: 70).

The house was originally accessed from the ground level via a door that slides up, which remains in situ in its open position, with the entry now served by a conventionally hinged door. A further entry at level is provided via a gantry to the dining room on the mid-level. A central spiral staircase provides access between the levels, with fenestration providing glimpses of the tree canopies with which the house draws level, and the Yarra River/*Birrarung* below which gives it its name. Internal walls retain their original or early finishes and evidence of the original colour scheme, with the kitchen remaining intact.

The extensive, picturesque site on which the house was built is outstanding and it gives a freedom to the architectural form that would not have been possible on most suburban allotments. As noted above (see 'History') the site has undergone landscaping improvement works over the past half-century, and today stands as a combination of remnant endemic, introduced native and introduced species. A number of trees considered integral to the landscape values to which the house responds are recommended for heritage tree controls (see 'Grading and Recommendations' below). Outbuildings and ancillary structures include a landing and adjoining boat jetty.

A ground level annex, also designed by Peter McIntyre, was built in the 1960s beneath the western wing. Aside from those mentioned above, there have been a series of internal and external alterations, additions and accretions over the life of the building, including enclosure of the open decking (1958; since reversed) and a reduction in the size of skylights (McCartney, 2007: 68). Many of these were in response to understanding and adapting to environmental conditions at the site and the needs of a growing family. Rather than being detrimental to the integrity of the building, such changes over time demonstrates the flexibility afforded by its radical structural design and construction, and indeed are reversible. Today the house demonstrates a high degree of integrity.

Comparative Analysis

Within the Boroondara study area, the River House can be compared with a number of other radical and influential post-war modernist residences. McIntyre's own first residential commission, 'Stargazer House', 2 Taurus Street, North Balwyn (1952-3; Boroondara HO188; Hermes ID 14939) is considered of architectural merit of potentially state significance. Like River House, Stargazer House was an experiment in tensioned



and cantilevered built form, supported by prominently expressed cables, enabling upstairs rooms to be tilted to provide the views to the sky that gave the house its name. It is further considered of local significance for its high degree of integrity and single occupant status, enabling it to exemplify 'typical lifestyles emanating from the experiments with living undertaken by some after the war' (Citation, Hermes ID 14939).

McIntyre's mentor and nationally prominent modernist architect and critic Robin Boyd was also active in Boroondara, with works including his own house at 664-666 Riversdale Road Camberwell, and Pettigrew House (both 1945); (with), Redmond Street Kew (1946, with Pethebridge); and Grounds Romburg and Boyd's work in Studley Park for Wilson, Haughton-James, Cowen, Clemson, Date, Lawrence and Purves families (Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2012: 228-230). Of these, Boyd's own house at 664-666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell (1945; HO116; H0879; Hermes IDs 191, 14952) is the most appropriate comparative example, having been assessed for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register as having state significance as the 'prototype of the post war modern Victorian house'. The house was subject to an extensive comparative analysis in its 2001 Conservation Management Plan (CMP) (prepared by RBA Architects and Conservation Consultants Pty Ltd) which confirmed its state-level of significance including consideration within Boyd's oeuvre. The assessment included in the CMP considers the place to have a high degree of integrity overall, but denotes a 1975 addition as being intrusive. Relevantly, it is significant (at state level) for its association with post-war modernist architecture, as a fine and highly intact example demonstrating innovative and experimental design, as one of the earliest known examples of modernist architecture in Victoria, for its technical significance and demonstration of creative achievement connected with its design including open plan living, multi-functional rooms, integrated joinery and response to site that were considered revolutionary but now are commonplace, and for its association with Robin Boyd.

Having regard to the above comparative examples, the River House can be assessed as having at least similar or potentially even greater merit for recognition of its significance. While it is later than both examples, it represents a far more distinct and radical break from pre-modernist residential housing possibilities than either 'Stargazer' or Boyd's own house. Arguably, compared with Boyd's house it presented such a unique solution to a unique site that its practical influence on construction on more typical residential suburban allotments was more limited. However within McIntyre's work, it is the fulfillment of engineering experimentation with counterbalancing forces that was tentatively advanced in 'Stargazer'. It is a parsimonious and yet sensitive and aesthetically resolved engineering response, in such a challenging site context that only such a response could enable a building—none could otherwise be feasible.

A comparative assessment reveals that the place clearly meets the threshold for local heritage significance and has strong likelihood to meet the threshold for state significance.



Curtilage Map



Assessment Against Criteria

Criteria referred to in *Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay*, Department of Planning and Community Development, August 2018, modified for the local context.

CRITERION A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of the City of Boroondara's cultural or natural history (historical significance).

The River House is important to the City of Boroondara's cultural history as an early, well known and radical exemplar of the influence and development of architectural modernism in the post-war period. Emerging from a period of austerity associated with World War Two, the River House represented a distinctive departure from conservatism and stylistic restraint. The River House also anticipated—by nearly half-a-century—contemporary approaches to development on the *Birrarung/Yarra River* that emphasise its landscape amenity.

CRITERION B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Boroondara's cultural or natural history (rarity).

The place does not meet this criterion. While it represents a unique response to site, it is among a number of post-war architects' own homes in the municipality and indeed this part of Kew to demonstrate innovate design responses, many of which are included in the heritage overlay.

CRITERION C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Boroondara's cultural or natural history (research potential).

The place does not meet this criterion.



CRITERION D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

The place does not meet this criterion. While closely identified with architectural modernism in the post-war era, River House is radically unique in its response to site and its constituent elements. As such, its representativeness of this class of place is limited to less tangible factors such as innovation and experimentation rather than particular attributes capable of being described as principal characteristics.

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

Replete with comparisons to a Paul Klee butterfly, the distinctive form, finish and siting of the River House has evoked strong aesthetic responses in the architectural and broader community. The structural form literally embodies a tension between forces, enabling the majority of the building to appear incongruously suspended against a lush and steep riverside landscape. Its aesthetic effect incorporates theatricality through being revealed and hidden in turn by a curtain of deciduous foliage, within and against a backdrop of endemic and introduced vegetation. Its use of strong geometrical elements, particularly triangles, is a leitmotif that emblematises the building at each level of scale, from its overall structural form down to its constituent elements, and most notably its fenestration.

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

The River House demonstrates a very high degree of creative and technical achievement through its structural innovation that enabled an otherwise unusable site to accommodate a family home. The structural system designed in conjunction with advice from engineer Bill Irwin harnesses a counterbalancing of forces via an A-frame double cantilevered truss, enabling it to be physically possible to build on a sharply constrained site. This structural system for River House was in development prior to, and in fact influenced, the structural system for the 1956 Olympic Pool which was a critical part of the winning competition design, enabling the Olympic Pool design to use 1/3 of the steel than would otherwise be the case.

CRITERION G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

The place does not meet this criterion.

CRITERION H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Boroondara's history (associative significance).

The River House is synonymous with the early careers of Peter and Dione McIntyre, whose work individually, in collaboration and as part of the McIntyre Partnership has resulted in influential and award-winning architecture within the municipality and throughout Victoria. Among other prizes and awards, River House won the 2014 Australian Institute of Architects Victorian Architecture Award for 'best enduring architecture'.



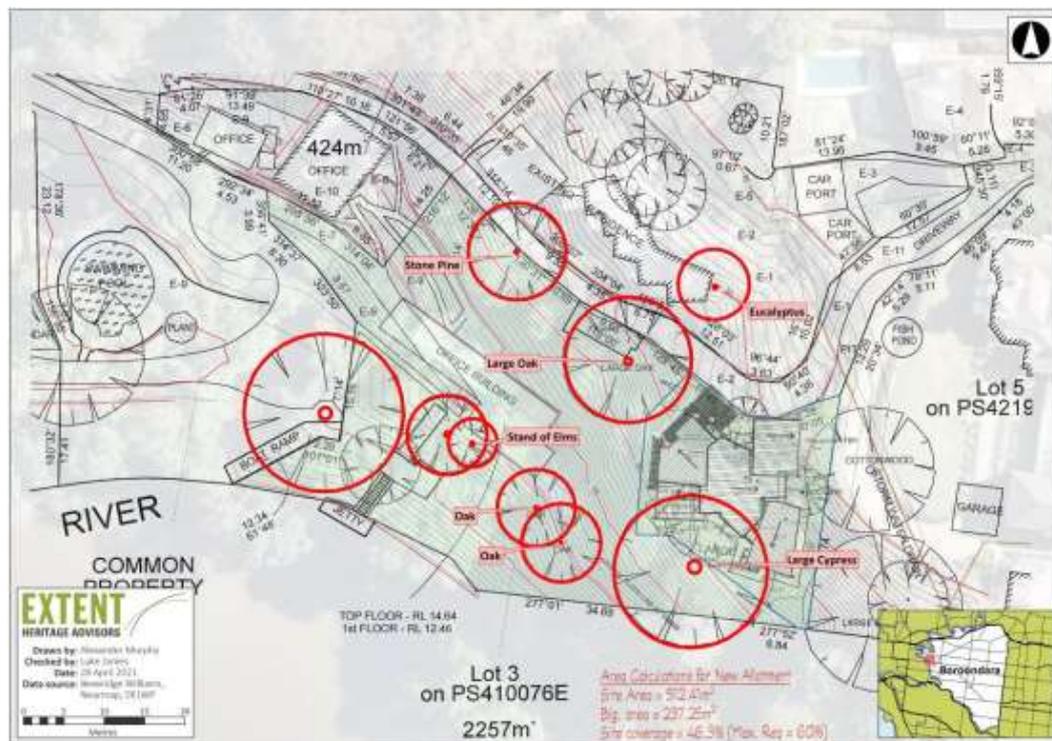
Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The house at 2 Hodgson Street Kew (River House) is significant to the City of Boroondara. Its original or early interior elements, and its external (original and 1960s) and original internal colour scheme are significant, as is the landscape setting, particularly the trees that provide the backdrop and deciduous screen to the River House including the stand of elms and oaks between the building and the river, the large cypress to its south east, the large oak to its north east and the stone pine to its north (see Tree control map below). Also significant is the boat jetty, the landing structure, and original or early hard landscaping elements including the sandstone steps to the river.

Features that do not contribute to the significance of this place include non-original or early alterations, and the 1960s annex, which although also designed by Peter McIntyre, was a pragmatic response to accommodate family needs. While it is not an intrusive element, its removal would clarify the structural expression of the eastern cantilever.

Tree control map¹



How is it significant?

River House is of local historical, aesthetic, technical and associative significance to the City of Boroondara.

¹ Map incorporates data from Beverage Williams and Co Pty Ltd ‘2 Hodgson Street and 25 Swinton Avenue Kew, Plan of Existing Conditions’ dated 4 May 2007; Nearnmap aerial imagery (2021) and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).



Why is it significant?

The River House is important to the City of Boroondara's cultural history as an early, well known and radical exemplar of the influence and development of architectural modernism in the post-war period. Emerging from a period of austerity associated with World War Two, the River House represented a distinctive departure from conservatism and stylistic restraint. The River House also anticipated—by nearly half-a-century—contemporary approaches to development on the *Birrarung/Yarra* river that emphasise its landscape amenity. (Criterion A)

Replete with comparisons to a Paul Klee butterfly, the distinctive form, finish and siting of the River House has evoked strong aesthetic responses in the architectural and broader community. The structural form literally embodies a tension between forces, enabling the majority of the building to appear incongruously suspended against a lush and steep riverside landscape. Its aesthetic effect incorporates theatricality through being revealed and hidden in turn by a curtain of deciduous foliage, within and against a backdrop of endemic and introduced vegetation. Its use of strong geometrical elements, particularly triangles, is a leitmotif that emblematises the building at each level of scale, from its overall structural form down to its constituent elements, and most notably its fenestration. (Criterion E)

The River House demonstrates a very high degree of creative and technical achievement through its structural innovation that enabled an otherwise unusable site to accommodate a family home. The structural system designed in conjunction with advice from engineer Bill Irwin harnesses a counterbalancing of forces via an A-frame double cantilevered truss, enabling it to be physically possible to build on a sharply constrained site. This structural system for River House was in development prior to, and in fact influenced, the structural system for the 1956 Olympic Pool which was a critical part of the winning competition design, enabling the Olympic Pool design to use 1/3 of the steel than would otherwise be the case. (Criterion F)

The River House is synonymous with the early careers of Peter and Dione McIntyre, whose work individually, in collaboration and as part of the McIntyre Partnership has resulted in influential and award-winning architecture within the municipality and throughout Victoria. Among other prizes and awards, River House won the 2014 Australian Institute of Architects Victorian Architecture Award for 'best enduring architecture'. (Criterion H)

Grading and Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Boroondara Planning Scheme as an individually Significant place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Boroondara Planning Scheme:

External Paint Colours <i>Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface?</i>	Yes
Internal Alteration Controls <i>Is a permit required for internal alterations?</i>	Yes
Tree Controls <i>Is a permit required to remove a tree?</i>	Yes
Victorian Heritage Register <i>Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?</i>	No



Incorporated Plan <i>Does an Incorporated Plan apply to the site?</i>	No
Outbuildings and fences exemptions <i>Are there outbuildings and fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	Yes, jetty and landing
Prohibited uses may be permitted <i>Can a permit be granted to use the place for a use which would otherwise be prohibited?</i>	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place <i>Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006?</i>	No

Identified By

Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988.

References

Built Heritage Pty Ltd, City of Boroondara Thematic Environmental History, 2012.

Context Pty Ltd, City of Boroondara Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study. Volume 4. Kew, 2018.

N Day, 2020, 'A Most Beautiful Piece of Land – McIntyre's River House Block', <https://mcintyrepartnership.com/>.

E Fitzgerald and D Ducrou, The Aboriginal History of Yarra, City of Yarra, undated, <https://aboriginalhistoryofyarra.com.au>

P Goad, 'McIntyre, Peter and Dione', in Goad, P and Willis, J, Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture, 2012.

K McCartney, 50/60/70 Iconic Australian Houses: Three Decades of Domestic Architecture, 2007.

National Trust of Australia (Victoria), Statement of Significance, Hermes No. 64915, [1990] 1998.

Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988.

Site visit and interviews with Peter and Dione McIntyre, 18 March 2021, and subsequent email correspondence.



Photographs



Figure 2. Interior showing kitchen and dining area



Figure 3. Interior showing dining area



Figure 4. Spiral staircase. Note original front door in 'open' position against wall.



Figure 5. Interior, upper level.



Figure 6. Interior, lower level.



Figure 7. View of approach to River House from jetty, showing stone stairs.



Figure 8. Concrete plinth.



Figure 9. Cantilevered balcony.



SUMMER HOUSE AND CLIFF HOUSE

Prepared by: Luke James, Extent Heritage

Address: 25 Swinton Avenue and 3/2 Hodgson Street (part), Kew

Name: Summer House and Cliff House	Survey Date: 18 March 2021
Place Type: Residential	Architect: Peter McIntyre / McIntyre Partnership
Grading: Significant	Builders: McCaskill Builders (Summer House) / Nigel Deane of Dcon Builders (Cliff House)
Extent of Overlay: To title boundaries of Lot 7 on PS410076E and new allotment from part of Lot 3 on PS410076E to be created under proposed plan of subdivision (see curtilage map below)	Construction Date: 1996 (Summer House); 1999 (Cliff House).

Cliff House





Summer House



Historical Context

Modern day Kew is bounded to its west and north by the river known in the Woi-wurrung language of the Wurundjeri people as Birrarung (or 'river of mists') and also known as the Yarra River, who were among the people of the eastern Kulin nations who inhabited the land until European colonisation and remain its Traditional Owners.

The following general historical summary is reproduced from Context 2018: 32-33.

The first survey of the Kew area was by government surveyor Robert Hoddle, who divided the 1400 acres (570 hectares), the Parish of Boroondara, into 150 blocks of different sizes in 1837 (Morrissey 2008). Kew was divided into large allotments to encourage the establishment of small farms and market gardens to supply the growing settlement of Melbourne. These larger allotments meant that future subdivision proceeded in a piecemeal way (Sanderson 1988:4/2).

Access to Kew was originally via a bridge to Hawthorn, opened in 1852, and by the privately owned Studley Park Bridge (nicknamed the Penny Bridge), opened in 1857. Direct access to Kew was gained when the Johnston Street Bridge was built in 1858. In 1856 the Boroondara Road Board District, comprising Kew, Hawthorn and Camberwell, was proclaimed (Victorian Places 2015).

The first houses in Kew were built in the 1850s around the area now known as the Kew Junction. During the gold rushes of the 1850s, speculation on land purchases increased and the region experienced rapid expansion. As Jane Carolan writes, Kew became a 'suburb of British expatriates who built their homes and gardens to replicate those left behind.' Many of the villas and mansions were built to overlook the city of Melbourne and were set in acres of land (Carolan 2003:3).

Subdivision of land to form residential estates in the Kew area occurred from the 1860s, although plans from the 1860s and 1870s suggest that the scale of



subdivision was quite small. In the 1880s, Melbourne's land boom was influential in establishing Kew's residential street pattern (Sanderson 1988:4/7-9).

Subdivision slowed with the economic depression of the 1890s. However, by the end of 1897, housing construction had begun anew. In 1903, Kew was described by the Australian Handbook as a 'very favourite place of residence for the merchants and upper tradesmen of the city, and is dotted with their elegant mansions, villas, and well-kept gardens' (cited in Victorian Places 2015).

From 1920 Victoria experienced the highest marriage rate in its history and families sought homes away from the crowded inner suburbs of Melbourne. Following the tramlines, new estates were established in Kew. The pattern of expansion continued through the rest of the decade, and was reflected in the construction of War Service Homes, a scheme administered by the State Bank from July 1922, with houses in Kew built mostly on subdivisions in the north and east of the suburb. New subdivisions in the 1920s changed the rural nature of north Kew, as housing and large recreation reserves began to replace dairy farms and market gardens. Estates were also established on the grounds of former mansions. Between 1921 and 1933, Kew's population increased by 46.62% and its house numbers by 62.73% (Sanderson 1988:4/11-17). As a result of council policy to limit industry, Kew had only 29 factories in 1927 compared with Hawthorn's 140 (Morrissey 2008), further reinforcing its reputation as a genteel residential suburb.

Today, Kew retains evidence of this historical growth and development. As the City of Kew Urban Conservation Study states:

To the north and east twentieth century housing predominates, the result of the suburban expansion that followed both World Wars. In the rest of the suburb the housing is more mixed, a legacy of constant subdivision. For this reason Kew does not have significant nineteenth century streetscapes, but in the mixture of housing styles numerous important buildings remain, and in the individual examples both old and new, Kew's built heritage is almost a compendium of domestic architecture in Melbourne, from smaller family houses through to grand mansions (Sanderson 1988:4/25).

The historical context for this part of Kew also includes a history of flooding, and of notable architects'-designed own homes, set out in the *Boroondara Thematic Environmental History* (Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2012: 24, 149, citations omitted) as follows:

It was not until the early twentieth century that the first official measures were taken to deal with the recurring problem of flooding. Four years after the flood of 1916, when the river rose to a height of 41.50 feet, the City of Kew set that figure as the minimum level for which building permits would be issued for new dwellings in the municipality. However, this figure would be revised twice over the next few years, when two more floods – each more serious than the one before – saw the municipal flood level increased to 44.6 feet (in 1923) and then 48.8 feet (in 1924). This proved satisfactory until the Great Flood of 1934, when the river rose to a record height of 60.6 feet. Eight years later, in February 1942, the Council officially adopted that height as the new municipal flood level below which no new subdivisions would be approved, and no building permits would be issued. An exception, however, was allowed if the low-lying site could be raised to a level approved by the MMBW, so that the sewerage could be connected to the main metropolitan system.



As Vaughan records, the increasing of the municipal flood level of 60.6 feet created hardship for property owners who, over the intervening two decades, had built dwellings (or merely purchased allotments) that were above the old flood level of 48.8 feet, but below the new one. Council dealt with diminished property values by acquiring much of this low lying land, which was redeveloped as riverside parks. The decision to increase the flood line was vindicated when, in October 1953, the Yarra River rose “almost to flood level”. During the early post-war era, as suburban infill began to spread across hitherto underdeveloped parts of the study area, remaining lots of low-lying land caught the attention of a new (and more adventurous) generation of homebuilders [including Peter McIntyre].

...

Kew's western fringe ... seemed to attract the most resident architects in the 1950s. Many in particular, were drawn to the booming Studley Park area; not only did this represent one of the last undeveloped suburbs close to Melbourne, but the site conditions – steep slopes, odd-shaped allotments, flood lines and web of drainage easements – represented a design challenge that architects found irresistible. The first architect to build his own house in Studley Park was John Colbourn, who designed a fine flat-roofed modernist house in Milfay Avenue in 1943. Others who followed included Stanley M C Evans (of the leading city firm of Tompkins, Shaw & Evans) in Yarravale Road (1949; demolished), Kurt Elsner in Stawell Street (1950) and Geoffrey Danne in Yarra Street (1954). South of Studley Park Road, in a small residential area bounded by Raven Street, Hodgson Street and the Yarra River, no fewer than four important and influential Melbourne architects built their own homes during the 1950s: Raymond Berg (1954; demolished), Peter McIntyre (1955), Ernest Milston (1956) and Don Hendry Fulton (c.1957). During this period, architect James Earle also designed a house for himself in Ridgeway Avenue, Kew (1954; since relocated). ... [John] Kenny's house [1978], in Raven Street, was built in the vicinity of those houses erected two decades earlier by Berg, Milston, McIntyre and Fulton. With the subsequent addition of Sean Godsell's own award-winning house on Hodgson Street (1997), this small area can be considered one of the most concentrated precincts of notable architect's own houses in the metropolitan area.

History

The land is located on a steep incline on the eastern bank of *Birrarung* (Yarra River) just downstream from its confluence of the *Merri Merri* (Merri Creek). This confluence of waterways, today known as the site of the historical Dights Falls, was both a river crossing and important ceremonial location for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people who have inhabited the area for tens of thousands of years (Day 2020; Fitzgerald and Ducrou, u.d.). The earliest known European occupant in the vicinity of the site was Scottish emigrant John Buchan, who in 1847 constructed 'Finhaven', a grand Victorian mansion located above the River House site, which was later demolished in 1940. This was joined by a number of other large Victorian mansions, including 'Swinton' (1859, later additions 1860s and 1880s, Boroondara HO129) (Day 2020; Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd 1988).

In 1947, 19-year-old architecture student Peter McIntyre, surveying a site in or around Hodgson Street, Kew for his father's architectural practice, decided to explore further down the site closer to the river, finding what he later recounted as 'the most beautiful piece of land' (Day 2020). The land adjoined the river in which McIntyre had spent formative moments of his Kew childhood swimming and exploring. In an unlikely series of events, the 19-year-old discovered the land was privately owned as a part of the former 'Finhaven', and had been inherited by John Buchan's descendants who had earmarked the flatter, higher parts of the site for development but had been advised by their surveyor that the section closest to the river was too steep and flood-prone to be



developed. McIntyre nevertheless agreed verbally with the owners to purchase the riverside portion for £200—an amount the young McIntyre did not have immediately to hand. Delighted with his success, McIntyre began to survey the site and was noticed by an adjoining neighbour, who went on to learn McIntyre’s plan and attempted to gazump the purchase with an offer of £1000, with plans to pool funds with his neighbours and subdivide the land so each could achieve absolute river frontage. Finally, however, the owners agreed to sell to McIntyre for £300. Wisely, McIntyre told his father subsequent to the purchase, which his father belatedly prohibited then funded, with a loan to be repaid through service to his firm (McCartney 2007: 65; Day 2020).

Peter McIntyre subsequently designed the River House (Boroondara HO72, constructed 1955), which he and Dione McIntyre (married 1954) lived in, with their four children, over the next four decades. During this time, the McIntyre’s consolidated their estate, with purchase (and subsequent sale) of ‘Swinton’ and the development of the site to accommodate a complex of buildings dispersed across the broader site housing accommodation and workspaces for the extended McIntyre family, friends and associates. Most substantial among these are the subject buildings Summer House (1996) and Cliff House (1999). In the period intervening the construction of the River House and Summer and Cliff Houses, the McIntyre Partnership designed a range of buildings evidencing an evolution of his design style and approach. Most relevant are his designs at Kyla Park (1972), Seahouse (1978) and Dinner Plain (1985) – notably, also sites that required a considered response to site exigencies, including steep alpine terrain and coastal foreshore. McIntyre confirmed that the particular choice of timber cladding at the Kew site was influenced by his alpine buildings (Pers. Comm).

Summer House was initially built as an investment property, intended to be let. Yet in the process of construction Peter and Dione McIntyre liked it so much that they chose to live there themselves, and extended the design to accommodate their specific needs. Cliff House was built three years later, incorporating spaces that could be let to tenants or occupied by family, friends or employees in the McIntyre Partnership.

Peter McIntyre summarised the evolving development of his architectural approach as follows:

At the beginning, I believed that the essence of Modern architecture was to use the available materials in a way that allowed them to express the forms that were being created. I learned over time that in itself this wasn’t enough. One also had to study how people reacted to these buildings and one had to place as much importance on studying that reaction as in studying materials, their characteristic and method of use. (McIntyre 2010: 4)

Rather than being a repudiation of the structural experimentation that brought the River House into being, such a perspective reflects the fusing of occupants’ concerns with McIntyre’s already demonstrated mastery of material possibilities. McIntyre (Pers. Comm.) further described this change as a move from ‘design that starts from the outside’, to ‘design that starts from the inside ... design with *feeling*’.

Description & Integrity

Summer House and Cliff House are perched higher on the same overall site as the River House, overlooking *Birrarung/Yarra* River from more expansive positions. Both are multilevel, timber clad buildings which are entered at grade from a driveway at the highest level, with levels descending over and down the site toward the river, an arrangement that is particularly distinctive across the three-storey equivalent of the aptly-named Cliff House. Both Summer House and Cliff House include two levels of main residence and a further, self-contained space (in the Summer House this is dubbed the ‘Tea House’, a pavilion adjoining main residence by walkway, and in the Cliff House, it is



the undercroft bedroom and kitchenette). In plan, both houses show adaptations in response to the unique topography—like River House, too steep for conventional suburban residential building techniques and economies to apply—but also the natural environment. Sited to take full advantage of the established vegetation, the southern elevation of the Cliff House is shaped to accommodate a large cypress tree nearby, while the Summer House sits above a stone pine and large and very old oak which frame its views along the river corridor. Both houses employ extensive cantilevered timber balconies with light balustrading and glazing, further providing opportunities to sit and live among the natural environment. The timber cladding is coloured similarly to the River House's current shade of Brunswick Green tinted with creosote, making the buildings deliberately recessive in relation to the landscape.

From the exterior, both houses more closely resemble McIntyre's alpine architecture than the structural geometries of the River House. Notably, they reverse the approach to site, beginning high on the site and tumbling down into ever small living spaces rather than, as at the River House, beginning at the foot of an incline and spreading high above. However geometry remains a concern; there are few if any right angles at play both in exterior and internally. Unlike the River House, both buildings used conventional construction techniques for their era: Summer House being a conventional timber frame on a concrete portal, although like the River House, not using a crane but rather constructed largely by hand; Cliff House used reinforced concrete with timber cladding, across a site that incorporates three stories of height difference.

In keeping with McIntyre's stated design philosophy for this later stage of his career, both buildings are best appreciated as they relate to their internal occupants, and in particular, how they provide opportunities to appreciate the river corridor landscape in foreground and middle-distance, and its views and flora and fauna, via placement of large, retractable single pane windows that transform living rooms into balcony-like spaces. These transition to an internal orientation for the spaces further away from the river, reflecting a 'zoning' approach that provides for spaces for retreat from the elements according to season and time of day. The spaces appear to reflect a lifetime of lived experience of the site, its particular orientation and needs, bookending a relationship to the site that began with radical youthful experimentation and ultimately a return to incorporate all that was learned subsequently on that site and far beyond.

Comparative Analysis

A comparative analysis of Summer House and Cliff House is proposed both to establish their significance within Peter McIntyre / McIntyre Partnership's oeuvre and to consider their relative significance against other late twentieth century places, particularly residential architecture, included in or that potentially merit inclusion in the Boroondara Heritage Overlay.

McIntyre's existing buildings within the Boroondara Heritage Overlay include the River House (1955, Boroondara HO72), an early, well known and radical exemplar of the influence and development of architectural modernism in the post-war period of likely state significance. It features a distinctive structural system that harnesses a counterbalancing of forces via an A-frame double cantilevered truss, enabling it to be physically possible to build on a sharply constrained site, and which influenced the structure of the 1956 Olympic Pool, of which McIntyre was an architect. 'Stargazer House', 2 Taurus Street, North Balwyn (1952-3; Boroondara HO188; Hermes ID 14939), which is also considered of architectural merit of potentially state significance. Like River House, Stargazer House was an experiment in tensioned and cantilevered built form, supported by prominently expressed cables, enabling upstairs rooms to be titled to provide the views to the sky that gave the house its name. It is further considered of local significance for its high degree of integrity and single occupant status, enabling it to exemplify 'typical lifestyles emanating from the experiments with living undertaken by



some after the war' (Citation, Hermes ID 14939). Other places include Former Spitzer House at 9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North (1959; Hermes ID 198661), which was been recommended in the 2015 Balwyn and Balwyn North Heritage Study which was not adopted, and is yet to be included in the Boroondara Heritage Overlay. According to the citation, it 'is significant as one of the most striking architect-designed post-war houses in Balwyn' and 'is also significant as a notable example of the later 1950s work of well-known architect (and long-time Kew resident) Peter McIntyre.'

Although best known for projects undertaken in the earlier part of that decade, which included co-authorship of the competition-winning design for Melbourne's Olympic Swimming Pool (1953-56) and a string of much-published suburban houses in an exuberant modern style, this particular house provides evidence of McIntyre's subsequent move towards a more formalised approach, reflecting his developing interest in modular planning and prefabrication.

Other McIntyre residential designs in Boroondara include the early 14 Orion Street Balwyn North (1955; assessed but not recommended for inclusion in the Boroondara Heritage Overlay; Hermes ID: 14723; and Flats, 157 Highfield Road, Camberwell (1960; not assessed, see Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2007: 147). McIntyre's late twentieth-century work is represented in Boroondara by his designs at Trinity Grammar School, Kew (1990s; not assessed).

The three McIntyre Partnership projects cited by the nomination as most clearly illustrating the design evolution that led to Summer House and Cliff House are his projects at Kyla Park, NSW (1972); another of his own houses, Sea House at Mornington (1978; not assessed) and the multi-residential work at Dinner Plain (1985; not assessed). The latter two figure prominently in McIntyre's own assessment of his work, with Sea House described as McIntyre's 'favourite work and best example of an emotionally responsive building' and the Sir Zelman Cowan medal-winning Dinner Plain alpine village being a project of which he is 'immensely proud', representing a 'modernist interpretation ... more sympathetic to its environment compared to '50s design' (Best 2012). It is noted in particular how Sea House—like Summer House and Cliff House—is best represented by an image of a view from the building to its environment.

A comparative analysis of Summer House and Cliff House within McIntyre's residential work in Boroondara and more broadly suggests that it would fill a significant gap within the municipality, being a representation of the evolution of McIntyre's significant late-twentieth-century work which shaped his modernism in response to the environment.

More challenging is analysing Summer House and Cliff House against other late-twentieth-century places in Boroondara. To the best of the author's knowledge, Edmond and Corrigan's McCartney House at 19 Rockingham Close, Kew (1982; Boroondara HO117; Hermes ID 22306) is the most recently constructed example of residential architecture on the Boroondara Heritage Overlay. Notable late twentieth-century architect-designed houses include Sean Godsell's own House, 8 Hodgson Street, Kew (1997; Hermes ID 194878) and John Wardle's Kitamura House, 123 Pakington Street, Kew (1996; Hermes ID 194886) both of which were identified in the 2007 Boroondara Thematic History (Built Heritage Pty Ltd: 145-6, 233) were assessed in 2012 and not recommended for inclusion in the Boroondara Heritage Overlay due to their then recentness.

The 2019 inclusion of Federation Square (1998-2002) on the Victorian Heritage Register (H2390) has demonstrated that relatively recent architecture of outstanding quality can merit heritage designation, and that recentness alone should not be an implicit criteria for not recommending inclusion. It is noted, for example, that McCartney House was included in the Boroondara HO as a recommendations of the City of Kew Urban



Conservation Study (Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd 1988), just six years after its construction. Yet such inclusions are far from common or uncontroversial, and the enduring qualities of such places that merit designation have to be demonstrated with particular precision and a degree of foresight.

On balance, it is considered that the lack of significant late 20th century residential architecture on the Boroondara Heritage Overlay may now be considered a gap in the heritage overlay rather than the result of an inherent obstacle. In this regard, Summer House and Cliff House would help fill this gap.



Assessment Against Criteria

Criteria referred to in *Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay*, Department of Planning and Community Development, September 2012, modified for the local context.

CRITERION A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of the City of Boroondara's cultural or natural history (historical significance).

The place does not meet this criterion.

CRITERION B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Boroondara's cultural or natural history (rarity).

The place does not meet this criterion. While late 20th century residential architecture is rare on the Boroondara Heritage overlay, it is not rare in and as of itself.

CRITERION C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Boroondara's cultural or natural history (research potential).

The place does not meet this criterion.

CRITERION D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

The place does not meet this criterion.

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

Through their siting, materials and internal planning, Summer House and Cliff House demonstrate a masterful aesthetic response to the site. Using a design process that began with internal considerations, both Summer House and Cliff House afford a particular aspect on a unique riparian environment, with expansive views in both directions along the river from its position on the rivers' elbow. In particular, the use of large, single pane windows and sliding doors draw the outside environment in, with the vertical orientation of the houses allowing unusually close proximity to the canopies of established trees and the many visiting fauna species. Externally, the recessive cladding, use of multifaceted angles and light, cantilevered balconies further demonstrate a deference to the aesthetics of the environment and landform.

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

The place does not meet this criterion. The houses are built on a challenging site, yet deploy common structural and construction techniques.

CRITERION G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

The place does not meet this criterion.



CRITERION H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Boroondara's history (associative significance).

Summer House and Cliff House represent fine late-career examples of the work of Peter and Dione McIntyre, whose work individually, in collaboration and as part of the McIntyre Partnership has resulted in influential and award-winning architecture within the municipality and throughout Victoria. As a return to the site with which Peter and Dione McIntyre are most closely associated, the houses combine their particular knowledge of the site gained over the previous five decades of lived experience, with the development of an architectural approach honed across a broad range of sites and in response to distinctive environments. The fact that they chose to make Summer House their home exemplifies their special association of the place.

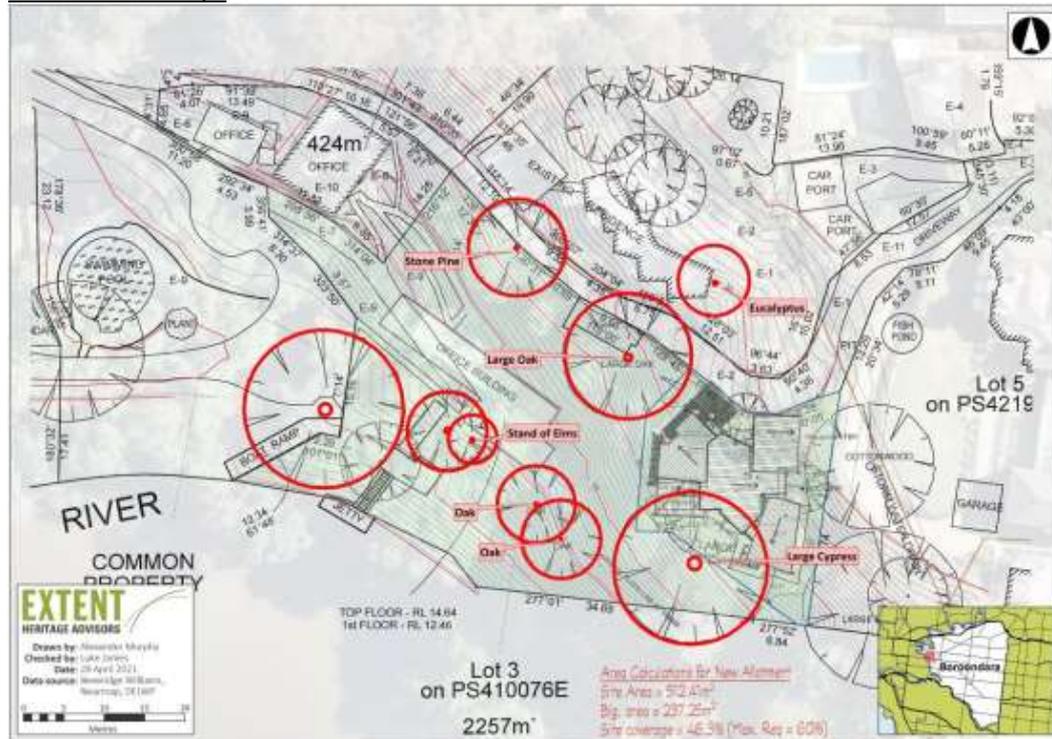


Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The houses at 25 Swinton Avenue Kew (Summer House and Cliff House) and their landscape environment including the eucalyptus to the east of Summer House (noted on the Tree control map below) are significant to the City of Boroondara as a group, including the smaller annex to the Summer House known as the Tea House. The carport and garage for Summer House are not significant.

Tree Control Map¹



How is it significant?

Summer House and Cliff House are of local aesthetic and associative significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

Through their siting, materials and internal planning, Summer House and Cliff House demonstrate a masterful aesthetic response to the site. Using a design process that began with internal considerations, both Summer House and Cliff House afford a particular aspect on a unique riparian environment, with expansive views in both directions along the river from their position on the river's elbow. In particular, the use of large, single pane windows and sliding doors draw the outside environment in, with the vertical orientation of the houses allowing unusually close proximity to the canopies of established trees and the many visiting fauna species. Externally, the recessive cladding,

¹ Map incorporates data from Beverage Williams and Co Pty Ltd '2 Hodgson Street and 25 Swinton Avenue Kew, Plan of Existing Conditions' dated 4 May 2007; Nearnmap aerial imagery (2021) and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).



use of multifaceted angles and light, cantilevered balconies further demonstrate a deference to the aesthetics of the environment and landform. (Criterion E)

Summer House and Cliff House represent fine late-career examples of the work of Peter and Dione McIntyre, whose work individually, in collaboration and as part of the McIntyre Partnership has resulted in influential and award-winning architecture within the municipality and throughout Victoria. As a return to the site with which Peter and Dione McIntyre and most closely associated, the houses combine their particular knowledge of the site gained over the previous five decades of lived experience, with the development of an architectural approach honed across a broad range of sites and in response to distinctive environments. The fact that they chose to make Summer House their home exemplifies their special association of the place. (Criterion H)

Grading and Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Boroondara Planning Scheme as an individually Significant place (Group listing).

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Boroondara Planning Scheme:

External Paint Colours <i>Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface?</i>	Yes
Internal Alteration Controls <i>Is a permit required for internal alterations?</i>	No
Tree Controls <i>Is a permit required to remove a tree?</i>	Yes
Victorian Heritage Register <i>Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?</i>	No
Incorporated Plan <i>Does an Incorporated Plan apply to the site?</i>	No
Outbuildings and fences exemptions <i>Are there outbuildings and fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted <i>Can a permit be granted to use the place for a use which would otherwise be prohibited?</i>	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place <i>Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006?</i>	No



Curtilage Map



Identified By

Norman Day, Nomination submission, 2020.

References

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<https://www.domain.com.au/news/retirement-not-on-drawing-board-20120710-21tro/>

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Day, Norman, 2020, 'A Most Beautiful Piece of Land – McIntyre's River House Block',
<https://mcintyrepartnership.com/>.

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<https://aboriginalhistoryofyarra.com.au>

P McIntyre, Architect Victoria, Summer 2010: 4-5.

Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988.

Site visit and interviews with Peter and Dione McIntyre, 18 March 2021.



Photographs



Figure 1. View from Cliff House of River House, river and city beyond.



Figure 2. View south east along the river from Summer House, showing balcony of Summer House, Cliff House and Victoria Street Bridge.



Figure 3. View from Summer House dining room, over the river to the east. Note cabinet colours referencing River House colour scheme.



Figure 4. View from Cliff House of river and city beyond.



Figure 5. View from Cliff House of river and city beyond. Note retractable door panels.



Figure 6. View of built in seating and view south east from Cliff House. Note large cypress tree in foreground.



Figure 7. View west from Cliff House, showing vertical arrangement of balconies. Note proximity of large cypress tree canopy.



Figure 8. View from Cliff House undercroft kitchenette.



Figure 9. 'Tea House' component within Summer House curtilage.