

## Mann House (former)

**Prepared by:** GML Heritage

**Address:** 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North

<b>Name:</b> Mann House (former)	<b>Survey Date:</b> December 2021
<b>Place Type:</b> House	<b>Architect:</b> Montgomery, King & Trengove (Neil Montgomery)
<b>Grading:</b> Individually Significant	<b>Builder:</b> Unknown
<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1954



Figure 1 39 Inverness Way Balwyn North. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 2 39 Inverness Way Balwyn North. (Source: GML 2021)

## Historical Context

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

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

### *9.3.2 Designing fine buildings*

North Balwyn is a residential suburb situated 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south is Balwyn, which is separated from North Balwyn by Belmore Road. It is bounded on the north by Koonung Creek and the Eastern Freeway. The suburb was formerly part of the City of Camberwell and from 1994 has been part of the City of Boroondara.

### *1940s and postwar development*

There had been a scattering of new housing development in the area north of Belmore Road from the late 1930s, but this area was developed significantly from the early 1940s as the new suburb of North Balwyn. Occupied with orchards and small farms, this was the one of the last remaining expanses of undeveloped land relatively close to the city. North Balwyn became the suburb of choice for many young married couples building new homes in the 1940s and 1950s (a proportion of which included returned servicemen). The suburb developed as quintessentially middle class, with a high proportion of brick homes and a notable absence of industrial activity. The ridge that ran along Doncaster Road was an advantage to house blocks in the adjoining streets, providing sought-after views to the distant ranges and encouraging the building of often grandiose double-storey homes. Public transport was provided with the extension from the electric tram from East Kew to North Balwyn in 1938, along High Street and Doncaster Road. A large shopping centre, known as North Balwyn Village, developed along Doncaster Road.

In the 1950s, the potential for large-scale residential development in North Balwyn was recognised by a private company, A.V. Jennings Pty Ltd, which proposed the Trentwood Estate on a large tract of land off Doncaster Road (Built Heritage 2015:12). From 1947, Balwyn and North Balwyn were acknowledged not only as epicentres for the Small Homes Service but also for Modernist 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.

This new residential expansion in North Balwyn, which included the Greythorn area in the 1950s, in turn brought commercial development. Several local retail strips appeared in the north of the study area, including in Bulleen Road at Dorado Avenue, in Balwyn Road between Lucifer and Echo streets, and, most notably, the prominent strip on Doncaster Road, just down from the Trentwood Estate. In 1960, G.J. Coles opened a large store on the corner of Doncaster Road and Burke Road, which was Melbourne's first American-style self-service drive-in supermarket complex. New schools and churches also appeared during this period of development. Balwyn High School, located in North Balwyn, opened in 1954, followed by Greythorn High School in 1959. Several new churches were constructed, extended or rebuilt to provide for burgeoning congregations (Built Heritage 2015:12). This included new Catholic churches at Deepdene, Balwyn and North Balwyn.

Since the 1990s, a significant influx of new immigrants into the area has seen the extensive replacement of interwar and 1940s homes with new residential development. The suburb of Balwyn

North today is favoured by many new home-owners for access to Balwyn High School—a co-educational government secondary school with nearly 2000 students.

## History

The land at 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North, 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 Freer Smith, Farmer of Bulleen Road, Kew purchased one hundred and forty-five acres of Edgar's Crown special Survey in 1915. The land was subsequently subdivided by surveyor E.P. Muntz into what was to become known as the Riverside Estate with allotments beginning to be sold in 1920. However, development of the estate was slow with most of the houses on the estate dating from the late 1930s and early 1940s. The subject site remained vacant until it was purchased by successful Melbourne estate agent Keith Mann, of Keith Mann Pty Ltd which had offices in Queen Street then Collins Street, Melbourne, South Yarra and Sunshine, and his wife Edna in 1952 making this house one of the last houses to be built on the Estate.

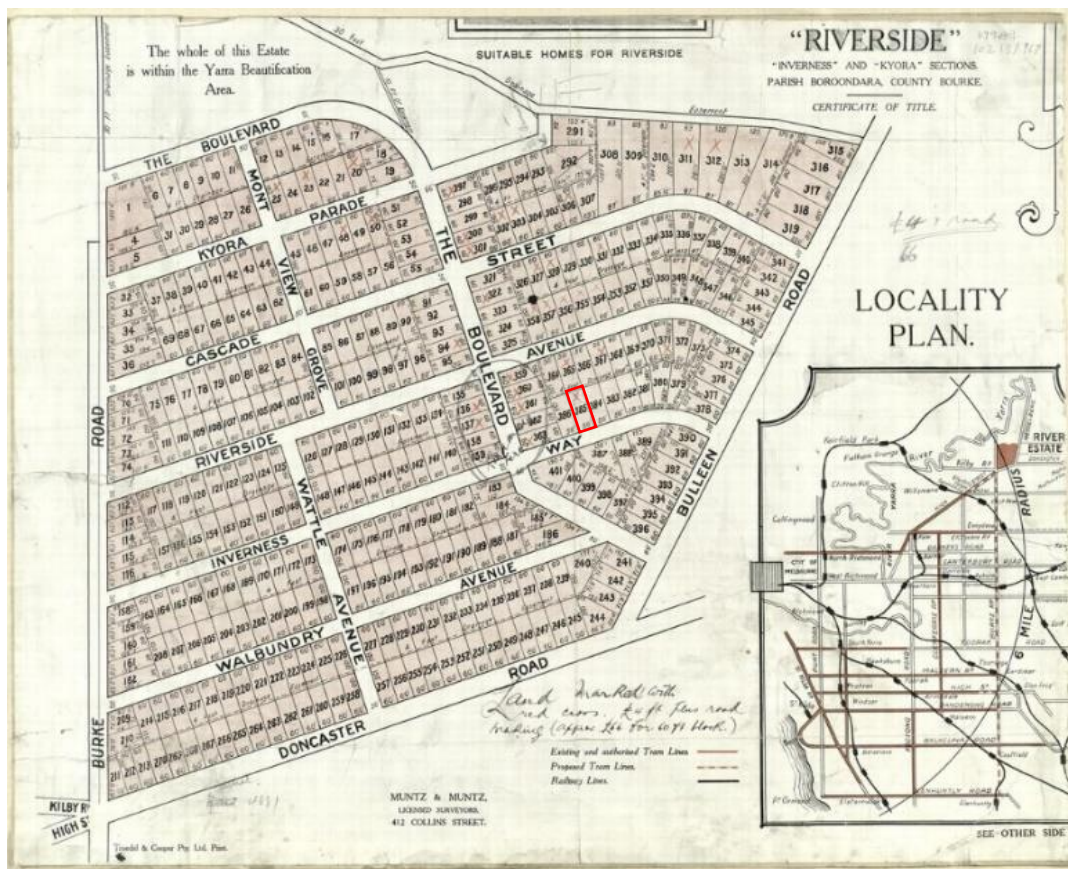


Figure 3 Plan showing the Riverside Estate (Batten and Percy (Firm) 193?) which was initially laid out in 1920. Keith and Edna Mann purchased lot 385 (outlined in red) in 1952. (Source: State Library Victoria)



The Manns commissioned then newly-formed architectural firm of Montgomery, King & Trengove to design their new home. Mann subsequently retained the firm to design his new house in North Balwyn. It was the firm's first residential project, and it attracted attention in popular and architectural media, being published in the property column of the *Argus* newspaper in 1954, and, in 1956, in a slender architectural guidebook published for the overseas and interstate visitors to the Olympic Games. The *Argus* article described how Mann had required north-facing views while retaining front rooms at street level, and otherwise drew attention to technical aspects, such as the use of prestressed concrete beams supporting slabs floors with a thin screed finish, and a 'maintenance-free' flat roof, made up of a timber deck with layers of asbestos felt and bitumen, topped with 42-gauge aluminium sheeting (*Argus*, 3 May 1954:8)

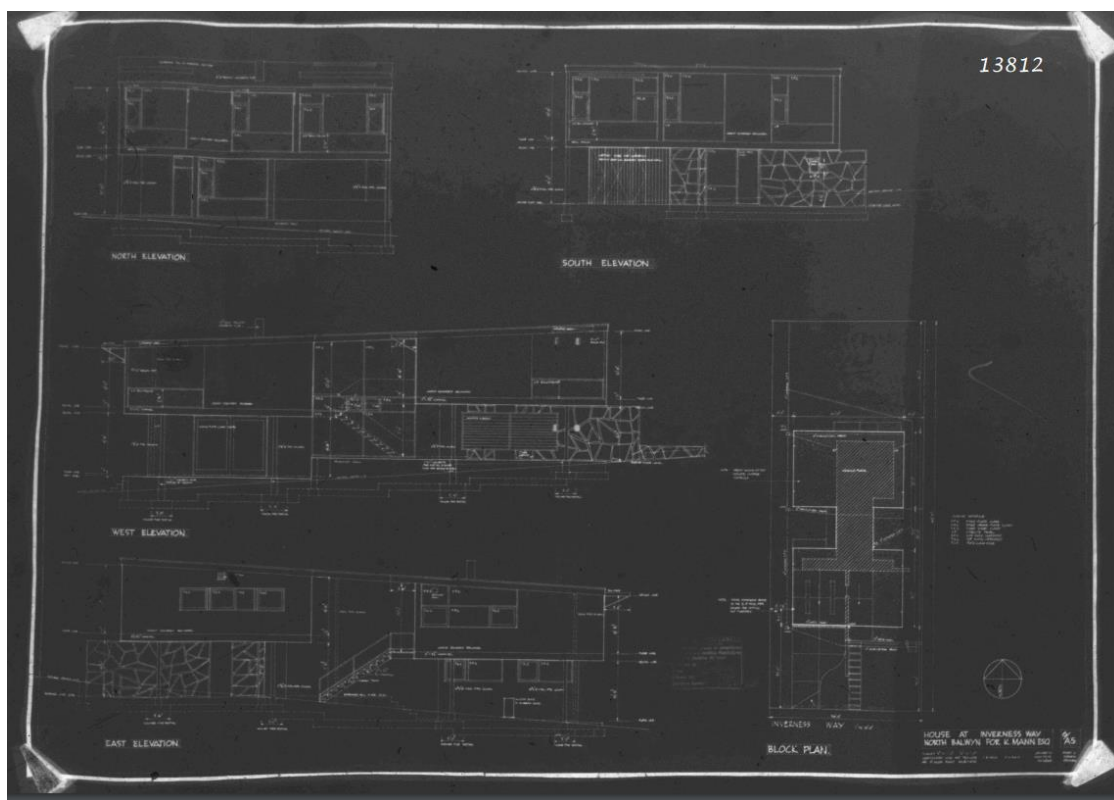


Figure 4 Working drawing for house at 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North showing east and west elevation and site plan. (Source: BP 35882)

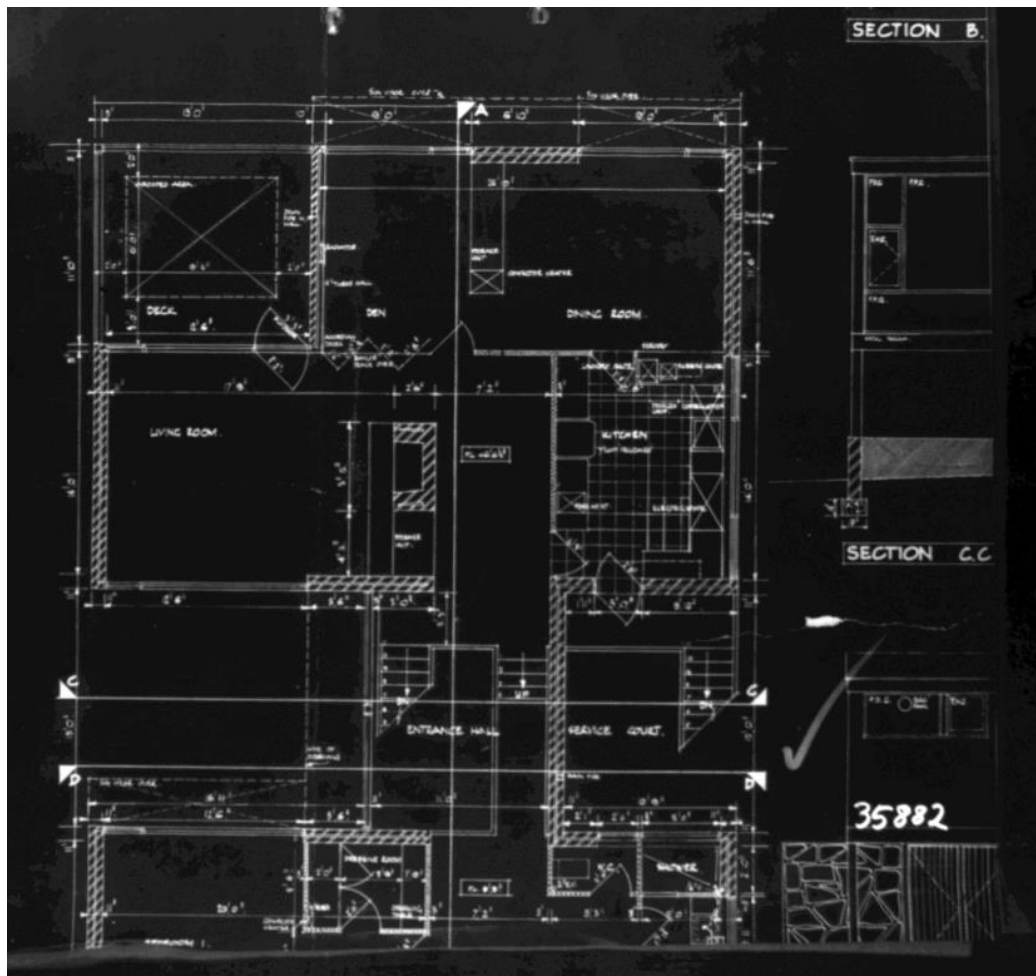


Figure 5 Working drawing for house at 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North showing part floor plan of rear of first floor with main living spaces facing north. Note the house is designed over four levels and is zoned with living spaces at the north (rear and bedrooms facing south (street)). (Source: BP 35882)

In 1964, the property was acquired by the Swiss government as a residence for their consul – Curt Mahnig (CT V6438 F540). The Mahnigs lived in the house until 1971, when Mahnig retired. Over the next twenty years successive Swiss consuls lived at the property until the property was sold in 1991 and again in 2002 when it was purchased by the current owners (CT V6438 F540).

Council building card records show that the Government of Switzerland obtained a permit to enclose a terrace at the property in September 1964, filling in of the roof above the street facing first floor terrace which can be seen open in the Peter Wille photographs (Figure 6).

Google street view shows that between August 2014 and November 2018 front garden works were undertaken which included rendering the low stone clad retaining walls, low front fence and letter box and replacement the concrete driveway and front path with pebbles set in concrete. The projecting stone clad wing wall under the house remains unaltered.



Figure 6 Photograph of street facing elevation of 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North not long after completion. Note roof to the first floor deck area is open. (Source: Willie, Peter 1954-55)



Figure 7 Photograph of rear (north) elevation of 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North taken not long after completion. (Source: Willie, Peter 1954-55)



Figure 8 Photograph of detail of first floor living room window overlooking an internal courtyard. (Source: Willie, Peter 1954-55)



Figure 9 Photograph taken from the street looking west showing east elevation of the house at 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North. Note the service court with external stairs to first level and the soft blue wall colour with deep blue glazed spandrel panels. (Source: Willie, Peter 1954-55)

The house is featured in *Melbourne Architecture* by Phillip Goad (2009) in which it is said to be 'One of the best examples in Melbourne of the influence of Harry Seidler's Rose Seidler House, Turramurra, New South Wales (1948-50)'. Goad further commented that the house is 'notable for its first floor concrete slabs laid on pre-stressed concrete beams and finished with a thin concrete screed' (Goad 2009:170).

### Montgomery, King & Trengove

Montgomery, King & Trengove was established in 1953 by Neil Edward Thomas Montgomery (1924-1995), Thomas Lionel King (1924-2001) and Robert Roff Trengove (1925-2010). The three met whilst studying architecture at the University of Melbourne and, after successfully collaborating on their final design project, decided to enter into partnership opening their office in 1953. While the firm initially concentrated on residential commissions, by the late 1960s they had gradually moved away from them to embrace other types of projects, notably branch banks (designing many for the ES&A Bank) and larger-scaled educational and institutional projects for university and state college campuses. Architect and critic Neil Clerehan noted in his obituary for Neil Montgomery, that the firm of



Montgomery, King & Trengrove 'quickly gained a reputation for excellence in the emerging Contemporary Style; white hard-edged cubistic forms, elevated with Mondrian inspired fenestration and a multiplicity of materials' (Clerehan 1995).

The partnership's first project, completed in 1953, was Keith Mann's real estate office at Sunshine. The house at 39 Inverness Way, also for Mann, was the firm's first residential project (Goad & Willis: 468). Montgomery, King & Trengrove has been noted for their hard-edged modernist style that reflected the partners of the firm's collective interest in the work of Oscar Niemeyer, Mies Van der Rohe and Marcel Bruer (Goad & Willis: 468).

## **Description**

The house at 39 Inverness Street, Balwyn North, is a two-storey-flat-roofed house designed in the postwar Modernist mode, expressed as a stark box-like volume elevated above the ground. The upper level of the house actually comprises two separate box-like volumes, connected by a common circulation space to create an H-shaped plan form. This is echoed at ground level, where the central core forms the entrance foyer, set back from the street behind a full-width void. The street facade is carefully balanced and regular, without being perfectly symmetrical. At ground level, the void is divided by a central and slightly projecting stone-clad wing wall, which defines the left (west) half as a double carport, and the right (east) half as an entry porch. The carport is partly enclosed by a louvred timber screen along its outer side, set back towards the rear, while the end wall is clad with vertical timber boards. The front door, offset alongside a full-height window, opens onto a paved area, with wide pebble concrete slab pathway that leads to the street. At the upper level, the plain white facade has a recessed balcony to the left side, directly above the carport, and otherwise incorporates large window bays. These bays contain several discretely-articulated elements laid out in a regular but asymmetrical geometric pattern evocative of painting by Mondrian: an unusually large, fixed sash window, a much narrower operable sash window with a small, fixed highlight above, and, along the base, a long spandrel infilled with deep blue tinted colourback glass. The balustrade of the recessed deck is treated with the same glazing. On the corner post of the deck is mounted a timber flagstaff.

## **Integrity**

39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North, is largely intact with few changes visible to original or early fabric. The house retains its original built form, rendered wall surfaces, flat roof with concealed gutters, glazed window walls with opaque glass spandrel panels, pattern of fenestrations and door openings and joinery. The house is distinguished by its carefully executed geometric massing and distinctive H shaped plan that is elevated off the ground and appears to hover above street level supported by an original stone clad wall. Alterations to the house visible from the street are the filling in of the roof above the first floor terrace which occurred in 1964, the addition of a stainless steel handrail, rendering of the low front wall, and the overall colour scheme. These alterations do not distract from the house's sophisticated execution of the postwar modernist idiom and, if desired, could be easily reversed.

Overall the house is of very 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 the suburban lifestyle resulted in the push for new housing and services in the suburbs of Melbourne.

In spite of the various subdivisions in the late 1800s and in the early twentieth century, the vast majority of the housing stock in North Balwyn 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. North Balwyn became the suburb of choice for many young married couples in the 1950s and 1960s with many using architects to design their homes. 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 short to spend on housing.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Montgomery, King & Trengove designed other Modernist houses in Boroondara. Of their early residential commissions, only one other example has been identified in the North Balwyn and Balwyn area: the former Kernutt House at 1080 Burke Road, Balwyn North. Completed in 1960, the former Kernutt House departed from the overtly Seidler-esque mode of their mid-1950s projects (the elevated box). Instead, the former Kernutt House was single-storey on a C-shaped courtyard plan, suggesting the influence of Mies van der Rohe. While this house (which was profiled in Neil Clerehan's *Best Australian Houses* in 1961) is still extant, its street facade has been substantially remodelled.

Other examples of the residential work by Montgomery, King & Trengove identified elsewhere in Boroondara, include 28 Monomeath Avenue, Canterbury (also built in 1954 like 39 Inverness Way, demolished 2012), and 13 Redmond Street, Kew (1961, demolished in 2021).

When considered more broadly as the manifestation of a particularly stark and hard-edged version of Modernism, the house at 39 Inverness Way can be compared with such local examples as the former Segal Residence at 7 Bernard Street, Balwyn North (Walter Pollock, 1959 demolished 2016) and the former Crawford Residence on the Trentwood Estate at 17 Trentwood Avenue (Polish-born and trained Tadeusz Karaskinski, 1958) which is assessed as significant as part of this study.

Montgomery's work still stands out as perhaps the most overt example of this type of Modernism in Victoria. This has been acknowledged by Dr Philip Goad, who, in 1999, described the house as 'one of the best examples in Melbourne of the influence of Harry Seidler's Rose Seidler House, Turramurra, NSW (1948-50)' (Goad 2009:171).

One other house designed by Montgomery, King & Trengrove has been identified, recently assessed for inclusion in a Heritage Overlay (of the Bayside Planning Scheme). Designed in 1962, Shallcross House at 245 Dendy Street, Brighton East is a double-storey flat-roofed concrete brick modern house expressed as a series of interlocking volumes with its street frontage dominated by a first-floor bay that projects over a double carport and recessed porch. In its use of an elevated cube projecting over a carport, the Shallcross House has clear similarities to the earlier Mann House. Assessed in 2007,



Shallcross House was subsequently significantly altered and was never included on the Heritage Overlay.

The house at 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North can be compared broadly to a number of contemporaneous houses in the Heritage Overlay in the Balwyn and Balwyn North areas that exhibit a similar use of volumetric massing, flat or low pitched roofs and full-height glazing:



Figure 10 300 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 11. 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn designed by Robin Boyd in 1952 (HO177) (Source: GML 2022)

'Gillson 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



Figure 12. 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)

visual extreme, in the design of the writer's study.

12-14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North is of local architectural and technical significance. Architecturally, the house is an early and notably intact example of the work of the eminent designer and writer Robin Boyd. It remains as one of relatively few surviving examples from this seminal phase of Boyd's career, prior to his celebrated partnership with Roy Grounds and Frederick Romberg. Along with the Gillison House in Kireep Road, Balwyn (1951), and the Dunstan House in Yandilla Road (1950), it is one of three outstanding early and substantially intact houses by Robin Boyd in the area. Considered collectively, these provide rare and valuable evidence of the innovation, boldness and fresh design approaches of a young architect on the cusp of an illustrious career.

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Several postwar houses on the Heritage Overlay in the broader Boroondara context are comparable to 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North:



Figure 13. '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

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materials and incorporation of built-in features. These are all aspects of domestic design which have now become common.



Figure 14 '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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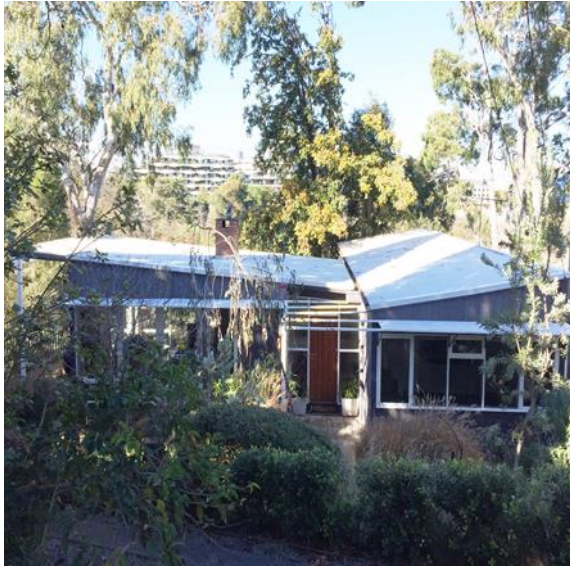


Figure 15. 6 Reeves Court, Kew designed by Ernest Milston in 1955 (HO822) (Source: Trethowan 2017)

'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 16. 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 City of Boroondara) is a good example of the inventive, spare, and environment-responsive designs of McGlashan & Everist. Built in 1961, the Guss residence 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.

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Figure 17. 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 18. 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 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

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

Boyd first 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 describe the typical characteristics of the style as a house with a flat or low-pitched roof with wide eaves, vertical or horizontal boarding and large areas of glass with regularly spaced timber mullions. Examples of



Boyd's work in Boroondara that demonstrate these qualities and are comparable to the subject place include: 300 Balwyn Road, Balwyn North 1949 (HO616), 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn 1952 (HO177) and 12-14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North, 1948-49, 1959, 1971 (HO928).

39 Inverness Way 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, HO822), McGlashan & Everist (18 Yarra Street, Kew, 1961, Significant within HO530), and Hayden & Associates (Cukierman Residence, 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn East). Similar characteristics across all these houses include the use of a flat or low-pitched roof plane, an expressed structural modularity in their design and the integration of the houses into their site-specific landscapes, large walls of glazing that connect the interior with the exterior, simple unadorned planar wall surfaces and a simple, often rectilinear planning.

39 Inverness Way falls into a subset of houses developed in the 1950s that responded to its site by hovering over the landscape on a platform. The strategy was used primarily as a means of placing houses on sloping sites and to capture views, imposing a rational solution to the irregularities of nature (London et al 2017:63). Like other Modernist houses in Boroondara and across Melbourne, the house at 39 Inverness Way reflects the profound influence of the Modernist style in Australia, which in the 1950s became actively tested by Melbourne architects to achieve a regional adaptation of the international idiom.

Overall the subject house is a good representative example of a Modernist house. It exhibits key characteristics of the style and is a fine example of respected architects Montgomery, King & Trengove (Neil Montgomery).

### **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).*

39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North, 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 1954 by Neil Montgomery of prominent architects Montgomery, King & Trengove, this house is the first private residential project that the architects undertook after establishing their practice in 1953. Featured in popular (including the *Argus*) and architectural media, (the RAI's slender 1956 architectural guidebook published for the overseas and interstate visitors to the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne), the house was widely commented on and exemplifies the high concentration of architect designed modernist houses built in Balwyn and Balwyn North during the 1950s and 60s.

*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).*

39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North is of aesthetic significance as a notable example of a house designed in the Modernist style. The house, cut from a cube, has a striking architectural composition, with its raised first floor expressing apparent weightlessness, bold Mondrian-style fenestration and internal courtyards epitomises modernism's stylish departure from postwar vernacular houses of brick veneer and hipped terracotta tiled roofs. The house reflects the early work of Harry Seidler and faithfully displays the design language taught to Seidler by teachers Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer at the Harvard Graduate School of Design

*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 Mann House at 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North, built to a design by architect Neil Montgomery of Montgomery, King & Trengrove in 1954, is significant.

Significant fabric includes:

- two storey built form expressed as a rectilinear box like volume raised above a full width void
- h-shaped plan centred around an entry/circulation core
- internal courtyard spaces
- open carport, louvred timber screen, and vertical timber clad wall at its end
- stone clad wing wall that bisects the open underneath void and projects toward the street
- recessed upper balconies and external stair
- discretely-articulated windows and mullions
- spandrel and balustrade panels of deep blue tinted colourback glass.
- timber flagstaff (corner post of recessed deck).

Although the early low stone retaining wall and letter box have been rendered these still contribute to the significance of the place as they maintain the original open garden layout design and low form of the front fence.

### **How Is It Significant?**

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

### **Why Is It Significant?**

39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North, 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 1954 by Neil Montgomery of prominent architects Montgomery, King & Trengrove, this house is the first private residential project that the architects undertook after establishing their practice in 1953. Featured in popular (including the *Argus*) and architectural media, (the RAIA's slender 1956 architectural guidebook published for the overseas and interstate visitors to the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne), the house was widely commented on and exemplifies the high concentration of architect designed modernist houses built in Balwyn and Balwyn North during the 1950s and 60s. (Criterion A)

39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North is of aesthetic significance as a notable example of a house designed in the International Modernist style. The house, cut from a cube, has a striking architectural composition, with its raised first floor expressing apparent weightlessness, bold Mondrian-style fenestration and internal courtyards epitomises modernism's stylish departure from postwar vernacular houses of brick veneer and hipped terracotta tiled roofs. The house reflects the early work of Harry Seidler and faithfully displays the design language taught to Seidler by teachers Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. (Criterion E)





## Grading and Recommendations

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

<b>External paint controls</b>	
<i>Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface?</i>	No
<b>Internal alteration controls</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for internal alterations?</i>	No
<b>Tree controls</b>	
<i>Is a permit required to remove a tree?</i>	No
<b>Outbuildings and fences exemptions</b>	
<i>Are there outbuildings or fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	No
<b>Victorian Heritage Register</b>	
<i>Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?</i>	No
<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
<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
<b>Incorporated plan</b>	
<i>Does an incorporated plan apply to the site?</i>	No

### Identified by:

Built Heritage Pty Ltd



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