

## McDowell Residence (former)

Prepared by: GML Heritage

**Address:** 1 Caravan Street BALWYN

<b>Name:</b> McDowell Residence (former)	<b>Survey Date:</b> December 2021
<b>Place Type:</b> House	<b>Architect:</b> A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall
<b>Grading:</b> Individually Significant	<b>Builder:</b> Cecil McDowell (owner/builder)
<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1956–58



Figure 1 1 Caravan Street, Balwyn. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 2 1 Caravan Street, Balwyn. (Source: GML 2021)



## Historical Context

The area of Caravan Street, Balwyn, is on the traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung.

This place is associated with the following historic themes taken from the *Boroondara Thematic Environmental History* (2012):

### *6.3.4 Suburban infill after Second World War*

### *9.3.2 Designing fine buildings*

Balwyn is a residential suburb about 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south are Canterbury and Surrey Hills and to the north is Balwyn North, which is separated from Balwyn by Belmore Road. Deepdene, historically forming part of south-west Balwyn, became a separate suburb in 2008.

### *Interwar development*

A number of significant infrastructure projects established from the first decades of the twentieth century provided opportunities for extensive residential development in Balwyn. A short section of the Outer Circle Railway, between East Camberwell and Deepdene, was reopened in 1900 and was serviced by the 'Deepdene Dasher' steam train until 1927. In addition, the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust extended its electric tramway service from Malvern along Glenferrie Road and Cotham Road to Deepdene in 1913. Near the tram terminus the new Deepdene State School was erected in 1914. In 1916 the tram line reached Mont Albert, but was not through-routed to the city by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board until 1929. The Burke Road tram reached Camberwell Railway Station in 1917, and in 1918 reached Cotham Road, Deepdene. In 1920 sewerage and electricity were established, with sewerage extending to Balwyn by 1927, and reaching Balwyn North in 1938 (Built Heritage 2015:10). A number of small farms and orchards in Balwyn were subdivided for suburban housing in the late 1920s and 1930s. Many new home-buyers erected affordable detached timber bungalows during this period under the credit foncier scheme provided by the State Savings Bank of Victoria. Californian Bungalows, English Revival and other interwar styles, which were built to designs provided in the State Bank pattern books, predominated across large areas of Balwyn, including that bounded by Whitehorse Road, Belmore Road, Burke Road and Balwyn Road. An elevated area on the north side of Whitehorse Road was developed in the 1930s as the prestigious Reid Estate. The wealthy retailer Oliver Gilpin built the mansion home 'Idylwyld' (now Connaught Aged Care) in Balwyn in the 1930s; its extensive grounds included lavish sunken gardens, an ornamental lake, a swimming pool and a private zoo.

Improvements in infrastructure coincided with several successive changes in municipal status. The former Shire of Boroondara (as it had been known since 1871) was renamed the Shire of Camberwell and Boroondara in May 1902, then upgraded to a Borough in April 1905, a Town in May 1906, and finally the City of Camberwell in April 1914 (Built Heritage 2015:10).

In 1925, Balwyn was described in *Australian Home Beautiful*:

*Charming indeed is this new suburb of Balwyn, to the eastward of Melbourne, towards that spot where the morning sun rises over the top of the Dandenong Ranges to stretch its light across one of the most beautiful environs in the city. Here the land is undulating and the eye wanders for miles upon miles across farm and orchard land to the blue distance of the hills to the east, so to the northeast, where the Healesville and Warburton ranges lie –*



*more distant still – in the faint blue of cloud-land. All this erstwhile farming land is revealing the urge of the expansion of the great city, and red-tiled roofs and new homes now dot (and in some places cover) the land of the Orchardist and the Farmer; but “the vistas” are there and there are miles upon miles yet to go before suburban settlement can reach the tall slopes of the Dandenongs. Just as the little farms and glades are varied, both in colour and form, so do the new houses show that pleasing variety which betokens individual interest in the problem of the new home. Gone are the old ideas of slate or iron roofs and party-coloured bricks and cast iron trimmings, and now, pleasing colour notes of red, brown and green nestle into the newly-formed gardens of these outer suburbs (cited in Built Heritage 2015:11).*

The interwar period saw significant expansion of Balwyn and Deepdene. A weatherboard Church of Christ was built at the corner of Cherry Road (1922) and two brick Catholic church-schools were built in Whitehorse Road, Deepdene (1923) and Brenbeal Street, Balwyn (1930). Around the same time, St Barnabas Anglican Church on Balwyn Road was also extended. There was extensive commercial development, including shops and banks, along both sides of Whitehorse Road in Balwyn. A shopping strip developed along Whitehorse Road, Deepdene, while smaller strips appeared along Burke Road (at Belmore Road, and later at Doncaster Road), and near the junction of Bulleen and Doncaster roads. Other new churches appeared during this period, while some of the older existing church buildings were entirely rebuilt to cater for enlarged congregations, notably the Balwyn Baptist Church on Whitehorse Road (1937), and the Frank Paton Memorial Presbyterian Church on Burke Road in Deepdene (1941) (Built Heritage 2015:11).

Fintona Girls' School, which had opened in Hawthorn in 1896, relocated to David Syme's former mansion 'Tourmont' in Balwyn Road in 1936. The Anglican Mission of St James and St John opened a large babies' home on Whitehorse Road, Balwyn, in 1934. Hotels were prohibited in Balwyn and Deepdene following the Local Option vote of 1920, a reflection of the strong temperance views of the local population, but other opportunities for leisure included three picture theatres that operated in Whitehorse Road in the 1930s and 1940s, one of which (the Balwyn Theatre) survives. Beckett Park was well patronised as were the adjacent Maranoa Gardens. There was limited industrial development in Balwyn; an exception was the Oslo Bakery in Deepdene. The textile company Holeproof Ltd established a large factory in Whitehorse Road, Deepdene, in the early 1940s.

### *Postwar development*

In the late 1940s the Housing Commission of Victoria acquired land at the south-west corner of Balwyn and Belmore roads, which was developed into an estate of 200 detached and semi-detached red-brick dwellings. Many of these houses were dedicated as public housing for war widows. A small group of shops at the corner of Hilda Street and Tivey Parade was also built to serve this new neighbourhood.

From 1947, Balwyn and Balwyn North were acknowledged not only as epicentres for the Small Homes Service but also for modern architect-designed homes in general. A number of notable architects, including Robin Boyd, designed Modernist homes in Balwyn in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly in the streets east of Balwyn Road, including the elevated area around Beckett Park. Several new churches were also constructed, extended or rebuilt in the postwar period to provide for burgeoning congregations (Built Heritage 2015:12). This included new Catholic churches at Deepdene and Balwyn.



Since the 1990s a significant influx of new residents into the area has seen the extensive replacement of modest interwar homes with new residential development. The suburb of Balwyn today is favoured by many new home-owners for access to Balwyn High School – a top-rated co-educational government secondary school with over 2000 students.

## History

The land at 1 Caravan Street, Balwyn, originally formed part of Elgar's Crown Special Survey purchased and surveyed by Henry Elgar in 1841.

Elgar did not reside on the land as he was based in the West Indies, employing an agent to manage his investments in Australia. The survey was subdivided into small farms and grazing runs and leased out for several years. After financial difficulties forced Elgar to sell his land, the majority was purchased by a shipowner named Brooks, while a third of the survey remained in the possession of Mrs Dyce, the widow of one of Elgar's business partners.

David Kenny, farmer, purchased 35 acres of Elgar's land in 1904. Kenny owned the property until 1928, when ownership was transferred to Carrington and Co Pty Ltd and the land was subdivided into suburban lots in 1929, the subject site becoming lot 139 of the 'Kenny's Hill Estate'. Changing ownership several times over the next 17 years, the vacant lot was finally purchased in 1956 by butcher Cecil McDowell and his wife Joanna, who shortly after constructed a house on the land.

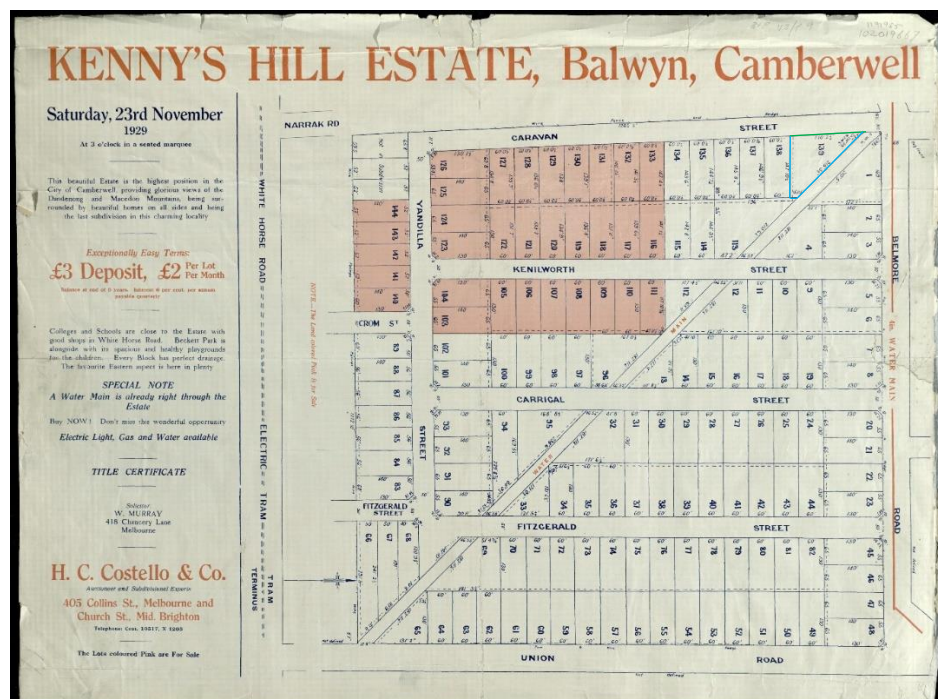


Figure 3 Kenny's Hill Estate, Balwyn plan of subdivision. Lot 139 is outlined in blue. (Source: Batten & Percy Pty Ltd 1929, State Library of Victoria, with GML overlay)

To design their new house, the McDowells engaged the architectural firm of A. K. Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall. Working drawings for the 'Proposed Residence of A. C. McDowell, Esq', dated December 1956, depict a skillion-roofed house on an elongated split-level plan. To compensate for the slope of the site, the northern portion of the house (containing the living areas) was raised above the ground, with a precast concrete slab floor elevated on steel posts and beams.

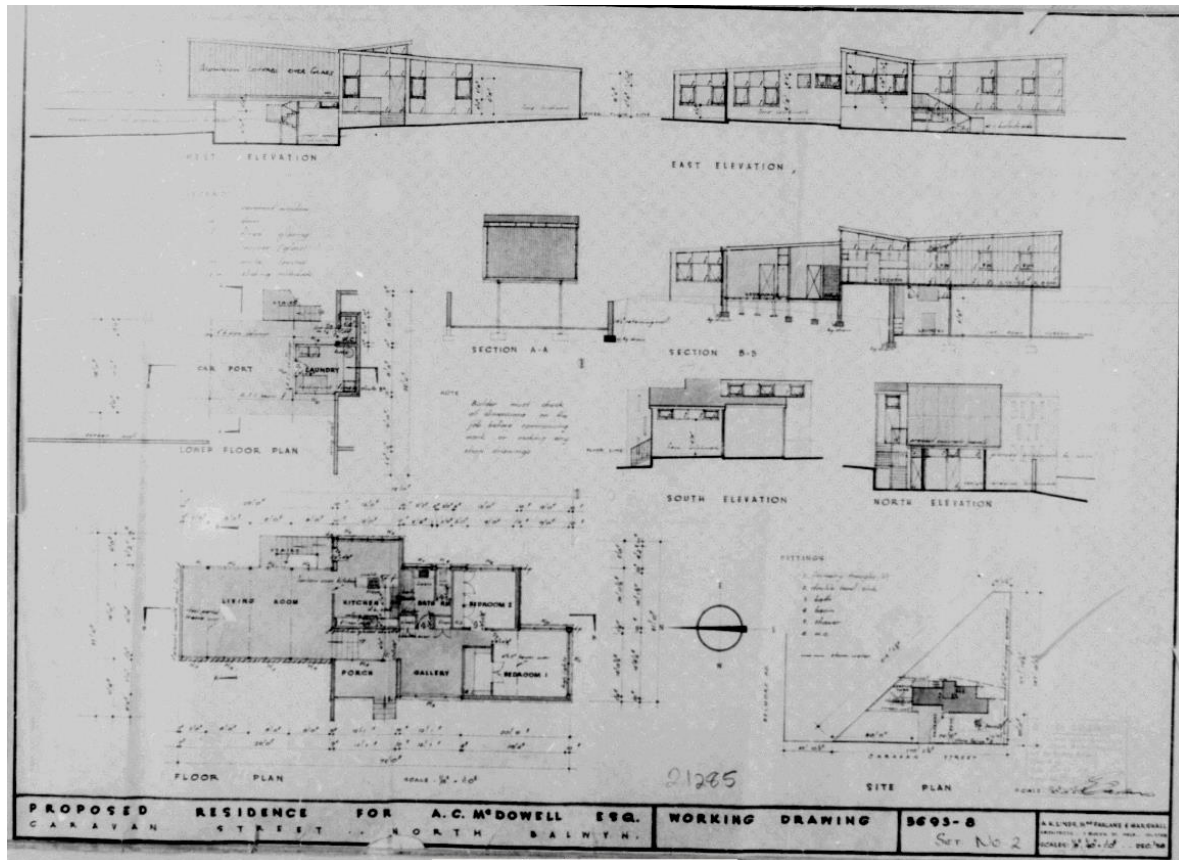


Figure 4 Working drawing for the proposed residence at 1 Caravan Street, North Balwyn, prepared by A. K. Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall in December 1956. (Source: BP 21285)

In January 1957 the project was published in the property column of *The Argus* newspaper, in which it was lauded as a fine solution to the problem of building on land with a steep fall (*Argus*, 18 Jan 1957:8). In September 1957 the City of Camberwell issued a building permit for the erection of the 'four roomed brick veneer' house to cost £6,000. Council records reveal that construction commenced in January 1958 and was completed about twelve months later (BP 21285).

The McDowell family lived in the house until 1971. The house was sold to the Markwell family, who enlarged it at the rear by extending the family room and adding a new master bedroom wing in 1972 (BP 50946).

The property was sold again in 1979, after which an inground pool (1980, BP 67929) was added and a family room extension (1986) was built to the design of architect Peter Sandow (BP 80378).



Figure 5 Article published in *The Argus* before the house was built, discussing how its design tackled the slope of the land. (Source: *Argus*, 18 Jan 1957:8)

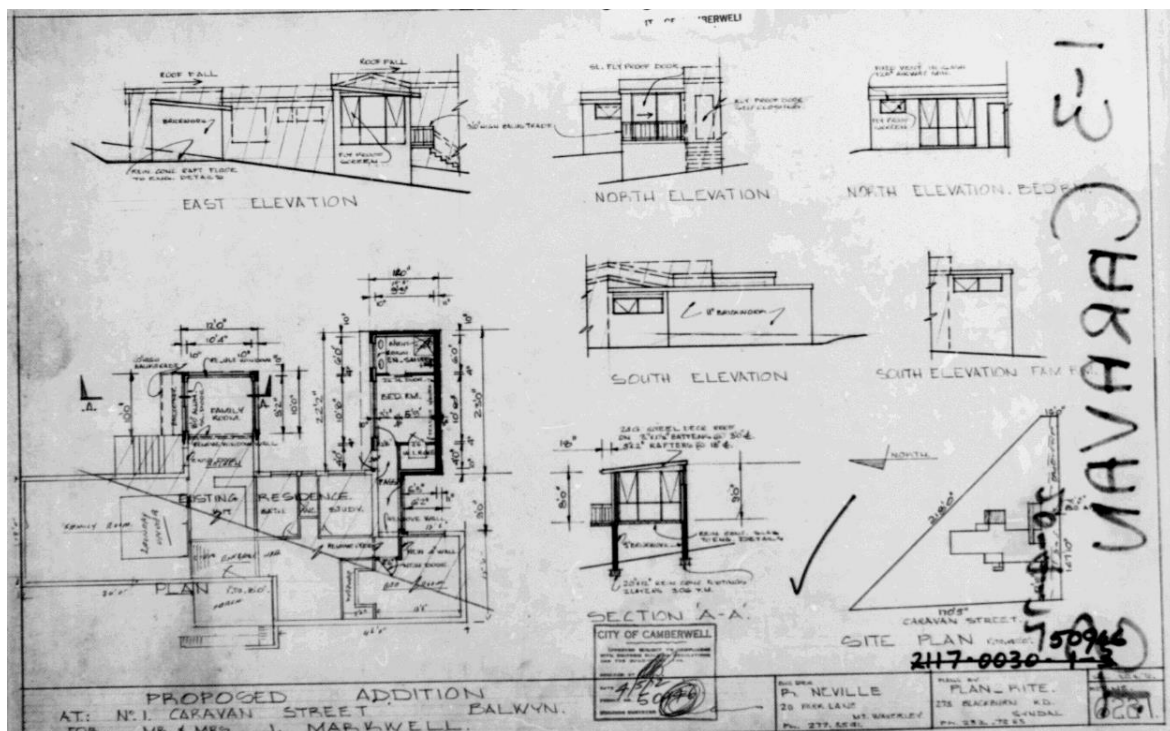


Figure 6 Working drawing for extension made to the rear of the house in 1972. (Source: BP 50946)



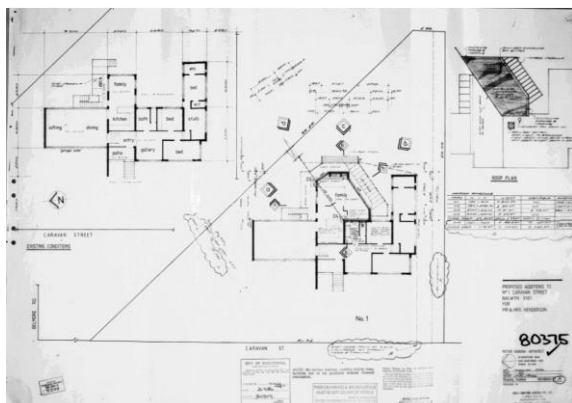


Figure 7 Working drawing showing the extension of a family room to a design by architect Peter Sandow in 1986. (Source: BP 80378)

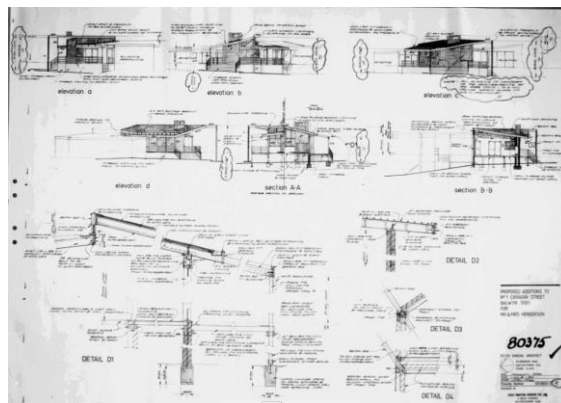


Figure 8 Elevations of the proposed family room designed by architect Peter Sandow in 1986. (Source: BP 80378)

The property changed hands again in 1989 and 2018. Council building cards record no alterations or additions to the property since 1986. However, by November 2018 the overpainted brick walls of the house had been rendered and the open carport under the living room had been enclosed with metal garage roller doors (images viewed in Google Street View).

#### **A. K. Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall**

This prominent postwar architectural firm grew from the interwar practice of Albert Keith Lines (1897–81), who opened an office in 1923. Five years later he took on Miss Jessica MacFarlane (1911–95) as an articled pupil. She rose to become a senior designer and, during the 1930s, was responsible for many large residential projects that characterised the firm's output during that time. The office closed down during the Second World War but re-opened in 1945 with MacFarlane as a full partner. Three years later they were joined by Bruce Marshall (born 1923), a returned serviceman who was himself elevated to partnership in 1952. MacFarlane left the office in 1954 (when she married and moved to South Australia) but her surname was retained in the firm's title. Much of the subsequent output of A. K. Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall was guided by Marshall, whose expertise was in larger-scale commercial and industrial work. While the office undertook some residential commissions during the 1950s and 1960s, it otherwise became best known for council offices and other municipal buildings, which formed the mainstay of the practice well into the 1970s (Goad and Willis 2012:411).

#### **Description**

The house at 1 Caravan Street, Balwyn, is a single-storey skillion-roofed brick house designed in the postwar Modernist style. Occupying an unusually wide allotment that slopes down from east to west, the house is expressed as a cluster of separate volumes that extends across the site. Where the ground slopes away at the west side, one part of the house (containing the living room) is elevated above the ground on metal posts, forming a double carport below (now enclosed as a garage). Although expressed as separate volumes, the parts of the house are united under a broad and continuous skillion roof, clad in metal tray decking, which slopes in the opposite direction to the land. At the rear of the house, a central projecting wing (containing kitchen and family room) has a skillion roof that slopes in the other direction, which forms a partial butterfly-like profile. This wing is the addition designed by architect Peter Sandown in 1986.



The elongated street elevation is effectively double-fronted, with the southern half (containing bedrooms and bathrooms) projecting slightly forward and the northern half (comprising the elevated living room) recessed; the point of intersection is marked by a projecting brick wing-wall enlivened with three rows of narrow rectangular openings. The northern half of the west-facing façade is entirely glazed, comprising four bays of full-height multi-paned windows, while the southern half comprises further similar full-height window bays (the first of which is slightly recessed to form an entry porch) and an entirely windowless third bay of rendered brickwork. The recessed entry porch, and the short flight of concrete steps leading up to it, have open balustrades made up of broad timber members.

The house is elevated above street level. The front boundary is defined by volcanic rock retaining walls that return into the drive on both sides. This type of landscaping is commonly seen in gardens of Modernist houses and are therefore thought to be part of the original or early landscaping on the site. COR-TEN panels are a more recent addition. The front garden is otherwise characterised by low shrubs and ground covers that do not compete visually with or obscure the house. An isolated mature eucalypt in one corner of the front garden may have been planted or retained and incorporated for sculptural interest as part of the landscape setting to the house, as was typical in landscape settings to Modernist houses (Goad 2002:249).

### **Integrity**

1 Caravan Street, Balwyn, is largely intact with some changes visible to original or early fabric. The house retains its original built form, distinctive skillion roof form, glazed window walls and door openings and joinery and early landscape elements. Alterations include the rendering of the brick walls, the installation of roller doors to the carport and changes to the balustrading to the front steps and porch. While the rendering of the brick walls has somewhat altered the materiality of the house, its original massing of separate wings under a single skillion roof remains clearly legible. While the original carport under the living room has been enclosed, it does not alter the integrity of the house and the ability to appreciate its original design innovation. While several phases of additions have been made to the rear of the house, these are not visible from the street and therefore do not detract from the overall integrity and 1950s character of the house.

Overall, the place has high integrity.

### **Comparative Analysis**

Throughout the middle decades of the twentieth century there was rapid suburban growth around the fringes of metropolitan Melbourne. Increased access to the motor car, growing prosperity in the postwar period, and the desire for a suburban lifestyle resulted in the push for new housing and services in the suburbs of Melbourne.

Despite various subdivisions in the late 1800s and in the early twentieth century, the vast majority of the housing stock in Balwyn North was not built until the postwar period. The area north of Belmore Road, where large tracts of land were taken up with orchards and small farms, was one of the last remaining areas of extensive undeveloped land close to the city. Balwyn North became the suburb of choice for many young married couples in the 1950s and 1960s, and their homes were often designed by architects. Many of these architects were influenced by the International style that had emerged in Europe between the wars. They approached house design with optimism and innovation, despite the material shortages and other restrictions that had been imposed during the war years. Modernism offered an alternative to many of the postwar styles offered at the time, many of which



were simply scaled-down versions of the 1940s prototypes. The informality of open floor plans, and the relationship between interior spaces and the landscape setting, fitted comfortably within the Australian context, and this, coupled with a simplicity of structure and minimisation of decoration, worked at a time when demand for housing was high, building materials were in short supply, and money to spend on housing was scarce.

As a local example of the work of A. K. Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall, 1 Caravan Street represents a significant departure from the firm's pre-war output, which is well represented in the Balwyn / Balwyn North area by Moderne-style brick houses such as 19 Oakdale Avenue, built in 1936 (HO192), 136 Whitehorse Road, built in 1936 (HO419) and 8 Cityview Road, built in 1938. 1 Caravan Street is also quite different from the firm's earliest post-war work in the area, typified by the triple-fronted brick dwelling at 1 Ashby Court, built in 1947. The firm's move towards a more progressive Modernist style was subsequent to the departure of partner Jessica MacFarlane in 1954 and the increasing role of Bruce Marshall, who joined the office in 1948 and became a partner in 1952. This switch is evident in a house at 263 Doncaster Road, built in 1955, which may be the first truly modern dwelling that the office designed in Balwyn / Balwyn North. With its flat roof, brick wing-walls, balcony, multi-paned window wall and integrated garage underneath, this interesting house anticipated the rather more striking design that the company produced for the McDowells the following year.

In spite of the dominance of houses built in the years following the Second World War, Heritage Overlay coverage of postwar houses in Balwyn and Balwyn North is limited. The house at 1 Caravan Street, Balwyn, can be compared broadly to a number of contemporaneous houses in the locality that exhibit a similar use of volumetric massing, flat or low-pitched roofs, and full-height glazing. These include the following examples.



Figure 9 'The Bunbury House', 300 Balwyn Road, Balwyn North, designed by Robin Boyd in 1949 (HO616). (Source: GML 2022)

'Bunbury House', 300 Balwyn Road, Balwyn North is of local historical, architectural, aesthetic and social significance. It represents a significantly early and intact example of modernist architecture by prominent Australian architect, theorist, author and critic Robin Boyd. 'Bunbury house' displays clear associations in its design and detailing with the designs of Robin Boyd that were developed as part of the Small Homes Service, an initiative that sought to provide cost effective, architecturally designed homes to a wider audience. 'Bunbury house' incorporates design elements that are recognisable and important in Boyd's design work, including the design of efficient floor plans, floor to ceiling glazing, projecting eaves and suspended sun shading devices constructed from timber slats.



Figure 10 'Gillison House', 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn, designed by Robin Boyd in 1952 (HO177). (Source: GML 2022)

Architecturally, the design of the Gillison House at 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn, epitomises the approach to design adopted by Robin Boyd and other Melbourne Modernists. Its minimalist external cuboid expression is adorned only by 'structural decoration', characterised by the triangular bracing to windows. Like the nearby Stargazer House (designed by Peter McIntyre architect in 1951–52) at 2 Taurus Street, Balwyn North, it also took the form-follows-function dictum to a visual extreme in the design of the writer's study, visible on the top right in the photograph.



Figure 11 12–14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North, designed by Robin Boyd in 1948–49 with alterations by Boyd in 1959 and 1971 (HO928). (Source: Built Heritage 2020)

'Gillison House', 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn is of local historical and architectural significance. Architecturally its design epitomizes Boyd and other Melbourne Modernists' approach to design, with a minimalist external cuboid expression adorned only by 'structural decoration' as implied by the triangular bracing to windows. Like the nearby 'Stargazer house', (designed by Peter McIntyre architect in 1951–52) at 2 Taurus Street, Balwyn North, it also took the form-follows-function dictum to a visual extreme, in the design of the writer's study.

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There are also several postwar houses on the Heritage Overlay in the broader Boroondara context that are comparable to 1 Caravan Street Balwyn. Some examples are:



Figure 12 'Robin Boyd House I', 664-666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell, designed by Robin Boyd in 1947 (VHR H0879; HO116). (Source: National Trust of Australia (Victoria))

'Robin Boyd House I', 664-666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell is of local historical and architectural significance. The house is considered by Boyd's contemporaries as the prototype Post-War Modern house which took up new ideas about spatial flow, both inside and outside the building, revealing in the minimalism required by the war's materials conservation program and the challenges posed by the near impossible site. It extended the leading architecture of its time and strongly influenced an emerging group of architects. The house demonstrates innovative design with regard to response to site, informality in planning, flowing spatial arrangements, innovative use of materials and incorporation of built-in features. These are all aspects of domestic design which have now become common.



Figure 13 'former Hirsch House and Office' at 118 Glen Iris Road, Glen Iris, designed by Grigore Hirsch (CONARG Architects) in 1954-55 (HO897) (Source: Trethowan Architecture 2018)

The former Hirsch House and Office is of local historical, architectural, aesthetic and associative significance. The building and its response to the landscape and climate demonstrates the contemporary approach to local conditions favouring good orientation and functionalist planning

The residence is an intact example of a post-war Émigré architect's house and office and illustrates European Modernism as it was translated into a Melbourne context. The double-storey dwelling of the 1950s illustrates the Post-War Melbourne Regional style, demonstrating key characteristics of the style in the simplicity of the forms, low-pitch butterfly roof, textured clinker brick cladding and large areas of glass to the north. The bold forms are further expressed through the delineation of materials across the upper (clinker brick) and lower (concrete tile) levels and exposed steel structure. More broadly, the use of steel frame construction throughout, further allows the illusion of the upper level to dominate the architectural composition.

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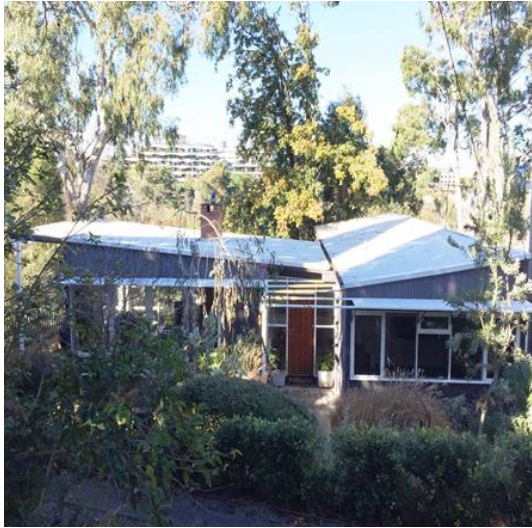


Figure 14 6 Reeves Court, Kew designed by Ernest Milston in 1955 (HO822). (Source: Trethowan 2017)

'Milston House', 6 Reeves Court, Kew is of local historical, architectural, aesthetic and associative significance. The house is a lightweight, timber framed house designed by architect Ernest Milston. The plan is formed of two rectangles reflective of the zones; the kitchen and living area are aligned with the street and run across the slope, while the bedrooms, bathroom and laundry are at right angles. Each wing has a separate skillion roof sloping to the other wing, creating an asymmetrical butterfly roof. A concrete driveway leads up from street level to a garage and studio, connected with the house by a pergola-covered path. A separate open pergola covers the entry. The building features extensive modular timber framed glazing. Horizontal awnings provide shade to the north, echoed in the open timber framing over the windows to the south that allow light penetration.



Figure 15 'The Guss Residence', 18 Yarra Street, Kew, designed by McGlashan & Everist in 1961 (Significant within HO530). (Source: Hermes)

The Guss Residence at 18 Yarra Street, Kew (Significant within HO530) is a good example of the inventive, spare, and environment-responsive designs of McGlashan & Everist. Built in 1961, the house consists of three pavilion forms around a central courtyard staggered up the sloping site. Utilising thin steel framing and light materials to reduce the bulk of the pavilions, glazed walls float above the driveway and provide views down the site.



Figure 16 'Dickie House', 6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn, c.1961–64 (HO784). (Source: Context in association with Trethowan 2017)

'Dickie House', 6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn is of local historical, architectural and aesthetic significance. The house is representative of the post-war design ethos, sense of optimism and architectural modernisation pioneered by Robin Boyd and others. The high-quality house-design features honesty of structure and material, clean lines, deep eaves and an overall sense of innovation in design. The integration of the house with the landscape, with its 'floating' appearance over the banks of the Yarra is characteristic of Modernist integration of architecture with natural context.



Figure 17 Cukierman Residence, 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn East, designed by Hayden & Associates (attributed to Anthony Hayden) in 1966 (HO857). (Source: Context in association with Trethowan 2018)

The Cukierman Residence at 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn, is of local historical, architectural, aesthetic, technical and associative significance to the City of Boroondara. The residence derives its aesthetic appeal from its unusual and striking architectural composition with references to the International Style. Interest is created through the floating, curved, massed form fronting the street and subtle but evocative detailing of materials. The horizontal articulation of the window sets with their green mosaic tiled spandrel panels is applied with effect. Slender circular columns support the raised form, creating an open undercroft, and the use of textured cream brick is continued in the landscaping elements such as the low walls and planters.

1 Caravan Street, Balwyn North, exhibits key elements of postwar Modernist housing typologies; most notably in its response to its site, informality in planning, flowing spatial arrangements and innovative use of materials. It compares to the earlier (1947) 'Robin Boyd House I' (VHR H0879; HO116) which is widely recognised as the prototype for postwar Modernist homes, in its clever adaptation to a difficult site, the use of new ideas regarding the spatial flow between inside and out, and the innovative use of materials in a time of postwar austerity.

Robin Boyd introduced the concept of a regional Melbourne style in 1947, calling for an architecture that was simple, light and fresh with an unpretentious elegance. Apperly, Irving and Reynolds (1989) described the typical characteristics of the style as a house with a flat or low-pitched roof with wide eaves, long unbroken roof lines with exposed rafters or joists, vertical or horizontal boarding, and large areas of glass with regularly spaced timber mullions. Examples of Robyn Boyd's work in Boroondara that demonstrate these qualities and are comparable to the subject place include: 300 Balwyn Road, Balwyn North, built in 1949 (HO616), 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn, built in 1952 (HO177) and 12–14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North, built in 1948–49, 1959, 1971 (HO928).



1 Caravan Street embraces these characteristics with a sophistication of design and planning that reflects the skill of its architects, A. K. Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall. It is comparable to the works of other notable Modernist architects, including Grigore Hirsch, CONARG Architects (118 Glen Iris Road, Glen Iris, 1954-55 HO897), Ernest Milston (6 Reeves Court, Kew, 1955, HO822), McGlashan & Everist (18 Yarra Street, Kew, 1961 Significant within HO530) and Hayden & Associates (Cukierman Residence, 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn East, HO857). Similar characteristics across all these houses include the use of a bold roof plane that appears to hover above the building, an expressed structural modularity in their design with an integration of the house into their site-specific landscapes, large walls of glazing that connect the interior with the exterior, simple unadorned planar wall surfaces, and a simple rectilinear planning.

Architecturally and aesthetically, 1 Caravan Street is one of the more striking examples of postwar residential architecture in the study area. With its low-pitched roof, rectilinear and partially elevated massing, window walls and clear articulation of new materials such as steel framework and concrete slabs floors, the house ably illustrates the basic tenets of International Modernism. Moreover, being designed on a long and relatively narrow plan due to a difficult site, the house has an atypically elongated street frontage that allows for an unparalleled expression of its Modernist form and detailing — a distinctive roof form of interlocking skillions, bays of full-height windows (occupying more than threequarters of the entire elevation) and the apparently hovering living room wing. Consequently, the house has a remarkable streetscape presence that has very few direct comparators in Boroondara.

Overall the subject site is an exceptionally fine example of an early mid-century modern house. It exhibits key characteristics of the style and is an innovative example of noted architects A. K. Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall.

### **Assessment Against Criteria**

Criteria referred to in *Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay*, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 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).*

1 Caravan Street, Balwyn, is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of Boroondara as a locus for fine, public and private buildings from the 1850s into the postwar period that were designed by leading architects. Designed in 1956 by prominent architects A. K. Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall, this house is one of relatively few private residential projects that the architects completed after 1954. The house is a notable example of the postwar residential work of the company, which had a long association with Boroondara through numerous commissions. Featured in *The Argus* for its innovative use of a concrete floor slab elevated on structural steel to overcome a difficult sloping site, the house exemplifies the large concentration of architect-designed Modernist houses built in Balwyn and Balwyn North during the 1950s and 1960s.

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

N/A

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



N/A

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

N/A

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

The house is aesthetically significant as one of the more striking examples of postwar residential architecture in the Balwyn / Balwyn North area. With its low-pitched skillion roof, rectilinear and partially elevated massing, window walls and clear articulation of new materials such as steel framework and concrete slab floors, the house ably illustrates the basic tenets of postwar Modernism. Situated high on a sloping block, and being designed on a long and relatively narrow plan in response to the site, the house has an atypically elongated street frontage that allows for an unparalleled expression of its Modernist form and detailing. This is enhanced by the spareness of the landscape setting and contrasting organic forms of the retaining wall and mature eucalypt. Consequently, the house has a remarkable streetscape presence that has few direct comparators.

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

N/A

*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).*

N/A

*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).*

N/A

## **Statement of Significance**

### **What is significant?**

The former McDowell Residence at 1 Caravan Street, Balwyn, designed by architects A. K. Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall in 1956, is significant.

Elements that contribute to significance include:

- an unusually elongated and double-fronted façade under a continuous skillion roof form
- a single-storey long and narrow plan, elevated at one end on an exposed steel framework to form a carport underneath
- full-height multi-paned window walls
- a projecting brick wing-wall enlivened with three rows of narrow rectangular openings

- a recessed entry porch with a short flight of concrete steps and open balustrades made up of broad timber members
- volcanic rock retaining walls to the street and drive
- an isolated mature eucalypt.

The 1972 and 1896 additions to the rear of the property are not significant nor are the roller doors to the carport and changes to the balustrading to the front steps and porch.

### How is it significant?

The house is of historical and aesthetic (architectural) significance to the City of Boroondara.

### Why is it significant?

1 Caravan Street, Balwyn, is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of Boroondara as a locus for fine, leading architect-designed public and private buildings from the 1850s into the postwar period. Designed in 1956 by prominent architects A. K. Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall, this house is one of the few private residential projects that the architects undertook anywhere after 1954. Featured in *The Argus* for its innovative use of a concrete floor slab elevated on structural steel to overcome a difficult sloping site, the house exemplifies the high concentration of architect-designed Modernist houses built in Balwyn and Balwyn North during the 1950s and 60s. (Criterion A)

The house is aesthetically significant as one of the more striking examples of post-war residential architecture in the area. With its low-pitched skillion roof, rectilinear and partially elevated massing, window walls and clear articulation of new materials such as steel framework and concrete slab floors, the house ably illustrates the basic tenets of postwar Modernism. Moreover, being designed on a long and relatively narrow plan due to a difficult site, the house has an atypically elongated street frontage that allows for an unparalleled expression of its Modernist form and detailing — a distinctive roof form of interlocking skillions, bays of full-height windows (occupying more than threequarters of the entire elevation) and an apparently hovering living-room wing. Consequently, the house and landscape elements have a remarkable streetscape presence that has very few direct comparators. (Criterion E)

### 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:

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**External paint controls**

*Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface?*

No

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**Internal alteration controls**

*Is a permit required for internal alterations?*

No

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**Tree controls**

*Is a permit required to remove a tree?*

Yes

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<b>Outbuildings and fences exemptions</b> <i>Are there outbuildings or fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	Yes: volcanic rock retaining walls
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<b>Victorian Heritage Register</b> <i>Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?</i>	No
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<b>Prohibited uses may be permitted</b> <i>Can a permit be granted to use the place for a use which would otherwise be prohibited?</i>	No
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<b>Aboriginal heritage place</b> <i>Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006?</i>	No
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<b>Incorporated plan</b> <i>Does an incorporated plan apply to the site?</i>	No
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**Identified by:**

Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2015





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