

# URBAN PLANNING DELEGATED COMMITTEE MINUTES



(Open to the public)

**Monday 3 April 2023**

Council Chamber - 8 Inglesby Road, Camberwell.

**Commencement** 6:34pm

**Attendance**

Councillor Nick Stavrou (Chairperson)  
Councillor Felicity Sinfield (Mayor)  
Councillor Jim Parke  
Councillor Victor Franco  
Councillor Jane Addis  
Councillor Cynthia Watson  
Councillor Wes Gault  
Councillor Di Gillies  
Councillor Lisa Hollingsworth  
Councillor Susan Biggar  
Councillor Garry Thompson

**Apologies**

Nil

**Officers**

Phillip Storer	Chief Executive Officer
Scott Walker	Director Urban Living
Daniel Freer	Director Places and Spaces
Kate McCaughey	Director Community Support
David Cowan	Manager Planning and Placemaking
Bryan Wee	Manager Governance and Legal
Christian Wilmsen	Coordinator Strategic Planning
Rachel Brien	Strategic Planner
Liam Merrifield	Senior Governance Officer

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## **1 Adoption and confirmation of the minutes of the Urban Planning Delegated Committee meeting held on**

### **MOTION**

**Moved Councillor Di Gillies**

**Seconded Councillor Wes Gault**

**That the minutes of the Urban Planning Delegated Committee meeting held on 20 March 2023 be adopted and confirmed.**

### **CARRIED**

## **2 Declaration of conflict of interest of any councillor or council officer**

*Councillor Garry Thompson declared a material conflict of interest for item 3.1 in accordance with section 128 of the Local Government Act 2020. Councillor Thompson advised the nature of the interest was "an interest in a property in Item 3.1".*

## **3 Presentation of officer reports**

### **3.1 Balwyn Heritage Peer Review Stage 3 - Outcomes of preliminary consultation**

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform the Urban Planning Delegated Committee (UPDC) of the outcomes of the preliminary consultation process for the Balwyn Heritage Stage 3 Peer Review and the officers' response to the feedback. The report also seeks a resolution to commence a planning scheme amendment to apply a permanent Heritage Overlay to the properties identified.

#### Background

Officers engaged heritage consultants GML Heritage (formerly Context) to investigate the heritage significance of 18 post-war properties within Balwyn.

Following completion of their detailed assessment, GML found that the following 17 properties warranted inclusion in the Heritage Overlay:

- 1 Caravan Street, Balwyn
- 2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn
- 17 Yandilla Road, Balwyn
- 116 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North
- 32 Hill Road, Balwyn North
- 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North
- 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North
- 26 Kyora Parade, Balwyn North
- 94 Maude Road, Balwyn North
- 7 Milfay Court, Balwyn North
- 47 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North
- 24 Orion Street, Balwyn North
- 44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North
- 22 Riverview Road, Balwyn North
- 9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North
- 17 Trentwood Avenue, Balwyn North
- 32 Ursa Street, Balwyn North

69 Sylvander Street, Balwyn North was assessed but did not meet the threshold for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay.

The draft methodology report was received late in March so was not exhibited as part of preliminary consultation. The methodology report has now been finalised with all the above-mentioned citations.

### Key Issues

Preliminary consultation on the draft heritage citations was undertaken from 4 November to 5 December 2022. Owners and occupiers of the affected properties, as well as owners of adjoining and adjacent properties, community and historical groups were notified in writing of the consultation period and invited to provide feedback.

Fourteen (14) submissions were received, including ten (10) objecting and four (4) supporting submissions.

The key issues raised in the feedback include:

- Supporting feedback/ requests for additional properties to be included in a Heritage Overlay
- Disagreement that certain homes meet the criteria for inclusion under the Heritage Overlay
- Detrimental impact on property value
- Concerns about the structural condition of the building
- Maintenance and repairs of heritage places

Officers and Council's heritage consultant have reviewed the feedback received and have provided a summary of and response to each submitter in the table at **Attachment 1**.

No properties are recommended to be excluded from the amendment. The only change recommended is an update to the citation for 7 Milfay to reflect alterations to the building.

### Next Steps

Officers recommend the Urban Planning Delegated Committee (UPDC) adopt the Balwyn Heritage Peer Review Stage 3 Methodology Report contained at **Attachment 2** and resolve to seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit a planning scheme amendment to introduce a Heritage Overlay to the properties on a permanent basis.

*Cr Garry Thompson left the Chamber at 6:35pm prior to consideration and voting on this item.*

*Four speakers opposed to the officers' recommendation addressed the meeting.*



**MOTION**

**Moved**            **Councillor Cynthia Watson**

**Seconded**    **Councillor Felicity Sinfield**

**That the Urban Planning Delegated Committee resolve to:**

- 1. Receive and note the feedback received and outcomes of the preliminary consultation process undertaken on the draft Balwyn Peer Review Stage 3.**
- 2. Endorse the officers' response to the preliminary feedback received and recommended changes to the draft Balwyn Peer Review Stage 3 outlined in Attachment 1.**
- 3. Adopt the Balwyn Heritage Peer Review Stage 3 Methodology Report contained in Attachment 2, as annexed to the minutes.**
- 4. Write to the Minister for Planning to request authorisation to prepare an amendment to the Boroondara Planning Scheme in accordance with Section 4B and 8A(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* to include properties identified in the Balwyn Peer Review Stage 3 in the Heritage Overlay.**
- 5. Following receipt of authorisation from the Minister for Planning, exhibit the amendment in accordance with Section 19 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.**
- 6. Authorise the Director Urban Living 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.**

**CARRIED**

*Cr Garry Thompson returned to the Chamber and resumed his seat at 7:04pm after consideration and voting on the item.*

**4        General business**

Nil

**5        Urgent business**

Nil

**6        Confidential business**

Nil

## **The Council meeting concluded at 7:05pm**

**Confirmed**

**Chairperson**

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**Date**

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# MINUTES ATTACHMENTS



## Urban Planning Delegated Committee

**Monday 3 April 2023**

**Attachments annexed to the minutes for the following items:**

- 3.1 Balwyn Heritage Peer Review Stage 3 - Outcomes of preliminary consultation

# MINUTES ATTACHMENTS



## Urban Planning Delegated Committee

**Monday 3 April 2023**

Attachments as annexed to the resolution:

- 3.1 Balwyn Heritage Peer Review Stage 3 - Outcomes of preliminary consultation



# BALWYN HERITAGE PEER REVIEW STAGE 3

**Methodology Report**

March 2023



## **Acknowledgement of Country**

We respect and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, their lands and waterways, their rich cultural heritage and their deep connection to Country, and we acknowledge their Elders past and present. We are committed to truth-telling and to engaging with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung to support the protection of their culture and heritage. We strongly advocate social and cultural justice and support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

## **Cultural warning**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this report may contain images or names of First Nations people who have passed away.

# Report register

The following report register documents the development of this report, in accordance with GML's Quality Management System.

Project	Issue No.	Notes/Description	Issue Date
2699	1	Draft Report	March 2023
2699	2	Final Report	March 2023

## Quality management

The report has been reviewed and approved for issue in accordance with the GML quality management policy and procedures.

It aligns with best-practice heritage conservation and management, *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* and heritage and environmental legislation and guidelines relevant to the subject place.

## Copyright

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## **Executive summary**

### **Introduction**

The 'Balwyn and Balwyn North Heritage Study (incorporating Deepdene and Greythorn)' (hereafter the 'Balwyn Study') was prepared for Boroondara City Council (hereafter 'Council') by heritage consultancy Built Heritage Pty Ltd, in 2015

The Balwyn Study identified 200+ individual places with potential heritage significance and seven potential heritage precincts. As part of the Balwyn Study, this list of places and precincts was subjected to a detailed process of review and prioritisation by Built Heritage Pty Ltd. to identify those places and areas that were considered to represent the highest priority for local heritage protection. Following this review, a longlist of over 90 places and precincts was produced. The longlist of 90 places included 'Priority 1' places; 26 individual places and four precincts, and these were assessed by Built Heritage Pty Ltd in the Balwyn Study.

Following strong community opposition, Council resolved not to proceed with the implementation of the Balwyn Study in September 2015.

Council adopted an updated Heritage Action Plan (HAP2016) on 2 May 2016. The HAP2016 sets out an ongoing priority action being the preparation and implementation of heritage controls to properties identified as 'individually significant' in the Balwyn Study.

On 20 March 2017, Council resolved to undertake a peer review of the Balwyn Study, commissioning Context (now GML Heritage) to undertake further review and investigation of the longlist produced in the 2014 Balwyn Study. Stage 1 of the peer review was carried out by Context and completed through Amendment C276. This amendment introduced a Heritage Overlay over eight individual properties and two precincts. Amendment C276 was gazetted and incorporated into the Boroondara Planning Scheme on 26 July 2019.

Stage 2 of the peer review was carried out by Context and completed through Amendment C318. This amendment introduced a Heritage Overlay over 16 individual properties and one precinct. Amendment C318 was gazetted and incorporated into the Boroondara Planning Scheme on 18 December 2020.

In February 2021, GML Heritage (at the time trading as Context) was engaged by the City of Boroondara to undertake Stage 3 of the Peer Review of the Balwyn Study. This involved the review of 18 individual place citations of postwar places prepared by Built Heritage as part of the Balwyn Study. This report covers the assessments of the Balwyn Heritage Peer Review Stage 3 (hereafter, the 'Peer Review'). It includes an overview of the methodology, findings and recommendations, as well as citations for nominated individual properties.



## **Key Findings**

The key findings of the 'Balwyn Heritage Peer Review Stage 3' are:

- There are 17 individual heritage places assessed to be of local significance (see Appendix A).

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Boroondara City Council:

- Adopt the 'Balwyn Heritage Peer Review Stage 3' (2023) and include it as a Reference Document in the Planning Scheme.
- Implement the 'Balwyn Heritage Peer Review Stage 3' (2023) by:
  - Adding the places assessed as being of local significance, listed in Appendix A, to the Heritage Overlay of the Boroondara Planning Scheme with the schedule entries shown in the place citations

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and brief

The City of Boroondara contains an extensive range of heritage assets including Victorian, Federation, interwar and post-war dwellings, commercial buildings and precincts, and a range of public buildings and features such as bridges, railway stations, community buildings, churches, parks and gardens. Many of these places are of aesthetic, social, historic, cultural, technical or spiritual significance to the municipality.

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* places an obligation on municipal councils 'to conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or other of specific cultural value'.

Consistent with this objective, the City of Boroondara has prepared numerous heritage studies that identify places of heritage significance.

Council adopted an updated Heritage Action Plan (HAP2016) on 2 May 2016. The HAP2016 sets out an ongoing priority action being the preparation and implementation of heritage controls to properties identified as 'individually significant' in the Balwyn Study.

The draft Balwyn and Balwyn North Heritage Study (including Deepdene and Greythorn) (the Balwyn Study) was completed in 2015 by Built Heritage Pty Ltd and sought to identify places and precincts of local cultural heritage significance in the suburbs of Balwyn, Balwyn North and Deepdene. This included the re-assessment of 45 properties previously identified (but never protected) in the Camberwell Conservation Study 1991 as well as properties not identified in the 1991 study. The Balwyn Study recommended 26 individual places and four precincts 'Priority 1' places for inclusion in the Boroondara Heritage Overlay. A further list of 40 places were recommended for further investigation and assessment.

Following strong community opposition, Council resolved not to proceed with the implementation of the Balwyn Study in September 2015. In March 2017 Council resolved to undertake a peer review of the draft Study and master list of properties created through the study engaging Context Pty Ltd to undertake the review. Given the strong community opposition to the recommendations of the draft Study, particularly in relation to the protection of post-war properties, the peer review focussed on the properties constructed prior to World War II and excluded the review of places constructed in 1946 or later.

Stage 1 of the peer review was completed by Context Pty Ltd through Amendment C276. This amendment introduced a Heritage Overlay over eight individual properties and two

precincts. Amendment C276 was gazetted and incorporated into the Boroondara Planning Scheme on 26 July 2019.

Stage 2 of the peer review was completed by Context Pty Ltd through Amendment C318boro. This amendment introduced a Heritage Overlay over 16 individual properties and one precinct. Amendment C318boro was gazetted and incorporated into the Boroondara Planning Scheme on 18 December 2020.

In February 2021, GML Heritage Victoria Pty Ltd (at the time trading as Context) was engaged by the City of Boroondara to undertake Stage 3 of the peer review of the Balwyn Study. The scope of this peer review was initially limited to 18 postwar properties identified as individually significant in the Balwyn Study. Of these properties 16 are currently not included in the Heritage Overlay. Two properties (39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North and 26 Kyora Parade, Balwyn North) are currently included in the Heritage Overlay as 'contributory' places to the Riverside Estate and Environs Precinct. Y

We note that in response to a community petition, Council resolved on 17 August 2020 to commence a planning scheme amendment to include the postwar property at 12-14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North in the Heritage Overlay (Amendment C341boro, gazetted 24 December 2021). As a result, 12-14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North is not included in the scope of this project.

The study involved a preliminary review of the heritage significance of the 18 postwar properties identified in the Balwyn Study by Bult Heritage Pty Ltd to determine whether application of the Heritage Overlay is appropriate and to identify any potential gaps and deficiencies in the draft citations to ensure they can withstand scrutiny of an independent Planning Panel

Where identified as warranting statutory protection (i.e., inclusion in the Boroondara Planning Scheme), heritage citations for each individual place would be reviewed and further investigated to support the recommendations. Each heritage citation and Statement of Significance would be prepared in accordance with *VPP Planning Practice Note 01 – 'Applying Heritage Overlay'* (2018) (PPN01), to form the basis for a planning scheme amendment process.

This report covers the assessments of the Balwyn Heritage Peer Review Stage 3 (hereafter, the Peer Review). It includes an overview of the methodology, findings and recommendations, as well as citations of places identified as being of local significance.

## 1.2 Study limitations

- Places were investigated externally and from the public domain, meaning that the front façade and partial side elevations were viewed.

- This assessment does not address historical archaeological or Aboriginal cultural values.

## 2 Approach and Methodology

### 2.1 Introduction

The Peer Review was prepared in accordance with *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Heritage Significance* (rev. 2013) and the Victoria Planning Provisions Practice Note No. 1 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' (2018) (the 'Practice Note').

The Burra Charter was written by the heritage professional organisation, Australia ICOMOS, in the 1970s, and has been revised and updated several times since, most recently in 2013. This document established so-called 'values-based' assessment of heritage places, looking at their social, aesthetic, historic and scientific values. Since that time, standard heritage criteria have been developed, based on these values. In the late twentieth century, the most commonly used standard criteria were the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) criteria for the Register of the National Estate.

The AHC criteria were superseded by the Heritage Council Criteria for the Assessment of Cultural Heritage Significance (HERCON). These assessment criteria were adopted at the 1998 Conference on Heritage, and by the Heritage Council of Victoria in 2008, and are substantially based on the AHC criteria. PPN01 recommends the use of the HERCON criteria for carrying out heritage assessments.

The approach to the Peer Review was developed to fulfil the tasks set out in Council's brief.

### 2.2 Stage 1—Preliminary review

#### 2.2.1 Desktop review

Stage 1 commenced with a google maps and nearmaps search to confirm the current status of the study places. This showed that two properties from the initial list of 18 had been demolished since 2016. These were:

- 2 Barnsbury Court, Balwyn (demolished 2015)
- 7 Bernard Street, Balwyn North (demolished 2016)

Each of the Built Heritage citations for the remaining 16 properties was then systematically reviewed, checking historical information, identifying any gaps in each section of the citations and checking for consistency with PPN01.

An excel spreadsheet of the places was established to record the outcomes of the preliminary citation review, noting what changes or additional work was needed for each section of the citations.

Required changes or additional work included:

- Adding Certificates of Titles where missing or not referenced
- Adding historical sources where not referenced
- Confirming connections with relevant themes in Boroondara's Thematic Environmental History
- Supplementing historical context and refining individual place histories
- Updating Descriptions
- Inclusion of an integrity statement
- Checking all comparative analysis examples
- Sourcing additional comparative analysis examples from Heritage Overlay
- Revising assessments against criteria
- Revising Statements of Significance to be in accordance with PPN01
- Review and updating of proposed statutory recommendations.

### **2.2.2 Field survey**

Following the desktop review, two GML Heritage consultants visited all 18 places included in the study. Properties were surveyed on foot from the public domain. Principal elevations and elements and, where possible, side elevations were photographed.

### **2.2.3 Internal workshop**

At the conclusion of the fieldwork tasks, a project team workshop was held to discuss the findings of the desktop review and fieldwork and develop a final list of places/precincts to be progressed for detailed assessment, and confirm further work required to the place citations. The purpose of the workshop was to clarify the benchmark for potential significance (considering integrity and intactness, and limited additional historical information) and provide a basis for justifying the potential significance of the investigated properties. An internal document was prepared to establish the key characteristics of the class, as required under the practice note, to ensure that each place had the key characteristics and sufficient integrity to be worthy of assessment as an individually significant place.

### **2.2.4 Stage 1–Findings and recommendations**

A short report was prepared to brief Council on the outcomes of Stage 1. The report included the final shortlist of properties considered likely to warrant heritage protection,

and which properties required review and further research to rectify any gaps and deficiencies identified as part of the preliminary review. The report also identified places that did not warrant inclusion in the Heritage Overlay and why.

While undertaking our preliminary investigations for Stage 1, three additional postwar places were identified as being potentially significant as an Individually significant place. After undertaking some preliminary historical research and confirming the integrity and intactness of each place it was recommended that they proceed to a full heritage assessment. The three places are:

1. 32 Corby Street, Balwyn North built in 1962 to a design by celebrated builder and designer Alistair Knox
2. 116 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North built in 1968 to a design by well-known emigre architect Sol Sapir
3. 32 Hill Road, Balwyn North built in 1951.

Due to a request for a demolition permit a full citation was prepared for 32 Corby Street, Balwyn North. The citation was independently peer reviewed and subject to Amendment C368boro (abandoned by Council at its meeting on 27 February 2023). It is excluded from this Peer Review.

It was also recommended that 44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North built in 1947 be included in the Peer Review. This place was assessed as part of the Balwyn Heritage Peer Review Stage 2 and was not pursued due to its postwar build date as that study had a 1946 cut-off date. A full citation for the place was prepared by Context in 2018 and required some review to bring it in line with the reviewed Stage 3 citations and PPN01.

The final list of 19 places to be progressed to Stage 2–Detailed assessment includes:

1. 1 Caravan Street, Balwyn 1956
2. 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North 1964
3. 94 Maude Road, Balwyn North 1949-50
4. 7 Milfay Court, Balwyn North 1956
5. 47 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North 1966
6. 24 Orion Street, Balwyn North 1958
7. 2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn 1963
8. 9 Seattle Street, Balwyn 1975
9. 69 Sylvander Street, Balwyn North 1962
10. 9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North 1958
11. 17 Trentwood Avenue, Balwyn North 1958
12. 32 Ursa Street, Balwyn North 1950
13. 17 Yandilla Road, Balwyn 1949
14. 22 Riverview Road, Balwyn North 1949
15. 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North 1954



- 16. 26 Kyora Parade, Balwyn North 1950
- 17. 116 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North 1963
- 18. 32 Hill Road, Balwyn North 1951
- 19. 44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North 1947

## **2.3 Stage 2—Detailed assessment**

### **2.3.1 Contextual and individual place histories**

Contextual histories for Balwyn and Balwyn North were prepared, covering nineteenth and twentieth-century periods of development.

Individual histories were prepared for each individual place, providing answers to key questions such as when the building was created/built, for whom, by whom (builder and designer, if known), and how it changed over time (both physically and in use). Biographical information on architects was also included where applicable.

Researchers drew upon the following primary and secondary sources:

- individually significant place citations prepared by Built Heritage Pty Ltd as part of the Balwyn North Heritage Study (including Deepdene and Greythorn) 2015
- planning permit records and associated plans provided by City of Boroondara
- certificates of title and plans of subdivision
- Central Plan Office historic aerial photography collection
- rate books
- parish plans
- Trove and Newspapers.com newspaper searches
- State Library Victoria online collections of historic maps, plans and photos
- University of Melbourne archives
- Sands & McDougall street directories
- Public Record Office Victoria archival collections
- previous heritage studies
- 'Thematic Environmental History' prepared for City of Boroondara by Built Heritage 2012
- local histories.
- recent publications that contextualise postwar modernism in Australia

### **2.3.2 Description and integrity**

A description of each place was prepared based on the field survey and documentation from Stage 1. Second and third site visits were undertaken from the public domain to verify some details as necessary. The description sets out the context (wider setting), the

elements of the site (e.g., fence, garden, outbuildings), the size and massing of the building, its materials, its stylistic influence(s), features of note, and any alterations.

A statement about integrity was prepared. This considered the intactness and the legibility of each place and informed the subsequent comparative analysis.

Considerations were made for each place's retention of overall form and massing, original external finishes, pattern of fenestration, architectural detailing and setting, as well as level of alterations.

### **2.3.3 Comparative analysis**

PPN01 advises that thresholds to be applied in the assessment of significance are state significance and local significance: 'Local significance includes those places that are important to a particular community or locality'.

In order to apply a threshold, comparative analysis was undertaken to substantiate the significance of each place. The comparative analysis drew on other similar places within Boroondara, including those that have previously been included in a heritage register or overlay.

In most cases comparisons were sought from within the City of Boroondara, and in some cases, from farther afield where pertinent comparisons were not found within the municipality. This was where they provided a direct comparison in terms of their architect, architectural style or type, or due to their demonstration of similar development pattern. Municipal-wide typological or comparative study was beyond the scope of this project.

### **2.3.4 Assessment against criteria**

In accordance with PPN01, heritage places are no longer assigned a letter grade, but are identified as meeting either the threshold of 'State Significance' or 'Local Significance'.

Places of Local Significance can include places that are important to a particular community or locality. Some of the places of local significance may also be important to the entire City of Boroondara, but this is not essential to meet the Local Significance threshold.

The Practice Note advises that assessment of whether a place meets the local or State threshold should be determined in relation to model heritage criteria (also known as the HERCON Criteria) which are as follows:

Criterion A: Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

Criterion C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

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

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

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

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).

Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

In the context of these assessments, where the criteria say, 'our cultural or natural history', it should be understood as 'Boroondara's cultural or natural history'.

## 2.3.5 Statement of significance

For each individual place found to meet the threshold of local significance for at least one of the criteria, a statement of significance was prepared, summarising the most important facts and the significance of the place.

Each statement was prepared in accordance with *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (rev. 2013)*; using the HERCON criteria and applying the thresholds of local or State significance. Each assessment is summarised in the format recommended in PPN01, namely:

What is significant? – This section should be brief, usually no more than one paragraph or a series of dot points. There should be no doubt about the elements of the place that are under discussion. The paragraph should identify features or elements that are significant about the place, for example, house, outbuildings, garden, plantings, ruins, archaeological sites, interiors as a guide to future decision makers. Clarification could also be made of elements that are not significant. This may guide or provide the basis for an incorporated plan which identifies works that may be exempt from the need for a planning permit.

How is it significant? – Using the heritage criteria above, a sentence should be included to the effect that the place is important. This could be because of its historical significance, its rarity, its research potential, its representativeness, its aesthetic significance, its technical significance and/or its associative significance. The sentence should indicate the threshold for which the place is considered important.

Why is it significant? – The importance of the place needs to be justified against the heritage criteria listed above. A separate point or paragraph should be used for each

criterion satisfied. The relevant criterion reference should be inserted in brackets after each point or paragraph, for example “(Criterion G)”.

## 2.3.6 Mapping and curtilages

PPN01 states in regard to mapping:

The Heritage Overlay applies to both the listed heritage item and its associated land. It is usually important to include land surrounding a building, structure, tree or feature of importance to ensure that any development, including subdivision, does not adversely affect the setting, context or significance of the heritage item. The land surrounding the heritage item is known as a ‘curtilage’ and will be shown as a polygon on the Heritage Overlay map. In many cases, particularly in urban areas and townships, the extent of the curtilage will be the whole of the property (for example, a suburban dwelling and its allotment).

However, there will be occasions where the curtilage and the Heritage Overlay polygon should be reduced in size as the land is of no significance. Reducing the curtilage and the polygon will have the potential benefit of lessening the number of planning permits that are required with advantages to both the landowner and the responsible authority.

Consistent with the practice note, the curtilages for the individual places recommended by this study are to be mapped to the extent of the title boundaries.

## 2.3.7 Statutory recommendations

The statutory recommendations for places and precincts assessed to be of local significance were made in accordance with relevant policies and guidelines set out in PPN01.

The Practice Note describes additional controls that can be ticked in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay for a place, including:

- External Paint Controls—to control changes to paint colours; particularly important if evidence of an early colour scheme survives; note that a planning permit is always required to paint a previously unpainted surface (e.g., face brick, render, stone, concrete, timber shingles).
- Internal Alteration Controls—to be used sparingly and on a selective basis for special interiors of high significance.
- Tree Controls—to be applied only where a tree (or trees) has been assessed as having heritage value, not just amenity value.
- Solar energy system controls –to require a permit to install a solar energy system (solar panels)
- Fences and Outbuildings which are not exempt from advertising planning permit applications—demolition applications for early fences and/or outbuildings that

contribute to the significance of a place must be publicly advertised if this box is ticked, and the accelerated VicSmart permit process cannot be used; note that a planning permit is required to alter, demolish or replace a fence or outbuilding even if this box is not chosen, however public notice of the permit application is generally not required.

- Included on the Victorian Heritage Register—can only be entered by Heritage Victoria.
- Prohibited uses may be permitted—this allows additional uses not normally permitted in a given zone, subject to a planning permit; it is most frequently used to give redundant buildings a wider range of future use options to ensure their long-term survival, e.g., purpose-built shops in residential areas.
- Incorporated Plan has been adopted for the place/precinct—an incorporated plan is sometimes prepared to introduce permit exemptions for a precinct or provide specific guidance in managing a complex site.
- Aboriginal heritage place—note that Aboriginal heritage significance was not assessed as part of this study.

When making statutory recommendations, recommendations for these additional controls were made where appropriate. In cases where Tree Controls or Fence and Outbuilding exemptions are recommended, the specific elements to be protected were indicated for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay to provide clear guidance for planners and owners. For example: Tree Controls: *Yes – English Oak*.

## 2.3.8 Hermes Orion entry

PPN01 specifies that:

All statements of significance should be securely stored in the HERMES heritage database.<sup>1</sup>

Where a planning scheme amendment has resulted in the addition of, or amendments to, places in the Heritage Overlay, the strategic justification (that is, heritage study documentation and statements of significance) should be entered into the department's HERMES heritage database.

This should be done once the citations have been finalised and adopted by Council. Once the associated amendment is adopted, the records of those places added to the Boroondara Heritage Overlay can be made publicly visible on the Victorian Heritage Database.

Places found not meet the threshold of local significance should be entered via Hermes Orion to note that they have been 'Researched but NOT recommended'. These records are not published for the general public to see but are accessible to Council staff.

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<sup>1</sup> The web-based data entry and management tool HERMES is now Hermes Orion.

## 3 Key findings

### 3.1 Local significance

A total of seventeen individual places assessed were considered to meet the threshold for local significance when assessed against the HERCON criteria, and thus worthy of protection in the Heritage Overlay.

These places are:

1.	1 Caravan Street, Balwyn	1956
2.	67 Hill Road, Balwyn North	1964
3.	94 Maude Road, Balwyn North	1949-50
4.	7 Milfay Court, Balwyn North	1956
5.	47 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North	1966
6.	24 Orion Street, Balwyn North	1958
7.	2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn	1963
8.	9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North	1958
9	17 Trentwood Avenue, Balwyn North	1958
10.	32 Ursa Street, Balwyn North	1950
11.	17 Yandilla Road, Balwyn	1949
12.	22 Riverview Road, Balwyn North	1949
13.	39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North	1954
14.	26 Kyora Parade, Balwyn North	1950
15.	116 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North	1963
16.	32 Hill Road, Balwyn North	1951
17.	44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North	1947

Note: 9 Seattle Street, Balwyn was assessed as being of local significance. Due to a request for a demolition permit for the property it was removed from the study and dealt with under a separate planning scheme amendment (C381boro).

## 3.2 Not of local significance

One place, 69 Sylvander Street, Balwyn North, considered in Stage 1 was found to fall below the threshold for local significance as an individual place for the following reasons.

- The house at 69 Sylvander Street is a standard vernacular house of the 1960's. Its built form, hipped roof, standard window openings and mild steel balustrading are all typical of the era. While its elevated position, sheer rendered walls and open terraces evoke some sense of southern Europe, research outside the scope of this study will need to be undertaken in order to benchmark if the property possess the idiosyncratic and evocative nostalgic references of a Mediterranean sub-style of importance to Boroondara.
- In order to satisfy Criterion A, the association of the place to an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life needs to be evident in the fabric of the place. 69 Sylvander Street is not easily identifiable as a house built for a Greek immigrant. Criterion A is not met.
- Historically, while Stathis Raftopolous appears to have been an active and highly respected member of the Greek community, his interests and area of influence were not centred in Boroondara. His business, Cosmopolitan Motion Pictures, was established in Brunswick and later moved to Abbotsford. Establishing twelve cinemas across Melbourne, notably none of them were in Boroondara. The threshold for Criterion H is not met.

## 4 Recommendations

### 4.1 Adoption of Assessment

It is recommended that the City of Boroondara:

- formally adopt the 'Balwyn Heritage Peer Review Stage 3' (2023), which includes this report, and
- include this report as a Background Document in the Boroondara Planning Scheme.

### 4.2 Implementation of Assessment

- It recommended that the City of Boroondara implement the recommendations of the review by preparing a planning scheme amendment that will add the individual places and precincts assessed as being of local significance listed at section 3.1 to the Heritage Overlay of the Boroondara Planning Scheme with the schedule entries as shown in the place citations.
- In addition to the general planning permit requirements of Clause 43.01 (Heritage Overlay), specific controls have been recommended for some individual places in accordance with Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP) Practice Note 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' (2018).



## 5 References

Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2012. 'City of Boroondara Thematic Environmental History' prepared for the City of Boroondara.

Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2015, 'Balwyn and Balwyn North Heritage Study', prepared for the City of Boroondara.

Context Pty Ltd 2017, 'Balwyn Heritage Peer Review Stage 1' prepared for the City of Boroondara.

Context Pty Ltd 2017, 'Balwyn Heritage Peer Review Stage 2' prepared for the City of Boroondara.

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2018 *Planning Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay* (August 2018).

Heritage Council of Victoria 2010. *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes*. HCV, Melbourne

The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013.

## **Appendix A—Place Citations**



## House

Prepared by: GML Heritage

**Address:** 116 Bulleen Road BALWYN NORTH

<b>Name:</b> House	<b>Survey Date:</b> October 2021
<b>Place Type:</b> Residential	<b>Architect:</b> Sol Sapir
<b>Grading:</b> Individually Significant	<b>Builder:</b> Trainor Enterprises
<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1963



Figure 1 116 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 2 116 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North. (Source: GML 2021)



## Historical Context

The area of Bulleen Road, Balwyn North, 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 North is a residential suburb situated 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south is Balwyn, which is separated from Balwyn North 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. Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North.

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 116 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North, originally formed part of Elgar's Crown Special Survey purchased and surveyed by Henry Elgar in 1841 (CT V7528 F001). In 1845, the land was later subdivided into 27 allotments within the 'Boroondara Estate'. The site was Lot 651 of the 'Camberwell City Heights Estate', which comprised 677 allotments bound by Bulleen Road, Doncaster Road, Mountain View Road and Templestowe Road. The Camberwell City Heights Estate was subdivided and released in stages from 1923 (*Reporter* 24 August 1923:7). The subject site was part of the land north of Hillview Road that was subdivided in 1928 (CT V5438 F461).

The subject site changed hands a few times from 1947 to 1963, before it was purchased by Carl and Eve Trainor on 26 July 1963 (CT V8388 F065). Plans for the new residence had been prepared and a building permit lodged prior to the purchase on 3 July 1963 (BP). The two-storey residence was designed by St Kilda based architect Sol Sapir and built by the family building firm, Trainor Enterprises, for a cost of £10,000 (BP), and (Figure 3—Figure 5).

The property remained under the ownership of the Trainor's into the 2000s. Council building cards record no alterations or additions to the property since 1963.

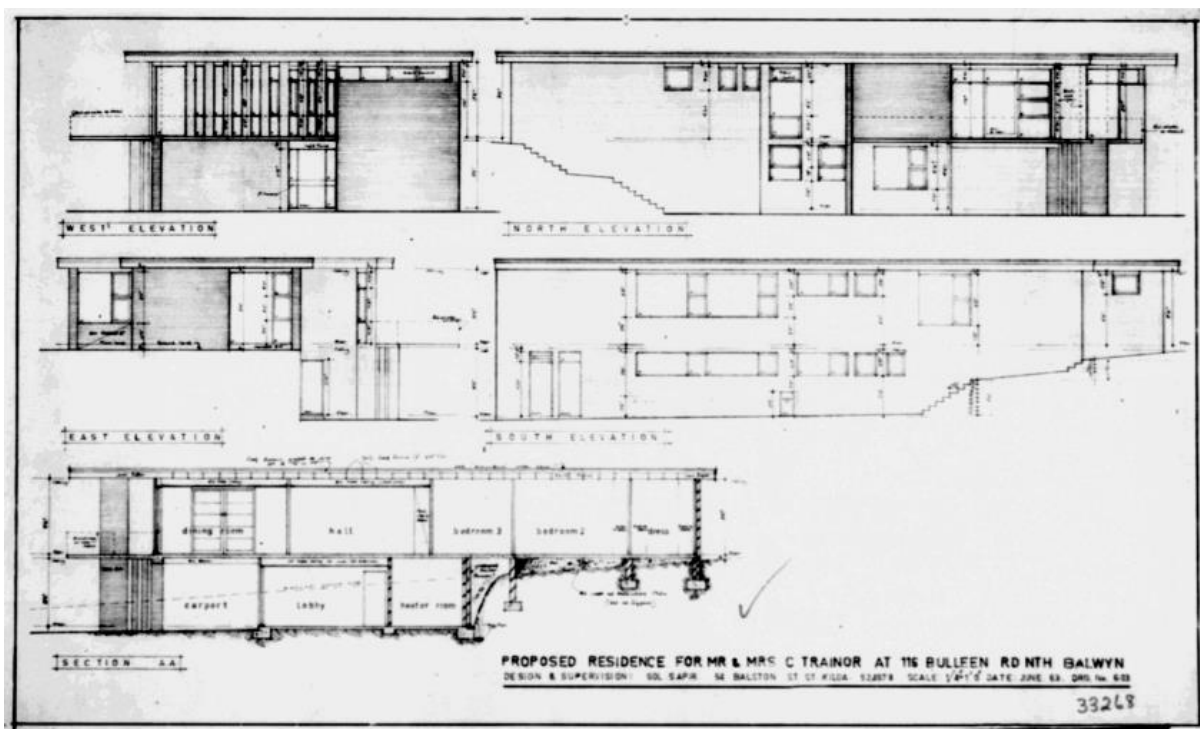


Figure 3 Architectural drawings by Sol Sapir for 116 Bulleen Road, North Balwyn showing elevations and section. (Source: BP 33268)



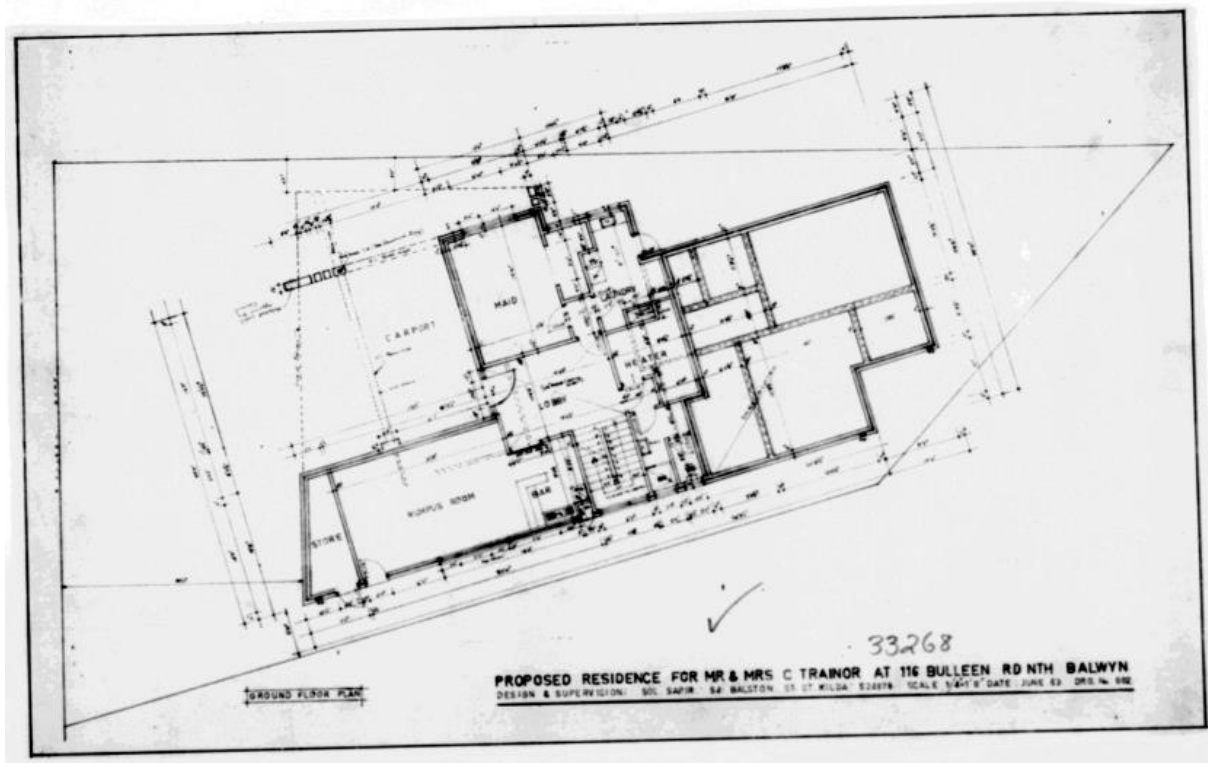


Figure 4 Ground floor plan for 116 Bulleen Road, North Balwyn. (Source: BP 33268)

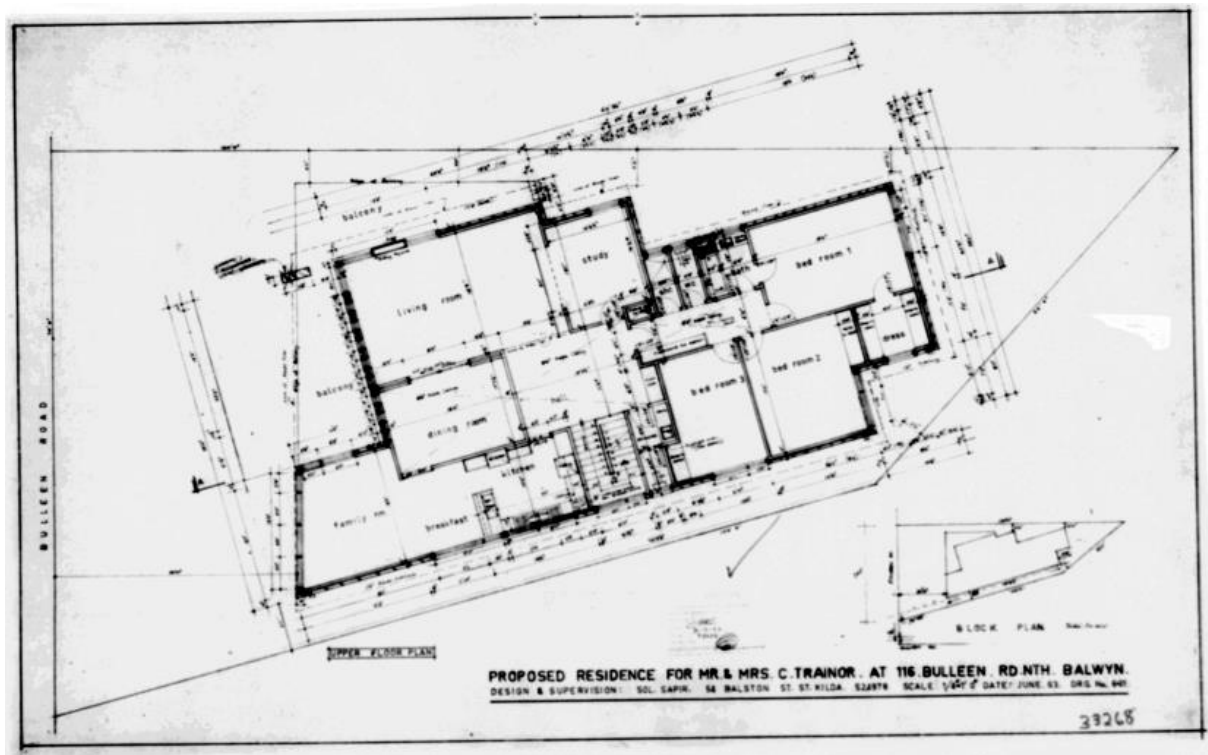


Figure 5 Upper floor plan for 116 Bulleen Road, North Balwyn. (Source: BP 33268)



## **Sol Sapir**

Melbourne born architectural designer Sol Sapir (1940-2015) was the son of Polish Jewish emigres who had abbreviated their surname from 'Sapirshtein' after migrating to Australia in 1928. Sapir commenced studying architecture at RMIT in 1958, however he did not complete the requisite office experience and therefore could not become a registered architect. Instead, he styled himself as an 'architectural designer', establishing his practice in 1963 in East St Kilda and later relocating to East Melbourne and South Yarra (Built Heritage).

Having designed several flat-roofed houses, including a concrete-brick house in Glen Avon Road, Hawthorn for himself and his wife and the house at 116 Bulleen Road, Sapir formed a collaboration with property developer and real-estate agent Nathan Beller and commercial builder Martin Sachs. Their association resulted in about 30 residential towers across Melbourne's inner south-east, which incorporated innovative construction methods including the American life-slab principle and steel slip formwork, as well as new forms of architectural expression. Notable examples include towers at 189 Beaconsfield Parade in Middle Park and 333 Beaconsfield Parade in St Kilda West (Built Heritage).

During his career Sapir completed more than one hundred blocks of flats, and by the mid-1970s was referred to as 'Melbourne's best-known high-rise specialist'. He also continued to undertake commissions for residential designs, including a large house in Buckingham Street, Heidelberg, which was used as a film location in the Graham Kennedy biopic *The King* (2007) (Built Heritage). Sapir continued to practice until his death in 2015, aged 75 (Clerahan 2014:29).

## **Description**

116 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North, is a two-storey brick-veneer dwelling constructed in 1963. Built on an elevated site on the east side of Bulleen Road just north of Hillview Road, the property is opposite a small commercial precinct on the Bulleen Service Road. Set back from the busy suburban street, the house is accessed by a gently sloping concrete driveway and sits in a recently cleared landscaped setting.

Constructed in orange brick with a flat roof, deep fascia boards conceal the house's gutters. The house is cut into the site so that its street facing elevation is two-storey while the rear of the house sits on a concrete slab-on-ground. The house is rectilinear in plan and follows the angle of the southern boundary of the site, while a projecting front roof and balcony aligns with Bulleen Road. This creates a distinctive angular, geometric form that is emphasised by the upper balcony cantilevering beyond the building line at its northern end.

The ground level functions primarily as a point of entry with open car accommodation underneath and a balcony above. Expressed concrete beams run the width of the carport and support the upper balcony. These beams taper at their northern ends as they extend beyond the building line creating a cantilevered side balcony. Under the carport the recessed timber entrance door sits within a frosted glass surround. The flat roof extends over the upper balcony and is supported by a brick column at its northern end. A lightweight metal balustrade runs across the front of the house.

At the upper level, under the covered balcony, a series of eight narrow floor-to-ceiling timber-framed windows punctuate the wall of the living/dining space behind. On the same level, a wide floor-to-ceiling timber-framed window is provided on the north-facing elevation. A subtle three-dimensional quality is given to the façade by the use of two-tone brickwork to the edges of these windows and the



balcony's support column that rises from the ground to the roof line. A sophisticated level of detailing is further evident in the 'toothed out' of the brickwork at the corners of the front projecting room.

The house is complemented by its original stacked stone front fence/retaining wall which returns along the driveway and incorporates planter boxes and an integrated letter box.



Figure 6 Vertical window bays on principal west elevation. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 7 Access to balcony via French doors. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 8 Section of fence/retaining wall with integrated planter on lower level. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 9 Stacked stone/retaining wall front fence, with integrated planter boxes and timber letterbox. (Source: GML 2021)

## Integrity

116 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North, is highly intact to its original 1963 design. The building retains its original built form, roof form and fascia detail, orange brick walls and timber-framed window and door openings and joinery. The integrity of the place is enhanced by its landscape elements, including original or early stacked stone retaining wall front fence.

## 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 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, and many used 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, which were often 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.

The house at 116 Bulleen Rd, Balwyn North can be compared broadly to a number of contemporaneous houses in the area that exhibit a similar use of volumetric massing, flat or low-pitched roofs and asymmetric form.

Despite the dominance of houses built in the years following World War II, Heritage Overlay coverage of postwar houses in Balwyn and North Balwyn is limited. The following are comparable examples in North Balwyn and Balwyn.



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

'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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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)

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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Figure 13 Former Plotkin House, 47 Mount View Road, Balwyn North, 1966 (assessed as Individually Significant in this study). (Source: GML 2021)

The former Plotkin House at 47 Mount View Road, Balwyn North is of local historical and aesthetic significance. It was specifically designed to address the rear of the property and capitalise on distant views east to the Dandenong Ranges. It is distinctive for its low roofline, its stark and apparently windowless facade and especially its modular concrete brickwork, which introduces almost sculptural effects through stepped planes, interlocking volumes, recessed headers and dwarf walls of contrasting narrow tile-like bricks. The massive slab-like letterbox which boldly intersects with two garden walls, is an especially prominent element on the street boundary.



Figure 14 Former McDowell Residence, 1 Caravan Street, Balwyn, 1956–58 (assessed as Individually Significant in this study). (Source: GML 2021)

The former McDowell residence at 1 Caravan Street, Balwyn is of local historical and aesthetic significance. It is one of the more striking examples of postwar 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. 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.

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Postwar houses in the Heritage Overlay in the broader Boroondara context that are comparable to 116 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North, include:



Figure 15 '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 16 '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.



Figure 17 'Cukierman Residence', 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn East designed by Hayden & Associates (attributed to Anthony Hayden) in 1966 (HO857). (Source: Heritage Victoria)

'Cukierman Residence', 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn is of local historical, architectural, aesthetic and technical 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.



Figure 18 'Dickie House', 6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn c.1961–64 (HO784). (Source: Context in association with Trethewan 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.

116 Bulleen Road compares well to the above examples. The subject house exhibits key elements of postwar Modernist houses influenced by a number of earlier examples including the 'Robin Boyd House 1', built in 1947 (VHR HO879; HO116), which is widely recognised as the prototype for postwar modern homes. The key elements of the Modernist house include its site responsive design, use of new ideas regarding the spatial flow between inside and out and the innovative use of materials in a time of postwar austerity.

These qualities are demonstrated in the subject place and a number of earlier houses in the Balwyn/Balwyn North area: 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).





The design of the house responds to the sloped site, with the garage integrated underneath and the main living space provided on the upper level. Positioned on an elevated site, the geometric form of the house is emphasised by the upper balcony cantilevering beyond the building line at its northern side. In this sense, the building is comparable to other local examples by notable Modernist architects who addressed respective topographical conditions, including the 'former Hirsch House and Office' (HO897), 'Cukierman Residence' (HO857), the 'Dickie House' (HO784), 43 Kireep Road (HO177), and 12–14 Tannock Street (HO928).

Similar characteristics across all the comparative examples include the use of a bold roof plane that appears to hover above the building, an expressed structural modularity in their design, simple unadorned planar wall surfaces and a simple rectilinear planning.

Overall, 116 Bulleen Road is a striking example of postwar residential architecture in the study area. With its flat roof, bold rectilinear and elevated massing and integrated garage underneath, it represents one of Sapir's earliest designs in a Modernist idiom, anticipating the architectural designer's later residential work.

It exhibits key characteristics of the style and is a fine example by respected architect Sol Sapir.

### **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).*

116 Bulleen Road, 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 1963 by respected architectural designer Sol Sapir, this house exemplifies the high concentration of architect-designed Modernist houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn 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 understanding 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 a striking example of postwar residential architecture in the Balwyn and North Balwyn area. The design of the house responds to the gently sloping site,



integrating the garage underneath with the main living space provided on the upper level. Its bold geometric form is emphasised by the upper balcony cantilevering beyond the building line at its northern end. The house represents one of Sol Sapir's earliest designs in a Modernist idiom, anticipating his later residential designs. The house features refined detailing including a series of eight narrow floor-to-ceiling timber-framed windows punctuating the upper-level wall and a wider floor-to-ceiling window facing north. A sophisticated level of detailing is further evident in the use of two-tone brickwork to the edges of these windows and the balcony's support column, and 'toothing out' of the brickwork at the corners of the front projecting room. The house is complemented by its original stacked stone front fence/retaining wall which returns along the driveway and incorporates planter boxes and an integrated letter box.

*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?**

116 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North, designed by architectural designer Sol Sapir in 1963, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- asymmetric built form with projecting front room and geometric massing
- flat roof with deep fascia and concealed gutters
- orange face brick walls with two tone detailing and 'toothed out' of the brickwork at the building's edges
- open carport beneath the upper floor
- upper balcony and metal balustrade
- original pattern of fenestrations and timber framed windows
- original or early stacked stone front fence/retaining wall with integrated planter boxes and timber letterbox.

### **How is it significant?**

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

### **Why is it significant?**

116 Bulleen Road, 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 1963 by respected architect Sol Sapir, this 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 a striking example of postwar residential architecture in the area. The design of the house responds to the difficult site, having integrated garage underneath with main living space provided on the upper level. Its geometric form is emphasised by the upper balcony cantilevering beyond the building line at its northern end. The house represents one of Sol Sapir's earliest designs in a Modernist idiom, anticipating his later residential designs. The house features refined detailing including a series of eight narrow floor-to-ceiling timber-framed windows punctuating the upper-level wall and a wider floor-to-ceiling window facing north. A sophisticated level of detailing is further evident in the use of two-tone brickwork to the edges of these windows and the balcony's support column, and 'toothed out' of the brickwork at the corners of the front projecting room. The house is complemented by its original stacked stone front fence/retaining wall which returns along the driveway and incorporates planter boxes and an integrated letter box. (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:

<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>Solar energy systems controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<b>Outbuildings and fences exemptions</b>	
<i>Are there outbuildings or fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	Yes: stack stone fencing/retaining walls
<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:**

GML Heritage 2021



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## McDowell Residence (former)

Prepared by: GML Heritage

**Address:** 1 Caravan Street BALWYN

**Name:** McDowell Residence (former)

**Survey Date:** December 2021

**Place Type:** House

**Architect:** A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall

**Grading:** Individually Significant

**Builder:** Cecil McDowell (owner/builder)

**Extent of Overlay:** To title boundaries

**Construction Date:** 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.

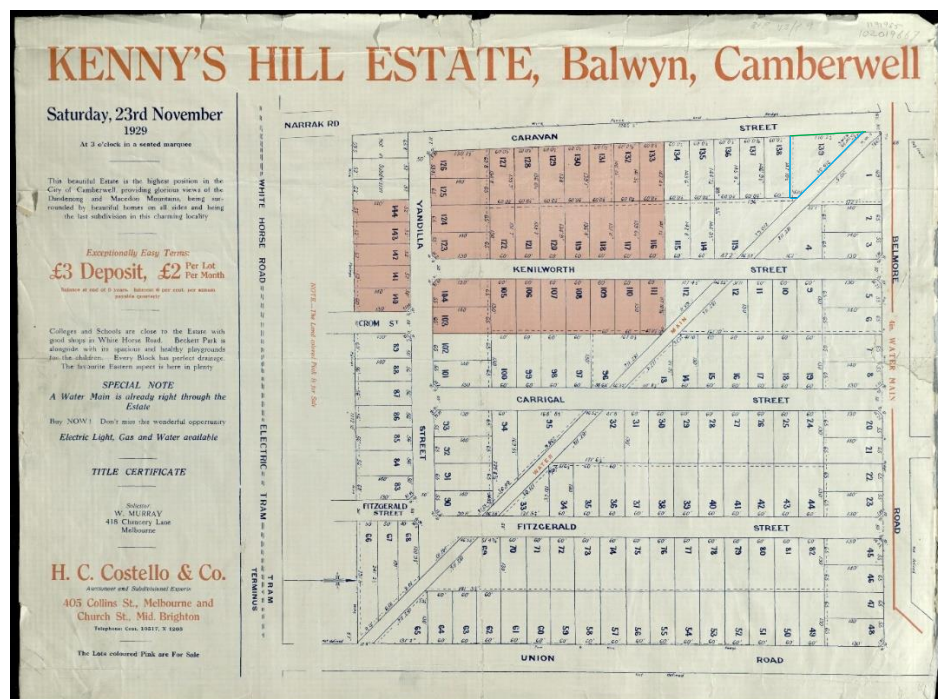


Figure 3 Kenny's Hill Estate, Balwyn plan of subdivision. Lot 139 is outlined in blue. (Source: Batten & Percy Pty Ltd 1929, State Library of Victoria, with GML overlay)

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.

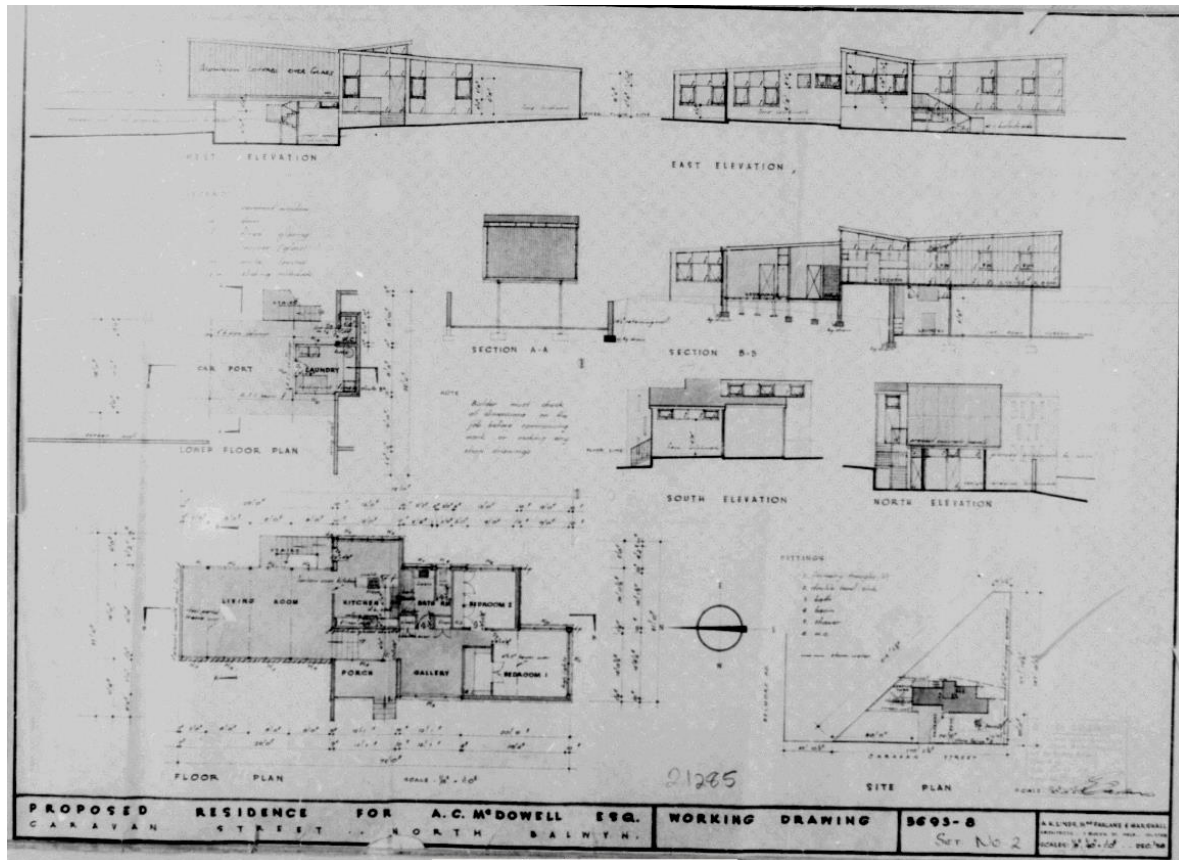


Figure 4 Working drawing for the proposed residence at 1 Caravan Street, North Balwyn, prepared by A. K. Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall in December 1956. (Source: BP 21285)

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)

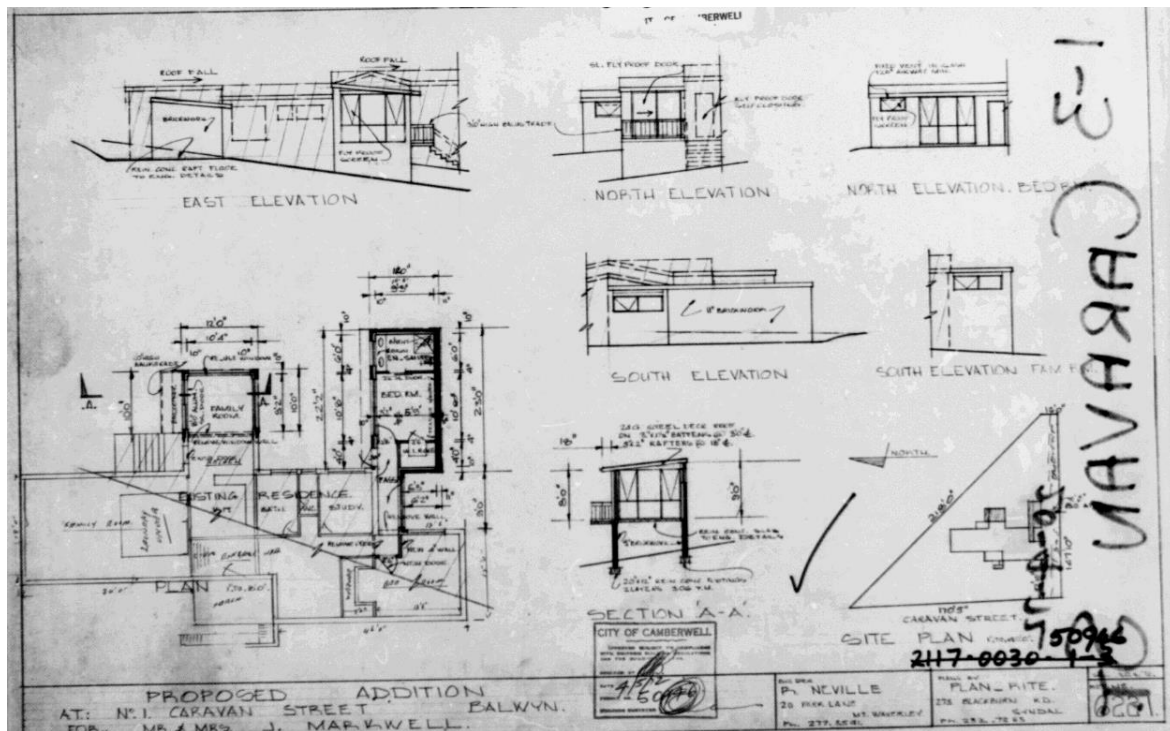


Figure 6 Working drawing for extension made to the rear of the house in 1972. (Source: BP 50946)

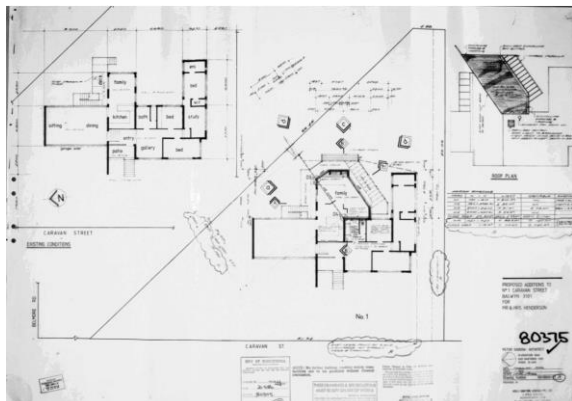


Figure 7 Working drawing showing the extension of a family room to a design by architect Peter Sandow in 1986. (Source: BP 80378)

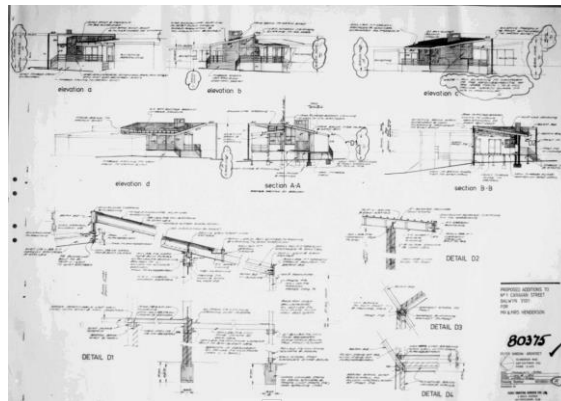


Figure 8 Elevations of the proposed family room designed by architect Peter Sandow in 1986. (Source: BP 80378)

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.



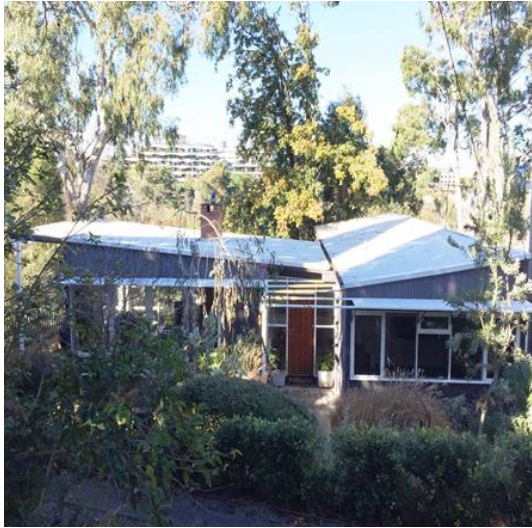


Figure 14 6 Reeves Court, Kew designed by Ernest Milston in 1955 (HO822). (Source: Trethowan 2017)

'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:

<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>	Yes
<b>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	Yes

---

*Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?*

---

**Outbuildings and fences exemptions**

*Are there outbuildings or fences which are not exempt from notice and review?*

Yes:  
volcanic  
rock  
retaining  
walls

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**Victorian Heritage Register**

*Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?*

No

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**Prohibited uses may be permitted**

*Can a permit be granted to use the place for a use which would otherwise be prohibited?*

No

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**Aboriginal heritage place**

*Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006?*

No

---

**Incorporated plan**

*Does an incorporated plan apply to the site?*

No

---

**Identified by:**

Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2015



## References

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Willis, Julie 2012. 'Bogle & Banfield' in Goad and Willis (eds) *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*. Cambridge University Press: Melbourne, p.95.

## House

Prepared by: GML Heritage

**Address:** 32 Hill Road BALWYN NORTH

<b>Name:</b> House	<b>Survey Date:</b> October 2021
<b>Place Type:</b> Residential	<b>Architect:</b> Unknown
<b>Grading:</b> Individually Significant	<b>Builder:</b> Toll Constructions
<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1951



Figure 1 32 Hill Road, Balwyn North. (Source: GML 2021)

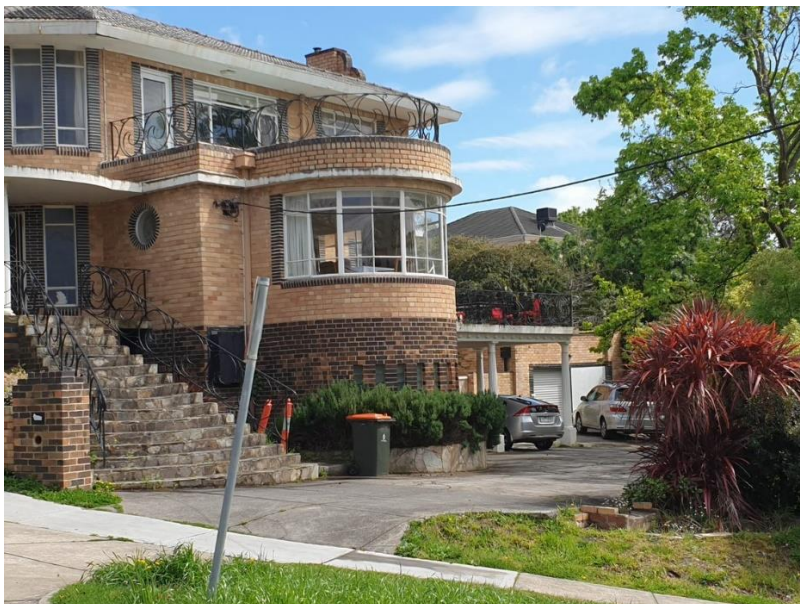


Figure 2 32 Hill Road, Balwyn North. (Source: GML 2021)





## Historical Context

The area of Hill Road, Balwyn North, 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):

*3.5.3 Expanding the network (the MMTB era)*

*6.3.3 Creating Middle class suburbs in the early twentieth century*

*6.3.4 Suburban infill after the Second World War*

Balwyn North is a residential suburb situated 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south is Balwyn, which is separated from Balwyn North 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.

The last pre-war addition to the tram network in Boroondara during the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board (MMTB) era, was the extension of the tram route along Doncaster Road to Balwyn North, which opened in 1938. This encouraged a burst of residential subdivision (although construction of houses was delayed by the onset of the Second World War and the consequent introduction of restrictions on private building activity) and opened the floodgates for the settlement boom that was to characterise the area in the postwar period (Built Heritage 2012:71, 132).

### *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. Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North.

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 32 Hill Road, 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. Joseph Shilton and Thomas Brown purchased two hundred acres of Edgars Special survey in 1875. Thomas Brown died in 1878 leaving his share of the land to his widow Mary. Joseph Shilton also died in 1878 leaving his share to his widow Fanny. Mary Brown transferred her portion of the land to Fanny Shilton in 1881. Fanny Smith retained the land until she sold it to various members of the Smith family (as joint proprietors) in 1918.

The subject site is located on what was Lot 101 of the 'Rookwood Estate', which was subdivided into 66 villa allotments and created Corby Street and Rookwood Street ('Rookwood Estate', 1927). For 40 years prior to the subdivision sale, the block of land at the corner of Doncaster and Balwyn roads, Balwyn North (then within the City of Camberwell), had been owned by William Patterson Vettler, a farmer and veteran rifleman, who died in 1926 (*Weekly Times* 27 November 1926:88).

Following the 1927 subdivision, large tracts of Rookwood Estate remained unsold, and the parcel of land on the corner of Riverview and Hill roads had yet to be developed by 1945 (Melbourne 1945.).

In March 1947, a member of the Royal Australian Naval Reserve and Hawthorn resident, Alan John Hinds, purchased the present Lot 195 Subdivision No.12895 (CT V7035 F921).

The land changed ownership three times before it was purchased by Edith Lily Toll of North Balwyn in May 1951 (CT V7035 F921). Shortly after this sale a brick residence was built by Toll Constructions of North Balwyn, for £5,000. A garage was added in 1952 for the cost of £150 (BP 86214).





Figure 3 Aerial image of 32 Hill Road, Balwyn North taken not long after the completion of the garage in c1952. Note many of the current garden elements are present including the curved retaining walls, planter under the bow window, driveway which is accessed off Riverview road and curves across the front of the house to the garage and wall joining the garage to the house (Source: Young in *Victorian Places*, 2015)

It is possible that the Tolls built the house as a speculative exercise as in 1953 the relatively new property was sold to a Harry Bell Kent, used car salesman from Balwyn. Kent sold it some six years later to North Balwyn residents William Joseph Davies, a builder, and his wife Patricia Marjorie Davies, in February 1959 (CT V7035 F921).

At the time of this sale the house was described in its real estate advertisement as a 'Chance in a lifetime to obtain one of Melbourne's most beautiful homes. Must be seen to be appreciated, S.C flat, Ballroom, stage, Picture theatre with 35mm projectors equal to any cinema. Built on double block, corner position. Magnificent views, double garage' (Age 8 April 1957:11).



Figure 4 Circled area showing the parcel of land on the corner of Riverview Road and Hill Road in 1945, just prior to its sale to Alan John Hinds. Dwellings are already visible in the area, particularly south of Riverview Road. Note Hill Road has yet to be extended north of Riverview Road. (Source: Melbourne 1945)

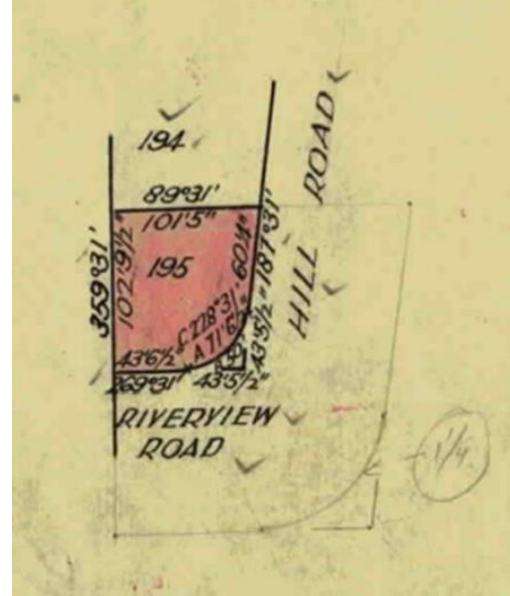


Figure 5 Detail from the Certificate of Title, showing the parcel of land Lot 195, Subdivision No. 12895, purchased by Alan John Hinds in 1947. (Source: CT V7035 F921)

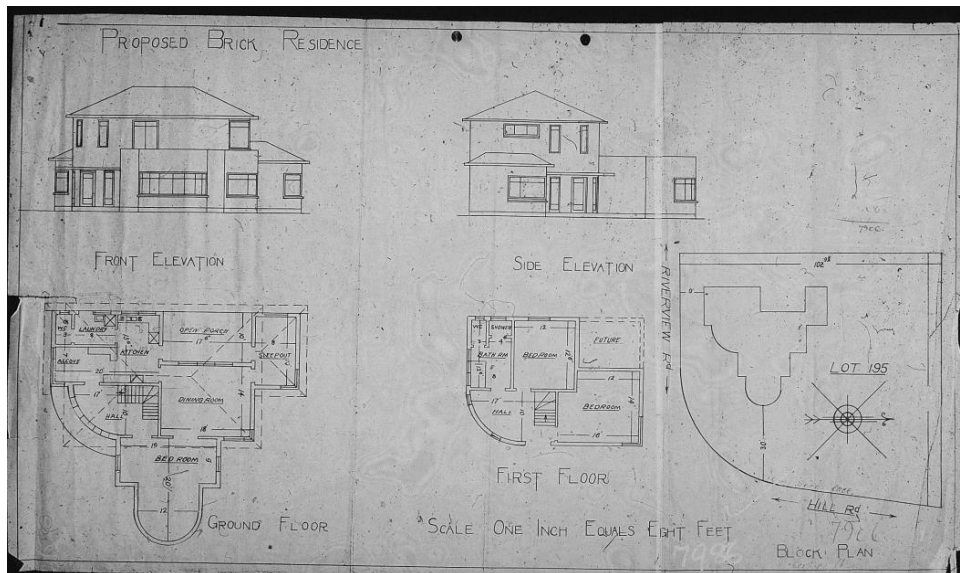


Figure 6 Architectural drawing of proposed brick residence. Note that drawing does not include the lower ground floor plan. (Source: BP 7986)

The Davies owned the property for almost 50 years, but throughout that time they experienced financial difficulties, requiring the property to be re-mortgaged several times, and leading to formal debt, sequestration or bankruptcy orders issued from the mid-1960s into the 1970s (CT V7035 F921; Australian Government Gazette 1968; 1973; Age, 13 June 1984:59). The property was sold to the current owners in July 2008 (CT V6467 F221).



In 2015 a building permit was issued for modifications to the first floor, including demolition of a concrete landing and internal alterations (BP 20150242/1).

An article featuring the house appears on the City of Boroondara's website, 'Boroondara News' page. Written by architecture and design writer Stephen Crafti, the article describes the house as one of 'only a handful of three-level waterfall style homes in Boroondara' (Crafti 2017). Mention is made in the same article of the intact interiors of the house which include moulded plaster ceilings, wall sconces, steel balustrading and an original colour scheme of pale salmon pink and grey with touches of gold to the ceiling of the ballroom.

## **Description**

32 Hill Road, Balwyn North, is a three storey brick dwelling built in 1951. Positioned on an elevated allotment that falls west to east, the site is located at the corner of Riverview Road and Hill Road. The house is elevated above street level, taking advantage of the slope of the allotment to maximize views toward the Dandenong Ranges.

The house is constructed over three levels with the main living spaces elevated above street level. Access to the front door is via a flight of sweeping steps that address the street intersection. Once inside the house, the bedrooms are on the second level while a full lower ground level houses a ballroom complete with stage.

The principal façade facing Hill Road is dominated by a projecting front room with steel framed bow window that sits below a large open terrace. This bow window continues down to the ball room below and features arrow slit windows. A further elevated terrace sits above a projecting room along the northern elevation with a third wrap around terrace opening off the main living spaces at the elevated ground floor level. This terrace is supported by slender, fluted Doric columns providing an undercroft area at ground level.

Constructed of cream brick with contrasting manganese brick detailing the house sits beneath a hipped roof clad in glazed brown terracotta tiles. Windows are steel framed and the front entry door features an original or early decorative flywire screen. Several of the windows, including the porthole window near the front entrance, front door side lights, first floor bathroom and side door with porthole window, are fitted with decorative etched glass. Decorative iron balustrades with a sinuous circular motif is featured on all terraces and on either side of the sweeping flight of entrance steps that lead up from the street corner. Clad in crazy paving these steps lead to a large, recessed portico entrance, with fluted Doric columns supporting a curved concrete roof slab. The defined slab edge of the portico continues around the house at ground floor window head height, creating a strong horizontal emphasis.

The house is integrated into the site with a concrete driveway accessed off Riverview Road passing in front of the house and continuing to a freestanding double garage located in the north west corner of the site. Constructed in cream brick with manganese brick trim the garage is contemporaneous with the house and features a simple stepped parapet. To the east of the drive the garden is terraced incorporating stone clad retaining walls and steps. A semi-circular planter box, also clad in crazy paving, follows the curve of the projecting bow window. The profile of a single 'waterfall' chimney was repeated in the low cream brick boundary fence, which has largely been recently demolished. This fence originally continued along both street frontages but has been recently removed along Hill Road.



Once a popular feature or specimen tree in post-war gardens, a mature Liquidambar (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) in the front garden contributes to the setting of the place.



Figure 7 Protruding bay with large bow window and decorative balustrade. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 8 Carport with balcony above and double garage visible beyond the bow window and semicircular planting box. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 9 Detail of balustrade, stone stairway, porthole window and portico entrance. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 10 Etched glass with maritime motif. (Source: GML 2021)

## Integrity

32 Hill Road, Balwyn North, is largely intact with very few changes visible to original or early fabric. The building retains its original built and roof form, contrasting brickwork and window and door openings and joinery. Original details include mild steel balustrades, a large bow window with original steel framed windows, decorative etched glass elements, crazy stonework clad entrance steps, a concrete portico with supporting columns, a brick double garage, stone retaining walls and planter under bow window (shown in c.1952 aerial) and low 'waterfall' cream brick fence along its eastern boundary. .

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 the 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.

While many of these couples turned to young progressive architects to design their homes in the Modernist style, houses drawing on the earlier design influences of the interwar years were still prevalent. Builder designed, these houses frequently drew on elements of interwar Moderne styling but utilised a distinctive material palette of cream bricks, with darker glazed brick bands giving them a particular postwar vernacular aesthetic. In the Balwyn/North Balwyn area many of these houses were built as 'statement pieces'. Set high above street level and taking full advantage of sweeping views to the hills, the houses were deliberately bold in their design to reflect the success and prominence or aspirations of their owners. In keeping with this status, the houses often integrated garages into their design

Commonly built on bases of manganese brick work, feature bands of the same bricks were laid under window sills and in linear bands across the otherwise plain brick walls of the house. As with the Moderne, corners were rounded, although in this instance the front façade stepped back from the street creating a waterfall effect; an effect that was often repeated in chimney and fence details. Hipped roofs were of glazed terracotta with deep eaves providing picturesque roof forms that covered complex asymmetrical floor plans below. Windows were typically steel framed and decorative interest was provided in mild steel balustrading and feature etched glass windows. Many of these design features were continued into the landscaping of the site with retaining walls of stacked stone or slate, curved steps and low front fences that mimicked the waterfall effect of the houses stepped facades.

Despite the dominance of houses built in the years following World War II, Heritage Overlay coverage of postwar houses in Balwyn and Balwyn North is limited. There are also few postwar houses on the Heritage Overlay in the broader Boroondara context. The house at 32 Hill Rd, Balwyn North can be compared broadly to the following houses in the Balwyn and Balwyn North area:



Figure 11 6 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North, built in 1951 (HO170). (Source: GML 2022)

6 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North is of local historical and architectural significance. It is an architecturally superior residential example in the Moderne style. The house is of local historical and architectural significance.

The design utilises all of the Moderne stylistic features, including curves, layered massing, flat roofs, nautical imagery, patterned brickwork and steel-framed window joinery. It is also related to the nearby Riverside and Camberwell City heights estates.



Figure 12 3 Kalonga Road, Balwyn North, built in 1948-1955 (HO176). (Source: GML 2022)

3 Kalonga Road, Balwyn North is of local historical and architectural significance. It is a cream brick residence which reflects both Moderne and Modernist influences in its design. Moderne influences are expressed in its layered geometric massed form with a strong horizontal emphasis, the curved open terrace, contrasting brown brick banding, stone front steps, porthole windows and use of contemporary materials such as steel framed windows. The fenestration pattern and flat roof on the upper storey reflect a more Modernist approach.



Figure 13 21 Riverview Road, Balwyn North. (Source: GML 2022)

21 Riverview Road, Balwyn North is a double storey cream brick house built in the early postwar vernacular style that incorporates elements of the interwar Moderne. Elevated above the street, the house utilises a standard asymmetric building form with hipped roof enlivened by a curved entry porch and projecting semi-circular front room with curved glass.

Interwar houses on the Heritage Overlay in the broader Boroondara context that are comparable to 32 Hill Road, Balwyn North include:





Figure 14 44 Studley Avenue, Kew (Significant within HO530). (Source: GML 2022)

44 Studley Avenue, Kew, is a double storey brick dwelling within the Yarra Boulevard Precinct, Kew. The asymmetrical massing of this substantial dwelling takes advantage of the sloping site, with a large bow window with steel framed windows and an open terrace with metal balustrade. A modern extension at the rear of the property has somewhat compromised the integrity of the place, however the original dwelling remains largely intact.



Figure 15 2 Beatrice Street, Glen Iris, built in 1940 (HO370). (Source: Lovell Chen 2005)

2 Beatrice Street, Glen Iris, is of local historical and architectural significance as a good example of a Moderne house of the late interwar period. The asymmetrical massing of forms takes advantage of the prominent corner siting to address both frontages, a context which sets it apart from the more traditional planning and form of the neighbouring properties. While the integrity of the building has been compromised to a degree by the alterations to windows and a door, the overall composition remains unaltered.



Figure 16 2 Belvedere Street, Kew, built in 1944 (HO313). (Source: Hermes)

2 Belvedere Street, Kew (also known as 28 Holroyd Street, Kew) is of local historical and architectural significance. It is a single storey triple-fronted brick house in the interwar Streamline Moderne style. Situated on a prominent corner site, the house features cream face brick on a manganese brick plinth, tapestry brick string lines and curved steel-framed picture windows. Fluted Doric columns support a concrete roof slab above a recessed entrance porch. The house retains relatively high integrity, with minor cosmetic changes undertaken in the mid-1960s.

32 Hill Road, Balwyn North, compares well to the above examples, through its incorporation of key elements of interwar Moderne styling expressed using a distinctive material palette and detailing that is typical of builder-designed postwar vernacular houses.

It compares well to 6 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North and 2 Belvedere Street, Kew, in its use of cream face brick, contrasting manganese brown brick banding, curved corner elements and steel-framed

windows. It shares the asymmetrical massing and defined slab edges of 2 Beatrice Street, Glen Iris, 6 Bulleen Road, North Balwyn and 3 Kalonga Road, North Balwyn. Like 6 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North, 44 Studley Avenue, Kew and 21 Riverview Road, Balwyn North the house incorporates a prominent curved bay window and open terrace with decorative steel balustrade. The hipped tile roof reflects a move away from the desired flat roofs commonly seen in more overt expressions of the Moderne style, where the roof is completely hidden behind a parapet (2 Beatrice Street, Glen Iris and 6 Bulleen Road, North Balwyn).

Architecturally and aesthetically, 32 Hill Road, Balwyn North is one of the more striking examples of post-war residential architecture in Balwyn North. It is a competently designed, detailed and highly intact example of a substantial three-storey dwelling built in the early postwar years. While Moderne influences can be seen in its layered geometric massed form, strong horizontal emphasis, curved corners and open upper terraces, its design reflects a distinctive postwar aesthetic, which includes sheer walls of cream brick broken up by bands of Manganese brick work, a dominant glazed terracotta tiled roof, flat concrete roofed entry porch supported by stylised fluted classical columns and decorative details such as etched glass feature windows and sinuous mild steel balustrading.

Taking full advantage of its elevated site the house confidently addresses both street frontages and features integrated landscape elements and complementary garage design, and is situated within a mature garden setting.

### **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).*

32 Hill Road, Balwyn North is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of the settlement boom that was to characterise the area in the postwar period. The settlement boom was spurred on by the extension of the electric tram route along Doncaster Road to Balwyn North, which opened in 1938, but which was delayed by the onset of WWII and associated restrictions on private building activity. Although the land, purchased in 1947, was part of the 1927 Rookwood Estate subdivision, the success of this and other 1920s and 1930s subdivisions in the area were delayed because of the sheer distance from useful public transport links.

Although not designed by an architect, the house represents the skilful execution of a highly original and complex design. As such, the house exemplifies the concentration of high quality individually designed 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 understanding 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).*

Architecturally, 32 Hill Road, Balwyn North is a particularly well executed and intact representative example of vernacular domestic architecture popular in the immediate postwar period. The house skilfully utilises standard built forms, seen in the hip roof, steel framed windows and sheer brick walls and enlivens them by articulating its elevations with a dominant projecting bow window, elevated terraces, sweeping entrance steps and flat concrete roofed porch. Built by a local building company Toll Constructions, the house is finely detailed and showcases the builder's skill in providing a 'statement house' that reflected the affluence and aspirations of property owners of the area.

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

N/A

*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 house at 32 Hill Road, Balwyn North, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include:

- original built form and materials of the house, including cream face brick walls manganese brick base and detailing
- pattern of fenestration and original window and door joinery, including the large steel framed bow window, porthole windows and etched glazing, and decorative flywire screen door
- hipped tiled roof
- a defined slab edge extending to curved portico entrance
- three open upper terraces
- recessed porch, front entry steps and crazy stonework cladding
- decorative balustrades with circular motifs
- front fence on east street boundary, garden bed and crazy stonework clad retaining walls and steps in the front garden.

### **How is it significant?**

The house at 32 Hill Road, Balwyn North, is of local historical and representative significance to the City of Boroondara.

### **Why is it significant?**

32 Hill Road, Balwyn North is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of the settlement boom that was to characterise the area in the postwar period. The settlement boom was spurred on by the extension of the electric tram route along Doncaster Road to Balwyn North, which opened in 1938, but which was delayed by the onset of WWII and associated restrictions on private building activity. Although the land, purchased in 1947, was part of the 1927 Rookwood Estate subdivision, the success of this and other 1920s and 1930s subdivisions in the area were delayed because of the sheer distance from useful public transport links. (Criterion A)

Although not designed by an architect, the house represents the skilful execution of a highly original and complex design. As such, the house exemplifies the concentration of high quality individually designed houses built in Balwyn and Balwyn North during the 1950s and 1960s. (Criterion A)

Architecturally, 32 Hill Road, Balwyn North is a particularly well executed and intact representative example of vernacular domestic architecture popular in the immediate postwar period. The house skilfully utilises standard built forms, seen in the hip roof, steel framed windows and sheer brick walls and enlivens them by articulating its elevations with a dominant projecting bow window, elevated terraces, sweeping entrance steps and flat concrete roofed porch. Built by a local building company Toll Constructions, the house is finely detailed and showcases the builder's skill in providing a 'statement house' that reflected the affluence and aspirations of property owners of the area. (Criterion D)

## 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:

<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>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<b>Outbuildings and fences exemptions</b>	
<i>Are there outbuildings or fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	Yes, curved stone retaining walls in front yard; front steps and semi-circular planter box under the bow window clad in crazy paving; original cream brick double garage and garden wall that links garage to main house.
<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:**

GML Heritage, 2021.





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## Lipton House (former)

Prepared by: GML Heritage

**Address:** 67 Hill Road BALWYN NORTH

**Name:** Lipton House (former)

**Survey Date:** October 2021

**Place Type:** Residential Building

**Architect:** Kevin O'Neil and Raymond Tung  
(from the office of Bogle & Banfield)

**Grading:** Individually Significant

**Builder:** L. P. Kelly & Company

**Extent of Overlay:** To title boundaries

**Construction Date:** 1965



Figure 1 Lucifer Street and Hill Road elevations, 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 2 Lucifer Street elevation, 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North. (Source: GML 2021)

## Historical Context

The area of Hill Road, Balwyn North, 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 North is a residential suburb situated 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south is Balwyn, which is separated from Balwyn North 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 since 1994 has been part of the City of Boroondara.

This house is associated with what might be termed the latter phase of post-war home-building in Balwyn North – that is, the period from the mid to late 1960s. This represented part of a broader boom in suburban residential development that had resumed after the lull caused by the credit crunch of the early 1960s. In Balwyn, and especially in Balwyn North, new and established subdivisions had already significantly filled out by that time and, by the mid-1960s, choice vacant allotments were starting to become more difficult to obtain. By the early 1970s very few were left.

### *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 Balwyn North (called North Balwyn at that time). Occupied with orchards and small farms, this was the one of the last remaining expanses of undeveloped land relatively close to the city. Balwyn North became the suburb of choice for many young married couples building new homes in the 1940s and 1950s, some of whom were defence force veterans. The suburb developed as quintessentially middle class, with a high proportion of brick homes and a notable absence of industrial activity. The ridge along Doncaster Road was an advantage for house blocks in the adjoining streets, providing sought-after views towards the city centre and the distant ranges, and encouraging the building of often grandiose double-storey homes. Public transport was provided with the extension of the electric tramway from East Kew to Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North.

Since the 1990s a significant influx of new residents 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 highly rated co-educational government secondary school with more than 2000 students.

## History

The land at 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North, originally formed part of Elgar's Crown Special Survey purchased and surveyed by Henry Elgar in 1841 (CT V7528 F001).

The subject site was Lot 116 of the large residential subdivision laid out in the early 1950s (CT V7528 F001; *Age*, 3 March 1952:8). The subdivision included 10 blocks on Walnut, Vicars and Hill Roads. Prices ranged from 6 pounds to 8 pounds 5 shillings per foot of frontage (*Age*, 3 March 1952:8).

In 1964 businessman Bertram Lipton and his wife Claudine acquired the title to the subject site. Born in Russia as Boris Lifschitz, Bertram Lipton had settled in Belgium by the mid-1930s. In 1940 Bertram, Claudine and their two sons migrated to Australia. Lipton was a moderately well-known painter and furniture maker. He hosted several exhibitions at the Victorian Artists' Society in the late 1960s and early 1970s (*Australian Jewish News*, 13 August 1971: 2).

The Liptons engaged Kevin O'Neil and Raymond Tung, architects and planners, to prepare designs for their new home in 1964. The couple wanted a relatively modest house with only two bedrooms but with large living and dining areas ('for entertaining friends and displaying some of Mr Lipton's finely-made furniture of his own design and handcrafting') and a studio-hobby room (*Australian Home Beautiful* August 1966:X). The architects proposed a split-level dwelling based around an elongated open-planned living/dining room with a lantern roof to provide additional height and clerestory windows to all sides. Bedrooms and service areas were clustered along the south side, with the hobby room and garage at the lower level.

In February 1965 a building permit was issued for the erection of a 'seven roomed brick veneer house' to cost £14,866. It was built by L. P. Kelly & Company of Bay Street, Brighton, and was completed by August 1965. The house appeared on the front cover of the popular home-making magazine *Australian Home Beautiful* in August 1966. The accompanying article observed that, as the site was not only on a corner but also elevated, it effectively had three street frontages. These qualities, the review noted, were 'analogous to those required for a piece of sculpture in the round – it must be satisfying when seen from any viewpoint'. In the *Australian Home Beautiful* piece, the Lipton house as 'an outstanding example of a house with this sculptural quality' (*Australia Home Beautiful* 1966:X).

Interior photographs from 1966 show that living areas were furnished with Chinese rugs, built-in wall units, and examples of Lipton's paintings and his hand-made furniture (*Australia Home Beautiful* 1966:X).



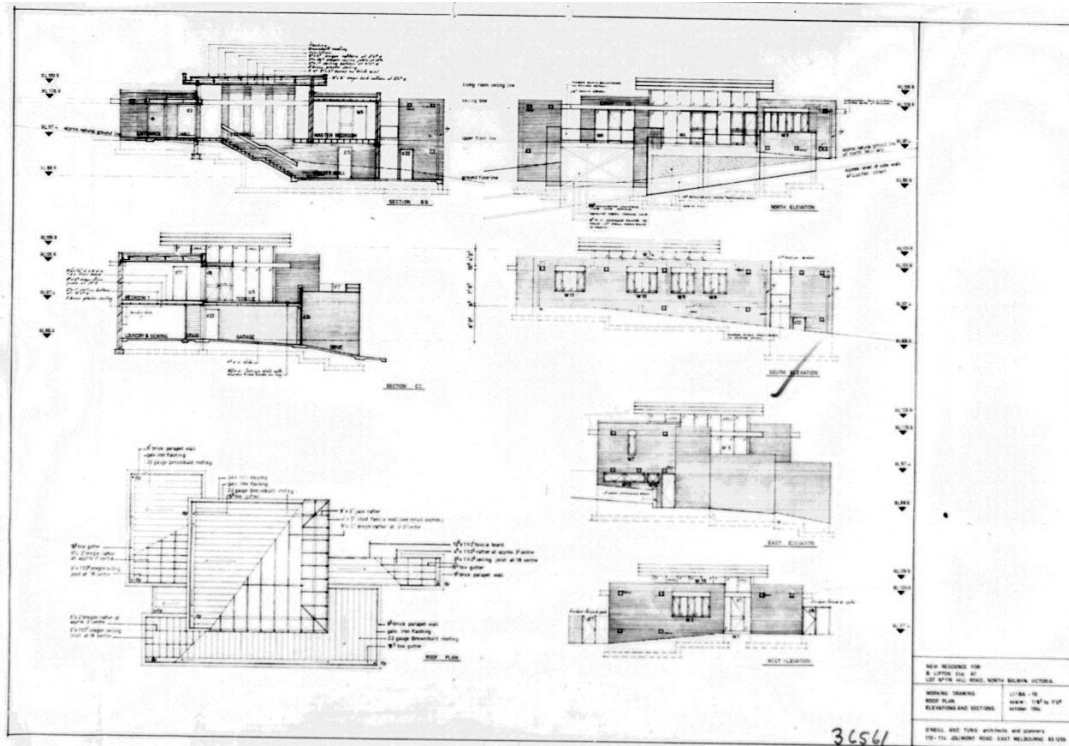


Figure 3 Working drawings for the roof plan, elevation and sections for the new residence at 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North, dated October 1964. (Source: BP 36561)

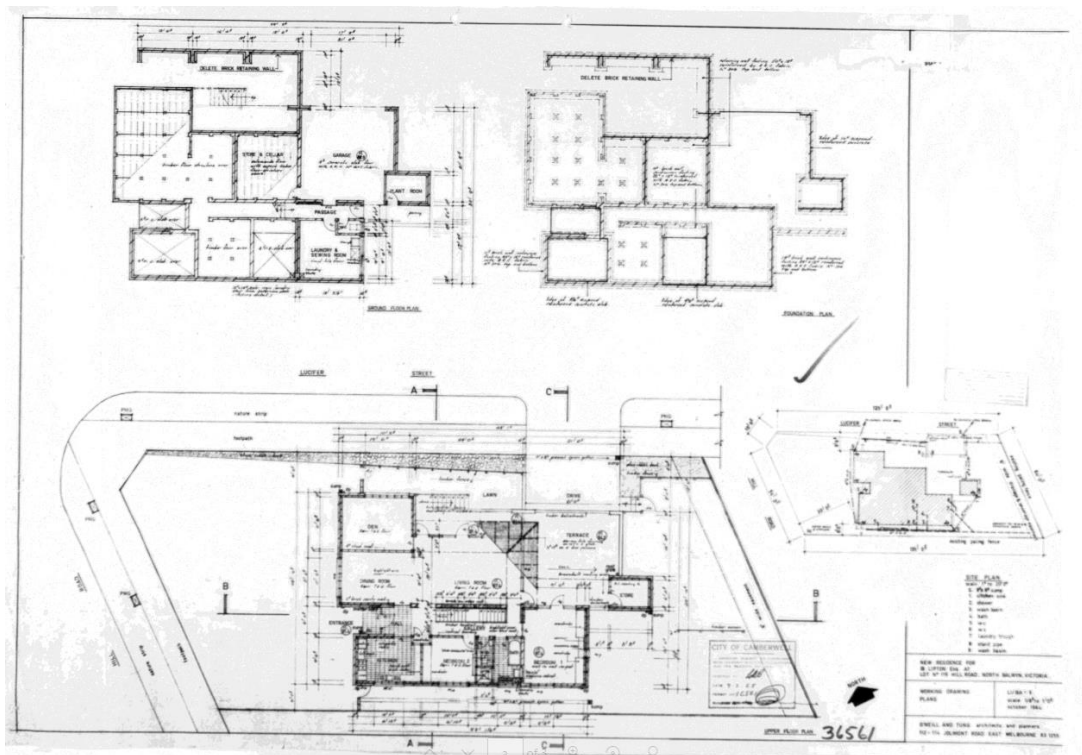


Figure 4 Working drawings of the plan for new residence at 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North, dated October 1964. (Source: BP 36561)



Council building cards show the architects also designed landscaping along the Lucifer Street boundary, comprising a sloping pebbled embankment with a timber fence along a section at the top of the embankment on either side of the driveway, and lawn (BP 36561).

Bertram and Claudine Lipton lived at 67 Hill Road until their respective deaths in 1974 and 1977 (*Australian Jewish News*, 20 December 1974:15; CT V7528 F001). Ownership of the house subsequently passed to another European emigre, German-born Gunter Friedlander, who lived there until his death in 2008 (CT V7528 F001).

Council building cards record no alterations or additions to the property since it was constructed in 1965 (BP 36561).

### **Bogle & Banfield Associates**

Bogle & Banfield Associates was a partnership formed in about 1959 between Gordon Douglas Banfield (1922–2007) and Alan Bogle (1902–1976). The pair met in the office of architect Harry Norris in 1954 and entered into practice together in 1959. Architect Bernard Joyce (1929–1994) was one of their notable employees. The firm is best known for its bold and innovative public buildings, including Gypsum House, La Trobe Street, Melbourne (c1969); St James Anglican Church, Glen Iris (c1959); the Total Carpark, Russell Street, Melbourne (1964–65); and St Vincent's Private Hospital, Victoria Parade, Fitzroy (c1972) (Willis 2012:95).

### **Description**

Occupying a corner allotment with a downward east–west slope, the house at 67 Hill Road is a flat-roofed, triple-fronted, split-level brick house expressed as a series of discrete but interlocking cubic volumes that step across the site. The composition is dominated by a central living area that incorporates a raised (lantern) roof with broad eaves, a tall fascia clad in metal decking, and timber-framed clerestory windows that, on the north and east sides, extend all the way down to floor level to create fully-glazed frontages, interrupted by broad timber-slat sunshades. The other rooms are clustered around the south and west sides of this central living area (shown on working drawings), in flat-roofed cubic volumes with lower roof-lines, simpler timber fascias, stark brown brick walls and large bays of windows with brick sills and narrow timber-framed sashes.

The house has an entrance from each of the two street façades. The main entry, on Hill Road, is set back into a deeply recessed alcove between the two asymmetrical wings that respectively contain the den/dining room and the kitchen, bathroom and bedrooms. On the Lucifer Street frontage, a small flight of steps alongside the den wing leads up to a broad L-shaped terrace, which opens of the fully-glazed living room walls. This terrace extends further westward across the double garage at the lower level, and there is a small windowless brick volume (containing a storeroom) at the extreme edge, connected to the main house via a covered walkway.

A sloped, volcanic rock embankment defines the Lucifer Street boundary, which continues as a rock garden with different sized stones and select boulders along the Hill Road boundary. A mature eucalypt, possibly a Narrow-leaved Black Peppermint (*Eucalyptus nicholii*), stands in one corner of front garden near the Hill Road boundary. There is no front fence, which was typical of the postwar Modernist house.





Figure 5 Mature single eucalypt in a corner of the front garden. (Source: GML 2021)

### **Integrity**

The house is highly intact to its original 1964 design. It retains the original form, massing, fenestration and detailing shown in the original building plans. The addition of an air-conditioning unit on the north wall and some minor changes to the original colour scheme, such as the garage and front doors (from beige to bright yellow) and the timberwork to the terrace sunshade and storeroom fascia (from dark brown to white) do not significantly diminish the integrity of the place. The house retains much of its original setting, including a sloped embankment of volcanic rocks along the Lucifer Street boundary and lawn.

### **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 (and where 67 Hill Road is located), 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 many used 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, which were often 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.

The house at 67 Hill Road can be compared to a number of contemporaneous houses in Balwyn and Balwyn North that exhibit a similar use of volumetric massing, flat roofs and full-height glazing. Despite the dominance of houses built in the years following World War II, there are only limited postwar houses in Balwyn North and Balwyn in the Heritage Overlay.

The following are comparable examples in the Balwyn North and Balwyn.



Figure 6 '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 7 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 2015)

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.

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 8 '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 9 '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.

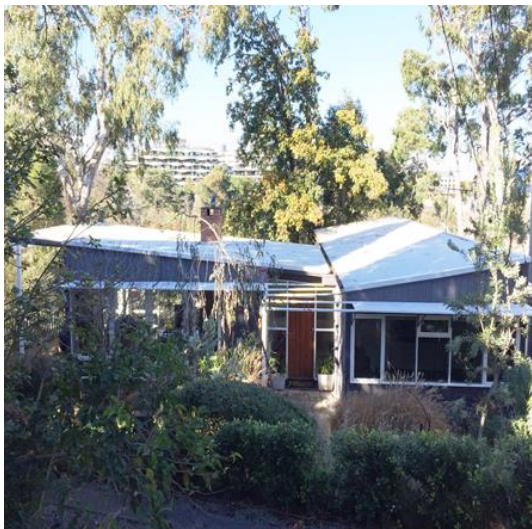


Figure 10 6 Reeves Court, Kew designed by Ernest Milston in 1955 (HO822). (Source: Trethowan 2017)

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

'Guss residence', 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 '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.



Figure 12 'Dickie House', 6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn, c.1961–64 (HO784 City of Boroondara). (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.

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Figure 13 '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.

The former Lipton House compares well to the above examples. Like the other examples, it exhibits key elements of postwar housing typologies, including low horizontal massing, interlocking cubic forms, flat roofs and responsiveness to site topography. The architects took advantage of the prominent corner location to develop an innovative approach to its design which addresses both street frontages equally and takes on a sculptural form in the landscape.

'Robin Boyd House I' (1947) (VHR HO879, HO116 City of Boroondara) is widely recognised as the prototype for postwar Modernist homes in its adaptation to the topography of the site and the use of new ideas on the spatial flow between inside and out. These ideas are also represented in the design for the Guss Residence (1961), 18 Yarra Street, Kew (Significant within HO530 City of Boroondara) and the subject building (1965), which uses interlocking forms and split levels in response to the site's topography.

The former Lipton House, like the 'Guss Residence' and 12–14 Tannock Street, Balwyn, is enhanced by the simplicity and informality of its garden setting, largely open to the street frontages.

Overall, the subject site is a good representative example of a mid-century Modernist house. It exhibits key characteristics of the style, including responsiveness to site,

## 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).*

The former Lipton House at 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North, is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of Boroondara as a locus for leading architect-designed public and private buildings from the 1850s into the postwar period. Built in 1965 to a design by architects Kevin O'Neil





and Raymond Tung of leading architectural practice Bogle & Banfield, the unconventional house and its interiors were featured in popular home-making magazine *Australian Home Beautiful* in 1966.

*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 understanding 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 former Lipton House is of aesthetic significance as one of the more innovative examples of 1960s residential architecture in Balwyn North. Occupying an elevated corner site, the design was conceived to present equally balanced elevations to two street frontages, in the manner of a sculpture-in-the-round. Expressed as a series of stepped and interlocking rectilinear volumes, the house has an especially eye-catching roof-line that is emphasised by the inclusion of a lantern roof with broad, panelled fascias and clerestory windows. With a continuous bay of full-height windows opening onto a broad sun deck over the garage, and its unusual integrated pergola and covered walkway connecting to a detached storeroom, the house remains a striking composition on this prominent suburban site. The building is enhanced by its open garden setting and sloped, embankment of rocks along the Lucifer Street boundary, also designed by architects Kevin O'Neil and Raymond Tung in 1965 as an integral part of their plans for the site. (Criterion E)

*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 Lipton House at 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North, built in 1965 and designed by architects Raymond Tung and Kevin O'Neill, is significant.

Significant fabric includes:

- The original built form, including the interlocking cubic forms stepped across the site
- flat roofs and raised lantern roof with broad eaves and tall fascia clad in metal decking
- face brick surfaces
- window and door openings and joinery
- timber slat sunshades.

The garden setting and sloped, embankment of rocks along the Lucifer Street boundary contributes to the significance of the place.

### How is it significant?

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

### Why is it significant?

The former Lipton House at 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North, is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of Boroondara as a locus for leading architect-designed public and private buildings from the 1850s into the postwar period. Built in 1965 to a design by architects Kevin O'Neil and Raymond Tung of leading architectural practice Bogle & Banfield, the unconventional house and its interiors were featured in popular home-making magazine *Australian Home Beautiful* in 1966. This house exemplifies the high concentration of architect-designed Modernist houses built in Balwyn and Balwyn North during the 1950s and 60s. (Criterion A)

The former Lipton House is of aesthetic significance as one of the more innovative examples of 1960s residential architecture in Balwyn North. Occupying an elevated corner site, the design was conceived to present equally balanced elevations to two street frontages, in the manner of a sculpture-in-the-round. Expressed as a series of stepped and interlocking rectilinear volumes, the house has an especially eye-catching roof-line emphasised by the inclusion of a lantern roof with broad panelled fascia and clerestory windows. With a continuous bay of full-height windows opening onto a broad sun deck over the garage, and its unusual integrated pergola and covered walkway connecting to a detached storeroom, the house remains a striking composition on this prominent suburban site. The building is enhanced by its open garden setting and sloped, embankment of rocks along the Lucifer Street boundary, also designed by architects Kevin O'Neil and Raymond Tung in 1965 and integral to their plans for the site. (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:

<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>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<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 2015



## References

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## 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.

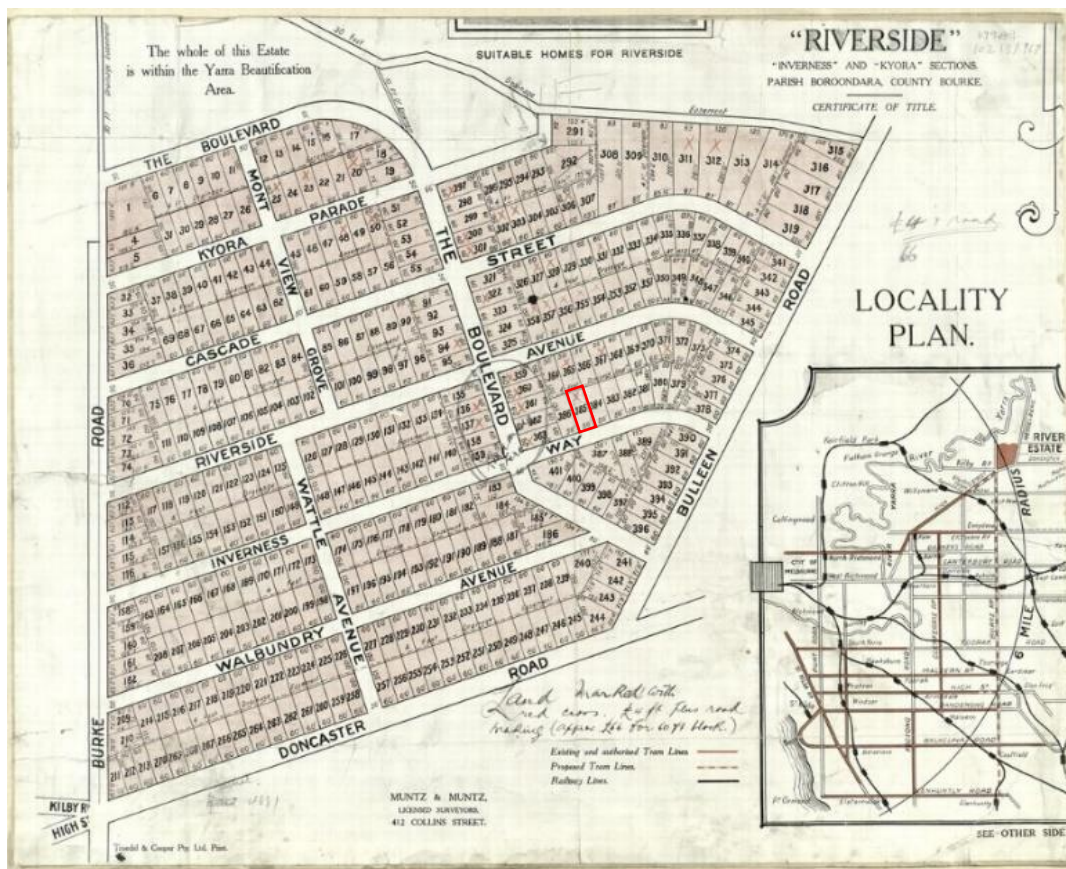


Figure 3 Plan showing the Riverside Estate (Batten and Percy (Firm) 193?) which was initially laid out in 1920. Keith and Edna Mann purchased lot 385 (outlined in red) in 1952. (Source: State Library Victoria)

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)

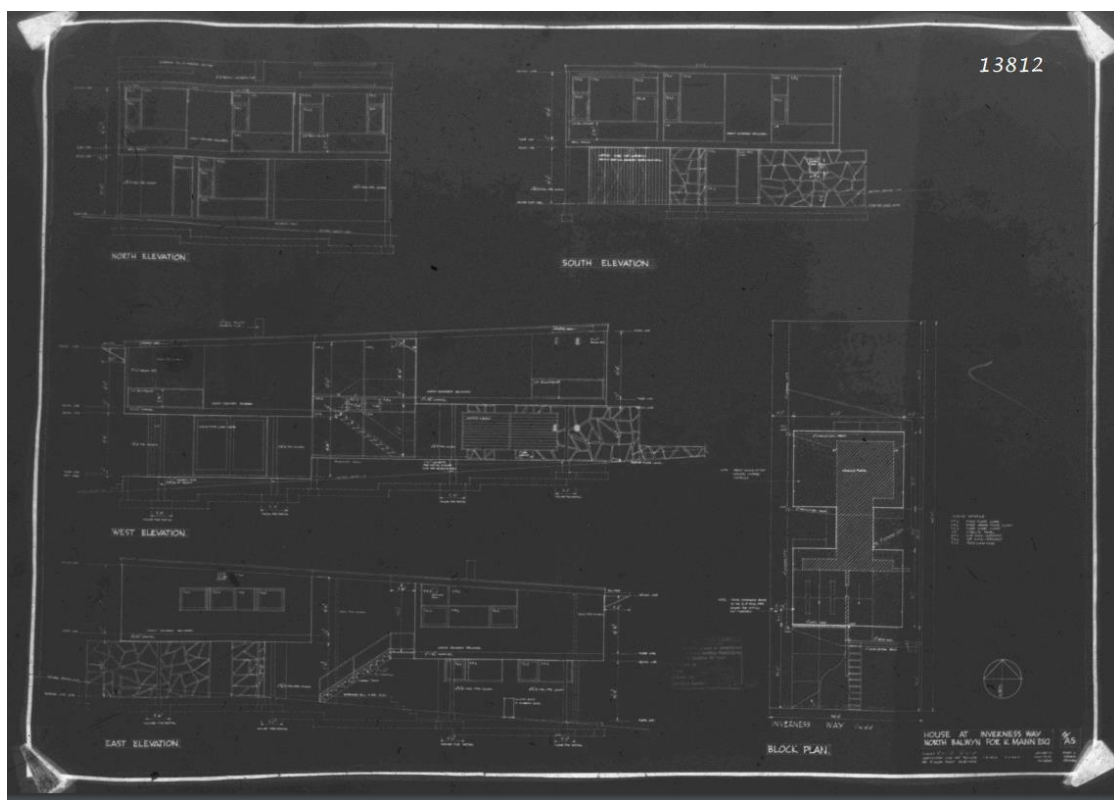


Figure 4 Working drawing for house at 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North showing east and west elevation and site plan. (Source: BP 35882)

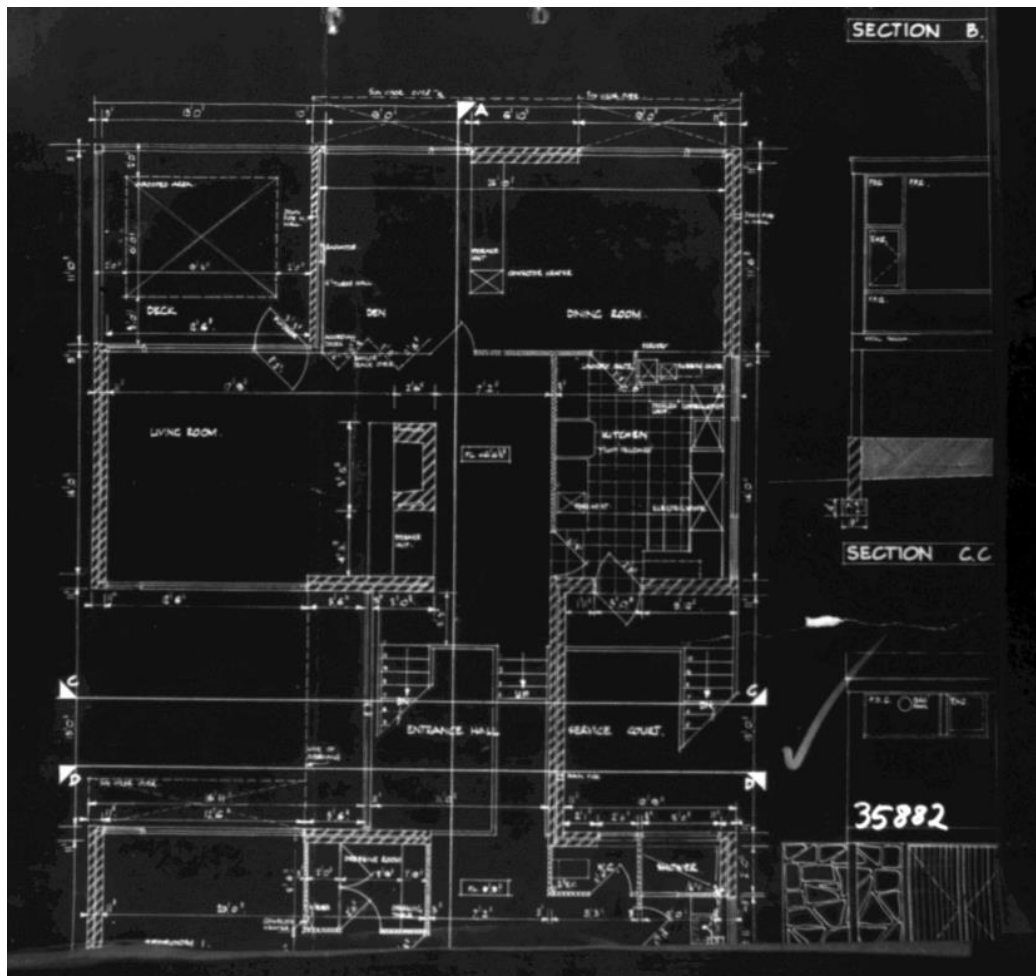


Figure 5 Working drawing for house at 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North showing part floor plan of rear of first floor with main living spaces facing north. Note the house is designed over four levels and is zoned with living spaces at the north (rear and bedrooms facing south (street)). (Source: BP 35882)

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 & Trengrove 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 & Trengrove 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

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



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)

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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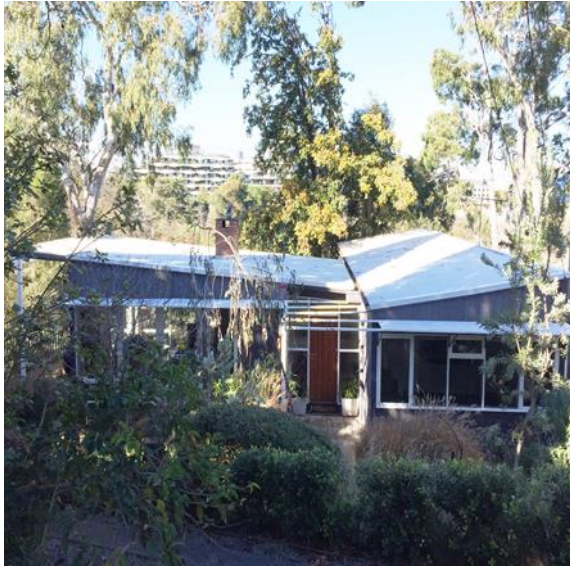


Figure 15. 6 Reeves Court, Kew designed by Ernest Milston in 1955 (HO822) (Source: Trethowan 2017)

'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>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<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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## Wing Shing House (former)

**Prepared by:** GML Heritage

**Address:** 26 Kyora Parade BALWYN NORTH

<b>Name:</b> Wing Shing House (former)	<b>Survey Date:</b> December 2021
<b>Place Type:</b> Residential	<b>Architect:</b> Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb
<b>Grading:</b> Individually Significant	<b>Builder:</b> O.L. Davey
<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1950



Figure 1 Principal facade (north elevation) fronting Kyora Parade. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 2 Oblique view of the principal façade and front garden retaining wall. (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 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 Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North, 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.

Postwar residential development in this part of North Balwyn combined settlement in the Riverside Estate which had commenced in the late 1930s. The area was then one of the first parts of the suburb to be developed when homebuilding resumed after the Second World War, and, consequently, the estate contains a rather higher proportion of houses from the late 1940s and early 1950s than those parts of North Balwyn further to the east.

## History

The land at 26 Kyora Parade, 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 is located on what was Lot 49 of a section of the 'Riverside Estate' that was subdivided into 41 residential allotments in 1938 ('Riverside Estate' 1938; CT V6780 F1355998). Kyora Parade was created as part of this release of land (Age, 10 May 1938:18). By 1941, the subject site was one of eight unbuilt-upon allotments of eighteen on the street (Figure 3).

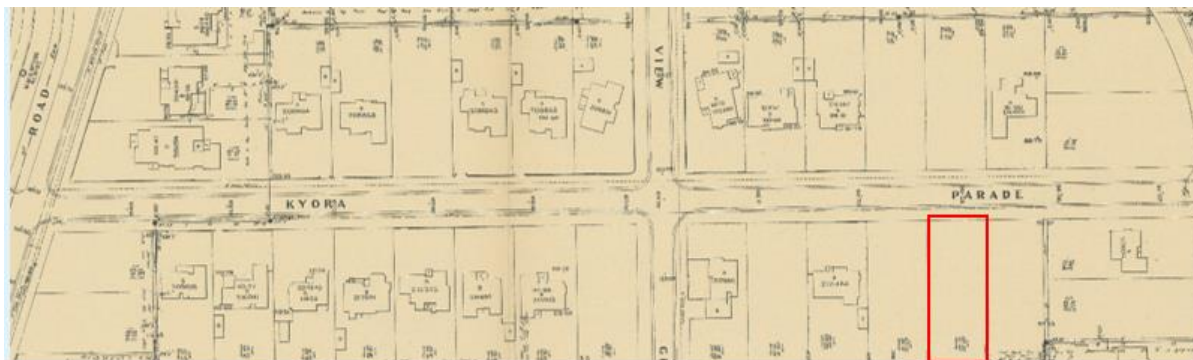


Figure 3 Extract from MMBVW Detail Plan 4775 showing the subject site outlined in red, 1941. (Source: State Library Victoria with GML overlay)

In 1948 Peter Wing Shing Chen and his wife Goy Jin 'Jean' Yeung purchased the subject land. Part of a prominent Chinese-Australian family, Peter Wing Shing (1897-1982) was one of six children of Chen Ah Chew, who migrated to Victoria for the 1850s Gold Rush (Ancestry 2021). Shing Chen and his brothers formed a mercantile business, Wing Young & Company, with varied concerns including fruit and vegetable wholesaling, food manufacture and furniture making. The Wing Shing's intended to



build a family home for themselves and extended family which included their two unmarried children, their married son Edward, his wife Nancy and their two children, and Peter's widowed mother, Marie (Ancestry.com).

The subject house was constructed in 1950 to designs prepared by Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb. It was built by OL Davey for a cost of £7500 (BP 4365). Shortly after its construction, the residence featured in the January 1951 *Australian Home Beautiful* magazine. The article reported that, 'faced with the building of a large house on a frontage of 60 feet, the architects placed the garage underneath the house and slightly higher than the footpath. This enabled the house to spread over the whole frontage' (*Australian Home Beautiful*:14). The article also noted that 'in a street of pleasant dwellings in North Balwyn, the two-storeyed home of Mr P Wing Shing stands out because of its arresting design' (*Australian Home Beautiful*:14).

Designed to accommodate ten people, the house included two large sun decks at the upper level, a substantial kitchen (incorporating three stoves) and a living room almost thirty feet (9 metres) wide, with a prominently angled north-facing bay window that opened onto an elevated terrace (*Australian Home Beautiful*:14). To further maximise available space, there was extensive use of built-in furniture: the living room included a shelving unit with cocktail cabinet, built-in radio/gramophone and record storage, while the bedrooms had built-in beds, window seats, storage units, and dressing tables (*Australian Home Beautiful*:14)

In 1950 a shed and small addition were constructed at the rear of the property and a pergola was added in 1952 (BP 9597). Council building cards record no alterations or additions to the property since 1952.

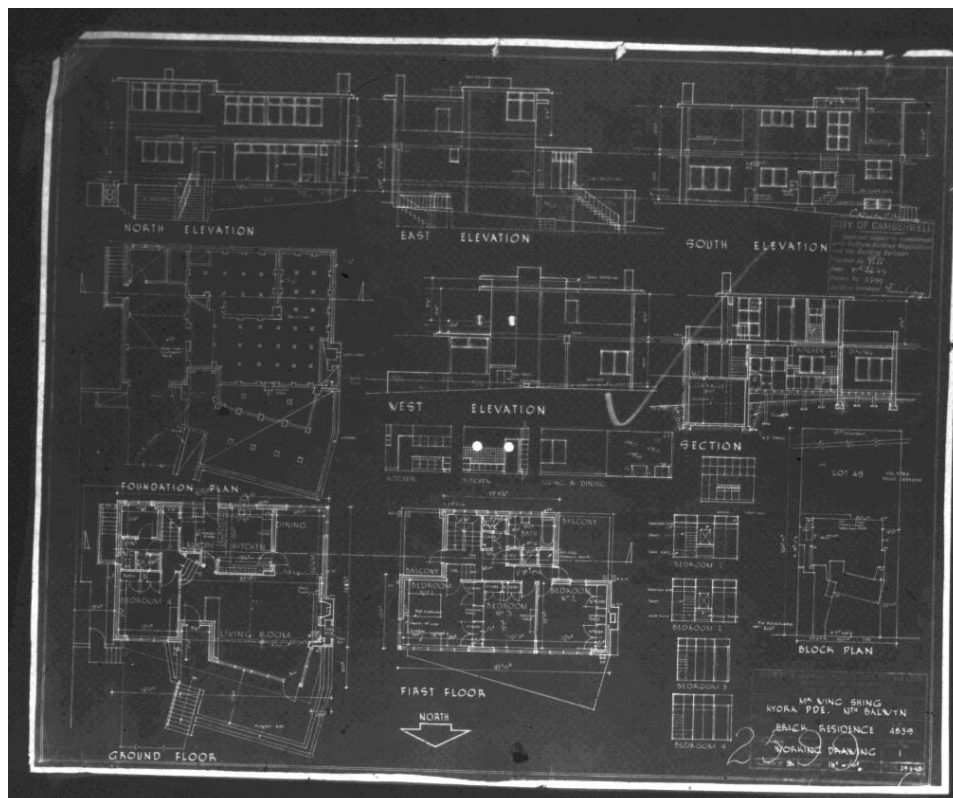


Figure 4 working drawing for 26 Kyora Parade, Balwyn North showing floor plan, elevations, section, block and bedroom cabinetry (Source: BP 2599)



Figure 5 The principal façade of the subject building, facing north (Source: *Australian Home Beautiful*, January 1951:15)



Figure 6 Image showing part of the lounge with dining room in the mid-foreground. Note the stone fireplace feature wall and curtain divider. (Source: *Australian Home Beautiful*, January 1951:15)

The extended Wing Shing family resided in the house for only a brief period. The house was advertised for sale in 1956 for £18,500 (*Age*, 22 February 1956:21). In 1959 the house was sold to medical practitioner Dr John Leong and his wife Ruby, who lived there until 2010 (CT V5064 F1012635).

### **Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, Architects**

The architecture firm of Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb was established in 1901, when William Godfrey entered into partnership with Henry Spowers. After Spowers' death in 1933, Godfrey's like-named son, William Purves Race Godfrey (1908-1983) joined the firm, which then moved away from historical revivalism towards more progressive modernism. When Godfrey senior retired in 1946, the firm was restructured with three new partners of his son's generation: Geoffrey Mewton (1905-1998), Eric Hughes (1901-1964) and John Lobb (1906-1994). The resulting practice, styled as Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, initially concentrated on modern residential architecture but soon became better known for larger-scale industrial, commercial and institutional projects. The firm remains in operation today under the name of Spowers Architects (Goad and Willis:278-9)

### **Description**

The house at 26 Kyora Parade, Balwyn North is a two-storey flat-roofed cream brick house in the postwar Modernist style. With its stark block-like articulation, the house presents a flat and unusually wide frontage to the street, enlivened at the lower level by a separate flat-roofed bay that projects outward at an angle and extends across the entire façade. This angled bay has full-height glazing and a glazed door opening onto an elevated terrace of uncoursed random stonework. The angled bay contains the main entrance, which is set into a stepped and off-centre alcove, marked by a single white column. To the west side of the entry porch, the stone terrace wall returns at a right angle to enclose an open staircase, which has a distinctive vertical screen on its opposite side. The stone wall also returns back towards the house, defining an open carport area directly in front of the small garage, which is integrated in the sub-floor area below the ground floor bedroom. The concrete driveway is defined by a low retaining wall in matching uncoursed stonework, which extends across the front property line.



At first floor level, there are two elongated horizontal bays of windows, one of which extends right to the corner, and returns partly down the east elevation. These windows contain large timber-framed casement sashes, with smaller highlights that extend right up to the eaves line.



Figure 7 Principal façade (north elevation). (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 8 Detail of box bay window and uncoursed stone retaining wall to the front terrace. (Source: GML 2021)

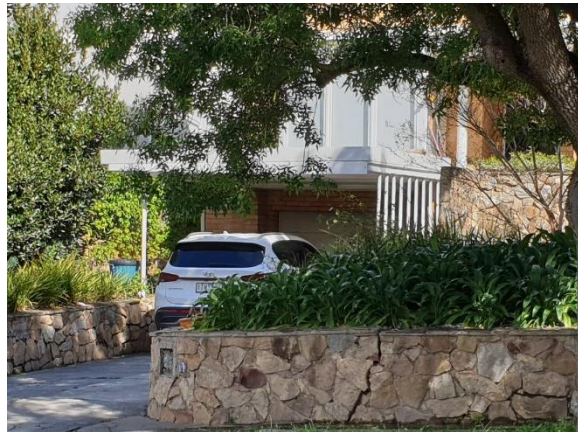


Figure 9 Detail showing carport. (Source: GML 2021)

## Integrity

The former Wing Shing House at 26 Kyora Parade, Balwyn North is highly intact with no significant changes visible to original or early fabric. The house retains its original built form, flat roofs, window and door openings and timber joinery. The cream brickwork of the house and stone feature walls of the front garden all retain their original finish. The original timberwork (window joinery and fascias) is painted in a very pale colour, as evident in early photographs. The column to the front entry porch, which was originally painted in a deep red colour, is now also painted white. The retention of the



original stone retaining walls further enhances and strengthens the legibility of the original design for the site as a whole.

## **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.

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 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 to spend on housing.

Before the firm of Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb began to embrace larger-scale commercial and industrial projects in the early 1950s, they were best known for modern residential architecture. The firm's residential architecture showed the influence of regional modernism from the West Coast of the USA and especially the work of Californian architect William Wurster, whom Geoffrey Mewton (the firm's leading design architect) was an admirer. Wurster's influence is evident in the expression of houses as a series of rectilinear volumes, combining both single- and double-storey elements, and the use of low skillion roofs, open sun-decks, dark-coloured vertical timber cladding with white-painted window frames and other trim. From the late 1940s, Godfrey Spowers completed a number of these houses around Melbourne, typified by notable examples at 58 Arkaringa Crescent, Black Rock (1949) and 21 Summerhill Road Beaumaris (1950, demolished). The Wing Shing Residence—the only known example of the firm's early residential work in the Balwyn and Balwyn North area and, possibly, in the entire municipality—stands out for its atypical use of cream brickwork which, coupled with the angled bay, projecting flat slab roof and columned porch, has rather more in common with some of the firm's contemporaneous non-residential projects, notably the Babel Building at Melbourne University (1947) and the Syme Wing of University College (1953) (Built Heritage 2014).

Considered more broadly as an example of early postwar residential architecture in the Balwyn and North Balwyn area, the house has a number of comparators. As noted in the historical context above, 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.

Despite the dominance of houses built in the years following World War II, Heritage Overlay coverage of postwar houses in North Balwyn is limited. Comparable examples include:



300 Balwyn Road, Balwyn North designed by Robyn 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 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn designed by Robyn 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





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

form-follows-function dictum to a 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.

There are also few postwar houses on the Heritage Overlay in the broader Boroondara context. Comparable examples include:



Figure 12 'Robin Boyd House I', 664-666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell designed by Robyn Boyd in 1947. VHR HO879, 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.

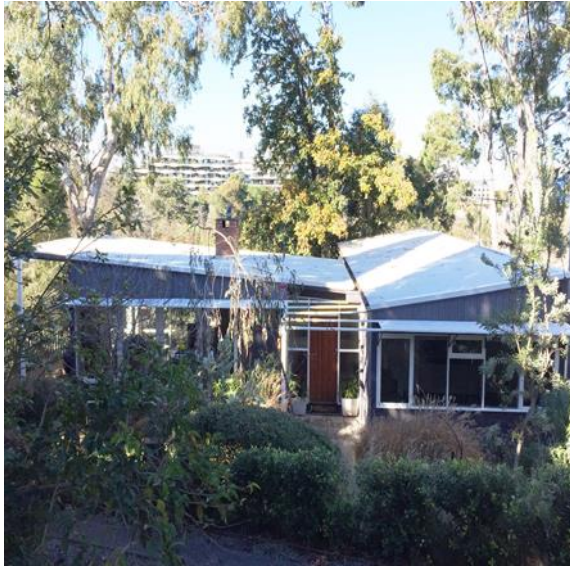


Figure 14 6 Reeves Court, Kew designed by Ernest Milston in 1955, (HO822) (Source: Trethowan 2017)

'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 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 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 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

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26 Kyora Parade, Balwyn North exhibits key elements of postwar Modernist housing typologies; most notably in its informality in planning, flowing spatial arrangements and innovative use of materials. It draws inspiration from the earlier (1947) 'Robin Boyd House 1' (VHR HO879, 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.

26 Kyora Parade, Balwyn North is also 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 City of Boroondara), , McGlashan & Everist (18 Yarra Street, Kew, 1961, Significant within HO530 City of Boroondara), Hayden & Associates (Cukierman Residence, 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn East).

A key Modernist design element of the former Wing Shin house is its horizontal rectilinear massing and flat roofs. All the comparative examples provided have this basic built and roof form, demonstrating a prevailing characteristic of postwar residential architecture. Amongst these examples, the subject building is notable for its stark block-like articulation, its unusually wide frontage to the street and its distinct ground level flat-roofed bay that projects outward at an angle.

Large expanses of glazing are another common motif of Modernist architecture that is evident in most of the examples provided. While earlier examples applied fenestration in horizontal rows, typically using timber casement or panel frames, designs from the late 1950s onwards embraced full height glazing often expressed as window walls. Unlike the later Guss Residence (18 Yarra Street, Kew) and Dickie House (6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn), the former Wing Shing House features large horizontal window bays of casement windows rather than full height vertical glazing. In this regard, its pattern of fenestration is more closely likened to 6 Reeves Court, Kew, 300 Balwyn Road, Balwyn north and 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn East, although this last example is of a later date (1969).

Overall, the former Wing Shing House compares well to other postwar Modernist house in the Heritage Overlay that feature key characteristics of Modernist design, including horizontal massing, flat roofs, extensive glazing and contrasting materials. It is distinguished by its projecting angled bay on the ground floor, high level of intactness and as a rare example of residential architecture by Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, Architects.

### **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).*

26 Kyora Parade, Balwyn North, is of 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. Built to a design by prominent Melbourne architects Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb in 1950, this house is one of relatively few private residential projects that the practice completed. The firm is better known for their larger-scale industrial, commercial and institutional projects. The arresting design of the Wing Shing House was featured in popular home magazine, the *Australian Home Beautiful* not long after it was completed. The house is important for its association with the emergence of postwar homebuilding in North Balwyn and exemplifies the high concentration of architect designed modernist houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn 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).*

Aesthetically, 26 Kyora Parade is significant as a striking and highly intact example of early postwar residential architecture in Balwyn North. Completed in 1950, it was amongst the first tentative wave of architect-designed houses to appear in the area after the Second World War. Aesthetically, the house is significant for its unusual and striking integration of features: its stark rectilinear expression with a highly distinctive angled window bay at ground floor, its stepped roof-line, and the contrast of smooth cream brickwork with stone feature walls, elongated window bays (with white-painted joinery) and deep roof eaves. The facade of this prominent house, virtually unaltered since 1950, remains an eye-catching element in the streetscape.

*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 Wing Shing House at 26 Kyora Parade, Balwyn North, designed by architects Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb and built in 1950 is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- original built form, interlocking flat roof form and angled ground floor bay
- face brick cream walls and feature stone walls
- pattern of fenestrations and doors and window and door joinery
- carport and concrete entry steps
- stone retaining walls in the front garden to the terrace, front boundary and driveway.

### How is it significant?

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

### Why is it significant?

26 Kyora Parade, Balwyn North, is of 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. Built to a design by prominent Melbourne architects Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb in 1950, this house is one of relatively few private residential projects that the practice completed. The firm is better known for their larger-scale industrial, commercial and institutional projects. The arresting design of the Wing Shing House was featured in popular home magazine, the *Australian Home Beautiful* not long after it was completed. The house is important for its association with the emergence of postwar homebuilding in North Balwyn and exemplifies the high concentration of architect designed modernist houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn during the 1950s and 60s. (Criterion A)

Aesthetically, 26 Kyora Parade is significant as a striking and highly intact example of early postwar residential architecture in Balwyn North. Completed in 1950, it was amongst the first tentative wave of architect-designed houses to appear in the area after the Second World War. Aesthetically, the house is significant for its unusual and striking integration of features: its stark rectilinear expression with a highly distinctive angled window bay at ground floor, its stepped roof-line, and the contrast of smooth cream brickwork with stone feature walls, elongated window bays (with white-painted joinery) and deep roof eaves. The facade of this prominent house, virtually unaltered since 1950, remains an eye-catching element in the streetscape. (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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<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>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<b>Outbuildings and fences exemptions</b>	
<i>Are there outbuildings or fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	Yes Stone retaining walls in the front garden and front boundary fence
<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 2012



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Victorian Heritage Register (VHR).

## Balwyn North Primary School (previously North Balwyn State School No 4638)

Prepared by: GML Heritage

**Address:** 94 Maud Street BALWYN NORTH

**Name:** Balwyn North Primary School

**Survey Date:** December 2021

**Place Type:** Education

**Architect:** Percy Everett

**Grading:** Individually Significant

**Builder:** Unknown

**Extent of Overlay:** Refer to map

**Construction Date:** 1949-59



Figure 1 Balwyn North Primary School, 94 Maude Street, Balwyn North. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 2 Balwyn North Primary School, 94 Maude Street, 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 Second World War*

*8.2.3 Making education universal*

Balwyn North is a residential suburb situated 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south is Balwyn, which is separated from Balwyn North 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. Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North.

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.

The building is associated with the expansion of community facilities in Balwyn North in the early post-war period. While the school had originally been mooted in the late 1930s (when there was a minor boom of residential expansion after the electric tram route was extended to Doncaster Road), the Department of Education wisely elected not to proceed with the project until after the Second World War. By the late 1940s, homebuilding in the Balwyn North area had resumed, although would not reach a peak until the later 1950s. Opened in 1950, the state school was actually predated by a local private school, St Bede's Roman Catholic Primary School (1946), but otherwise marked the beginning of a new era of state educational facilities in Balwyn North, which included a high school (1954) and four more primary schools at Greythorn (1953), Boroondara (1954), Koonung Heights (1954) and Bellevue (1957).

### Place History

The original portion of the Balwyn North State School was erected in 1947-50 following a decade of agitation from the local community. In a letter to the editor of the *Argus*, published in December 1939, the president of the North-West Camberwell Progress Association stated that “my association has striven for three years to obtain a state school in the North Balwyn [*sic*] area” ( *Argus*, 2 December 1939:9). He pointed out that almost one thousand new dwellings had been erected in the area since 1936, and noted that, while land for a school has been offered to the Education Department on several occasions, “these proposals have been negated [*sic*] by the Ministers”. The proposal was revisited in early 1945, when the provision of a state school at Balwyn North was put forward as a way to relieve overcrowding at the existing school in East Kew; however, the official word was that ‘at the moment, that was impossible because of shortage of manpower and materials. When that position was relieved, a new school would be built’ (*Age*, 8 February 1945: 2).

It was also during 1945 that Percy Everett (1888-1967), Chief Architect of the Public Works Department (PWD) in Victoria, embarked upon a study tour of the USA. During this trip, he examined the latest trends in modern school architecture and, on his return to Victoria, began to develop a new type of classroom based on a hexagonal module. Of these classrooms, Everett later wrote that ‘they are a square less in area than the ordinary rectangular room, but advantages to pupils and teachers will be reflected in vastly improved acoustics. The teacher, while speaking softly, may be heard distinctly by every pupil. The vision also is improved. No child will be too far from a colourful blackboard to see the written lesson clearly’ (*Argus*, 15 August 1949: 4).

As neatly summarised by Philip Goad, the scheme offered a ‘panoptic strategy of visual and auditory access to the teacher, the optimisation of natural daylight through window walls and clerestories, and use of the hexagon as a natural gathering shape for learning: the prototype for a “classroom planned around the pupils’. By definition, the hexagonal form provided maximum floorspace with minimum materials, thus reducing construction costs at a time when wartime restrictions were still in effect, and also allowed for further expansion when necessary (Goad 2012).

Everett's innovative scheme was developed during 1946 and, the following year, it was resolved to erect the prototype school at Balwyn North on land that the Education Department had acquired at the corner of Maud Street and Buchanan Avenue. In January 1950, the *Argus* reported that ‘Victoria's most modern state school, now almost complete, will open at Maud Street, North Balwyn [*sic*], in January 31’. The Chief Inspector of Primary Schools, G A Osborne, was quoted as saying that the

school was of the 'latest design' and was thought to be the first primary school in Victoria with central heating. Originally four classrooms, an office, staffroom and entrance hall were built. By 1959 additional classrooms were added giving the building its unique V-shaped plan. This resulted in a building that comprised a central wedge-shaped block (containing an office, staffroom and entrance hall) flanked by pairs of radiating hexagonal classrooms. Providing accommodation for 200 pupils, the new school 'was expected to relieve congestion at the Balwyn, Deepdene and East Kew schools'. (*Argus*, 21 January 1950:6)

As it turned out, the opening of the state school at Balwyn North proved very timely. A year later, when the Balwyn State School in Balwyn Road was destroyed by fire, some of its pupils were temporarily accommodated at Balwyn North until rebuilding was completed. The Balwyn North State School was itself expanded soon afterwards by the addition of a prefabricated Bristol classroom, for which tenders were called in August 1952. By 1959, seven additional classrooms had been built. By that time, however, enrolment levels at Balwyn North had already begun to decline due to the establishment of other state schools in the area, including those at Greythorn (1953), Boroondara (1954), Koonung Heights (1954), and Bellevue (1957). Nevertheless, the Balwyn North State School expanded further during the 1960s with the provision of a library and assembly hall (1966) and an art and craft centre (1968). The school had 500 pupils by 1973.

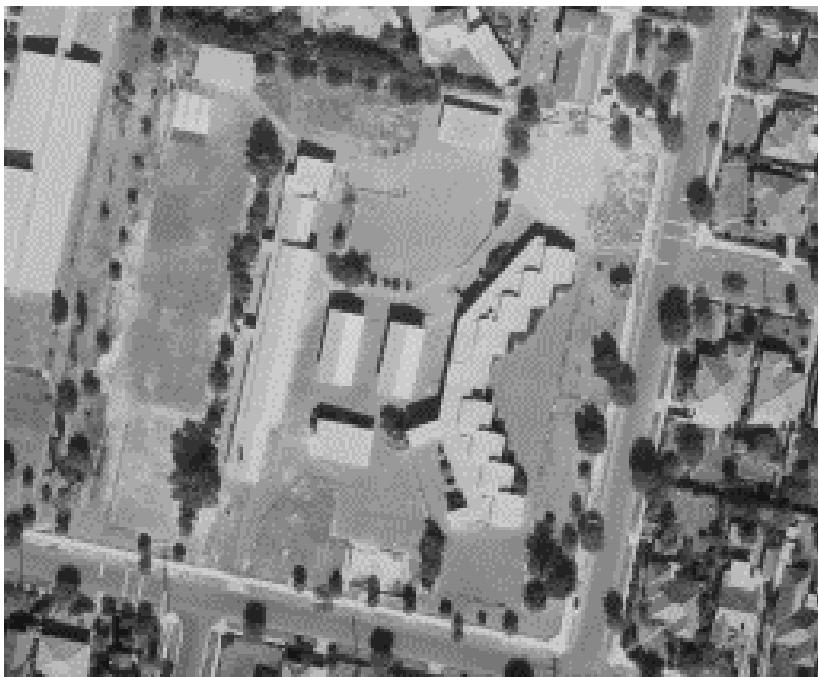


Figure 3 1969 Aerial view of Balwyn North Primary School. (Source: Landata)

The original grouping of eight hexagonal classrooms have undergone a number of alterations and additions over the years. The majority of these additions have been to the south (rear) side of the building, with the addition of extra classrooms and community facilities that follow the angle of the original building and a centrally placed library along the southern elevation. The most obtrusive addition has been to the entry area facing Maud Street where an Arts and Crafts room has been added. These additions have been undertaken in a sympathetic manner using similar coloured brick work and a flat roof profile.

While some of the original timber framed windows remain extant, several have been replaced with aluminium modules.

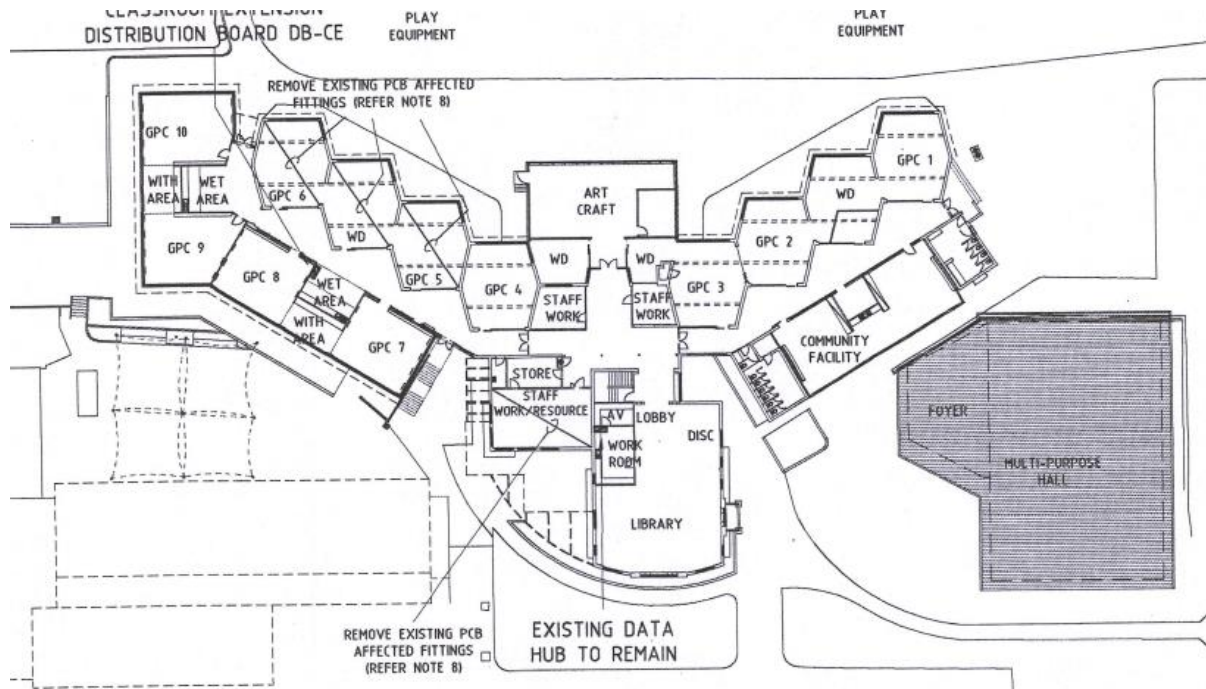


Figure 4 Floor plan showing the eight original hexagonal classrooms and circulation corridor behind. GPC7-10, library, staff work/resource room, community facilities and art craft space are all later additions. (Source: BP 2580)

#### *Percy Edgar Everett, architect (1888–1967)*

Percy Edgar Everett was a significant Victorian architect, best known for the work produced during his long tenure as Chief Architect of the Public Works Department from 1934 to 1953. Everett was born in Geelong and received his architectural training there. He studied at the Gordon Technical College and was articled to local architect W H Cleverdon. Between 1907 and 1910 he was employed as an architectural draftsman to the Geelong Harbour Trust before joining the firm of Seeley & King, where he later became a partner. Everett was headmaster of the Brunswick Technical School in 1916. He later went on to develop the architectural curriculum for the Victorian Education Department, and took up the position of headmaster of Brighton Technical School in 1932 (O'Neill 1996).

From 1934, Everett occupied the office of Chief Architect in the Public Works Department. Creating a strong design division within the department, separate to the divisions of documentation and contract administration, he insisted on absolute control of the design process, including the approval of all architectural drawings. Embracing an architectural eclecticism that he embodied in the work produced by the Public Works Department during his tenure, this resulted in a broad range of architectural works completed in the Art Deco, American Beaux-Arts and Modernist styles (O'Neill 1996). Everett's design education was influenced by his 1930 study tour to North America, Britain and Europe, including Russia (Goad 1999:135), and to the US again in 1945 (O'Neill 1996). Works completed by the Public Works Department were prolific, with Everett increasingly preferring the Moderne style for many institutional buildings (Goad 2012:239–40). Everett's projects covered a variety of public



buildings, including courthouses, police stations, prisons, mental hospitals, sanatoriums, schools, tertiary institutions and residences of government employees (O'Neill 1996). Notable buildings by Everett for the Public Works Department include the Frank Tate Building at the University of Melbourne (1939–40), Russell Street Police Headquarters (1942–43) and the Caulfield Technical College (now the Caulfield Campus of Monash University) of 1950 (Goad 2012:239–40) Everett retired from the department in 1953 (O'Neill 1996).

## **Description**

The original portion of the Balwyn North State School, set well back from the Maud Street frontage, is a single-storey flat roofed cream brick building on a highly unusual plan. This comprises a central skillion-roofed rectangular block flanked by two rows of hexagonal classroom modules, laid out with each successive module slightly offset from the last, which results in a distinctive stepped facade and an overall V-shaped plan form. Each of these hexagonal classrooms has generous glazing to the street: a full-width bay comprising four large timber-framed sashes, plus a fifth bay that returns down the side wall (either as a window or, in some cases, as a glazed door). Each classroom also has a projecting lantern roof to provide a narrow but continuous clerestory windows to the north and south sides.

When seen from the principal (Maud Street) frontage, the building appears relatively intact, inasmuch as the stepped rows of hexagonal classrooms, with their lantern roofs, clerestory windows and glazed frontages, can still be readily interpreted. Notably, they also retain their original unpainted finish to the cream brickwork. The central part of the facade, where an entrance foyer and staff rooms were originally provided, has been remodelled and extended in more recent times. Current aerial photographs indicate that additions have also been made to the rear (south) side, although these are not visible from Maud Street, are not considered to detract from or diminish the distinctive form of the original building when seen from that side.





Figure 5 2022 Aerial view of Balwyn North Primary School showing the original eight hexagonal classrooms designed by Percy Everett laid out in a V plan. Note the flat roofed buildings attached to the southern façade of the building and the central northern room are later additions. (Source: Nearmap)

### **Integrity**

The eight 1949-50 Percy Everett designed classrooms at the Balwyn North Primary School are somewhat intact with some changes made to original and early fabric. The building retains its original distinctive floor plan of eight stepped hexagonal classrooms, with lantern roofs, clerestory windows and glazed walls to the north. It retains its original materiality and built form which includes walls of cream brick, flat roof with deep eaves, and timber framed window walls although some of these have been replaced with aluminium. Internally the building retains many of its original fitting and fixtures which includes a central heating system believed to be the first installed in a primary school in Victoria. Additions have been made to the south side of the building however, these are not visible from Maud Street (principal façade) and do not impact on an understanding of the original built form and design intent of the building. The addition of an arts craft room along the north elevation where the entry originally was, is somewhat intrusive. However it is of a scale and materiality that does not distract from the original building. Moreover the unique built form and planning of the classrooms as envisaged by Percy Everett remain clearly legible.

Overall, the place has moderate integrity

### **Comparative Analysis**

In the relatively short time span between 1947 and 1952, Percy Everett proposed to erect at least twenty new schools across Victoria using his new hexagonal classroom system. Recent research by Dr Philip Goad, however, has identified only eight examples known to have actually been built before

Everett's design was abandoned in favour of a more efficient and cost-effective solution, the LTC (Light Timber Construction) classroom. Several of the hexagonal-planned schools were designed and constructed concurrently with the prototype at Balwyn North, namely the Red Hill Consolidated School on the Mornington Peninsula (1947-51), the Moorabbin West State School (1948-50) and the Darling East (later Solway) State School at Ashburton (1948-50). At least one other was designed and constructed subsequently, for the Newlands State School at North Coburg (1951-52).

Only four of the eight realised hexagonal schools still survive as of 2022 – those at Solway Primary School, Winston Road, Ashburton, Balwyn North Primary School, 94 Maud street, Balwyn North, Newlands Primary School, corner Murphy and Elizabeth streets, Preston and Red Hill Consolidated School, 341 Arthurs Seat Road, Red Hill.

The Solway Primary School in Winton Road, Ashburton – the only other example in the City of Boroondara – appears to remain in a comparably intact state. It has a slightly different plan form, with its eight hexagonal classrooms in a linear row, as opposed to the gentle curving configuration seen at Balwyn North. While it seems to retain its unpainted cream brick finish and multi-paned timber-framed windows, the building itself is largely concealed from view along its principal (Karrak Street) frontage by subsequent additions. Currently, only a few select glimpses of the original building remain evident along the property's Taylor Street frontage. By contrast, the distinctive form of prototypical example at Balwyn North is still clearly visible, and thus readily interpreted, from the street.

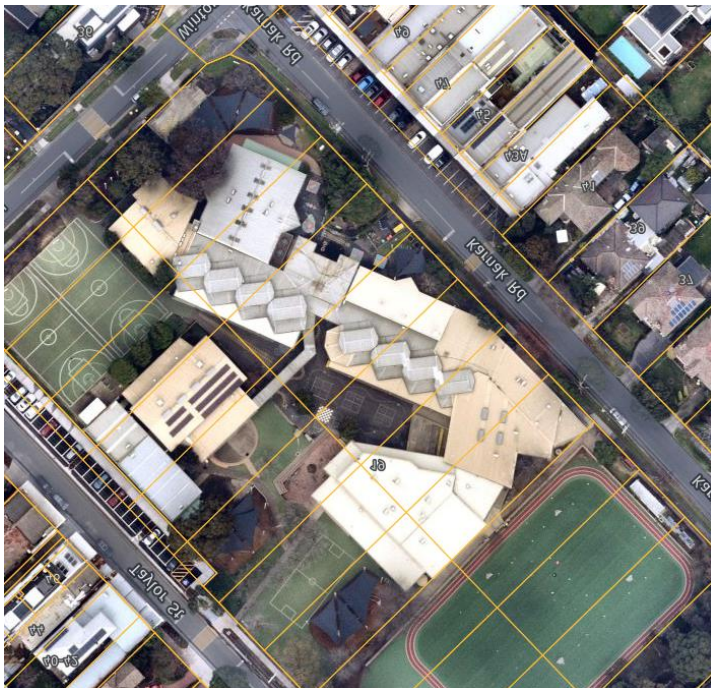


Figure 6 Aerial view of Solway Primary Scholl showing the eight 1950 hexagonal classrooms in linear layout. (Source: Nearmaps)

The Red Hill Consolidated School at 341 Arthurs Street Road, Red Hill was built in 1949/50 and comprises four hexagonal classrooms in a linear row. Aerial imagery shows that the built form of the class rooms appear intact, although new buildings have been built around them with one joining to them at their eastern end. It was not possible to confirm if the materiality of the classrooms is intact as they are not visible from the public domain.



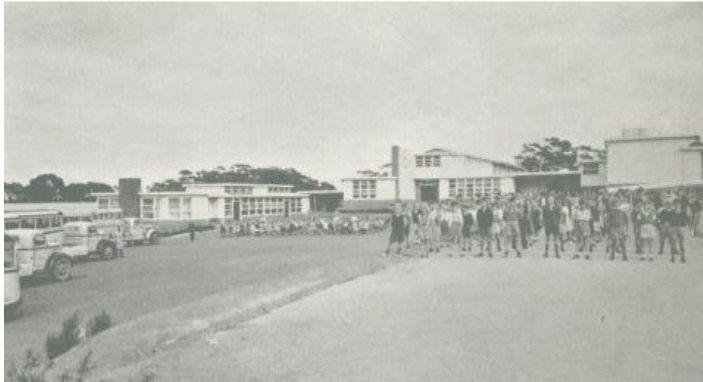


Figure 7 Red Hills Consolidated School, 341 Arthurs Seat Road, Red Hill built 1949-50 to a design by Percy Everett. (Source: Victorian Places)



Figure 8 Aerial view of Red Hills Consolidated School showing the four 1949/50 hexagonal classrooms in linear layout (Source: Nearmaps)

The Newlands Primary School at the corner of Murphy and Elizabeth Street, Preston was built in 1951. Originally comprising six hexagonal classrooms in a linear row, a second row of four classroom were added to the south of the first row. Consequent additions have joined the two rows of classrooms which now form the northern and southern edge of an internal courtyard. Aerial imagery shows the built form of all ten classrooms to be intact. Although difficult to see from the public domain, the classrooms appear largely intact with their cream brick walls unpainted, and timber framed windows, orientated to the north, extant.



Figure 9 Aerial view of Newlands Primary School showing 10 hexagonal classrooms arranged around a courtyard. Note the six northern classrooms were the original building, built in 1951 and the four southern rooms a later addition. (Source: Nearmaps)



When compared to the other remaining schools built in Victoria using Percy Everett's hexagonal modular design, the North Balwyn Primary School stands out as an intact and highly evocative example of his progressive design. It retains its original built form and materiality and, when viewed from Maud Street, clearly expresses Everett's design intent of providing maximum sunlight and ventilation for students. As with the other examples, it retains its distinctive hexagonal modular floor plan, face brick walls of cream brick, flat roofs with deep eaves and large walls of glazing. What sets it apart is its unique V shaped plan (all the other schools had a linear arrangement) and its visibility from the public domain along Maud street, being set close to the road and with no building built in front of it.

### **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).*

Balwyn North Primary School (formerly North Balwyn State School No 4638), built 1949-59, is historically significant as the first primary school built in the Balwyn North area. Its construction was in response to the dramatic increase in population in the area during the 1930s and 1940s that was brought about by the extension of the electric tram line along Doncaster Road in 1938 and the subdivision of farmland for residential development. The school was built in response to the demands of the local community and demonstrates the expansion of community facilities in North Balwyn in the early postwar era. It marks the beginning of a boom in the establishment of state schools in the wider area, which included Alamein (1950), Balwyn North (1950), Solway (1950), Greythorn (1953), Boroondara (1954), Koonung Heights (1954), Bellevue (1957), and Boroondara North (1968), as well as the establishment of Balwyn High School in 1954.

North Balwyn Primary School was originally conceived as a series of eight modular hexagonal classrooms laid out in a V format, which was designed for the Department of Education by Percy Everett, chief architect of the Public Works Department. The school was a prototype for this innovative new modular system based on top-lit hexagonal classrooms to provide greatly improved visual and acoustic properties. Although Everett proposed to build at least 20 schools using this bold and innovative system, only eight are known to have been realised before the scheme was discontinued in 1952. Of these, only four now survive. The example at Balwyn North, which is one of two extant examples in the City of Boroondara (the other being located at Ashburton), is of additional significance as the prototype for the entire scheme.

*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).*

Aesthetically, the original portion of the Balwyn North Primary School (formerly North Balwyn State School) is significant as the prototype for an innovative new type of state school architecture in Victoria that was developed by Percy Everett, following his return from an overseas tour in 1946. Influenced by what he had seen overseas, Everett proposed a modular system of hexagonal classrooms with lantern roofs and clerestory windows that would not only provide learning spaces with enormously improved acoustic and visual properties, but simultaneously minimise construction costs at a time when labour and materials continued to be restricted by wartime shortages. Laid out on a distinctive V-shaped plan the eight modular hexagonal classrooms embrace Modernist design ideal, including unadorned walls of cream brick, flat roofs with deep eaves, and walls of glazing. Orientated towards the north, facing Maud Street, and utilising a distinctive V-shaped layout, the building is an evocative example of Everett's innovative design. (Criterion E)

*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 building that comprises eight Percy Everett designed classrooms built between 1949 and 1959, located at Balwyn North Primary School, 94 Maud Street, North Balwyn, is significant.

Elements that contribute to significance include:

- Distinctive V-shaped plan creating eight modular hexagonal classroom spaces
- Unpainted cream brick walls.
- Flat roof with deep eaves and lantern roofs and clerestory windows.
- Original pattern of fenestrations and door openings.
- Timber framed window walls.
- Views to the building from Maud Street allowing its design intent to be legible from the public domain.

Latter additions to the south of the building and at the original north facing entry (crafts/art room) are not significant.

Significance is enhanced by the retention of original interior fittings and fixtures including the central heating system.

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

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

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

North Balwyn Primary School is historically significant as the first primary school built in the Balwyn North area. Its construction was in response to the dramatic increase in population in the area during the interwar years that was brought about by the extension of the tram line along Doncaster Road in 1938 and the opening up of farm land for subdivision. The school was in response to community pressure and demonstrates the expansion of community facilities into Balwyn North in the early post-war era. It marks the beginning of a boom in the establishment of state schools in the area which included Alamein (1950), Balwyn North (1950), Solway (1950), Greythorn (1953), Boroondara (1954), Koonung Heights (1954), Bellevue (1957), and Boroondara North (1968). (Criterion A)

Built in 1949-50, North Balwyn Primary School was originally conceived as a series of eight modular hexagonal classrooms designed by Percy Everett laid out in a V format. The school was a prototype for this innovative new modular system based on top-lit hexagonal classrooms to provide greatly improved visual and acoustic properties. Although Everett proposed to build at least twenty schools using this bold and innovative system, only eight are known to have been actually realised before the scheme was discontinued in 1952. Of these only four now survive. The example at Balwyn North, which is one of two extant examples in the City of Boroondara (the other being located at Ashburton), is of additional significance as the prototype for the entire scheme. (Criterion A)

Aesthetically, the original portion of the Balwyn North Primary School (formerly Balwyn North State School), at 94 Maud Street, Balwyn North, is significant as the prototype for an innovative new type of

state school architecture that was developed by Percy Everett, Chief Architect of the Public Works Department, following his return from an overseas tour in 1946. Influenced by what he saw overseas, Everett proposed a modular system of hexagonal classrooms with lantern roofs and clerestory windows that would not only provide learning spaces with enormously improved acoustic and visual properties, but simultaneously minimise construction costs at a time when labour and materials were still restricted by wartime shortages. Laid out on a distinctive V-shaped plan the eight modular hexagonal classrooms embrace modernist design ideal including unadorned walls of cream brick, flat roofs with deep eaves and walls of glazing. Orientated toward to the north facing Maud Street and utilising a distinctive V-shaped layout, the building is an evocative example of Everett's innovative design. (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:

<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>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<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 2013





## References

Building permit records (BP), City of Boroondara.

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## Kramer House (former)

Prepared by: GML Heritage

**Address:** 7 Milfay Court BALWYN NORTH

<b>Name:</b> Kramer House (former)	<b>Survey Date:</b> December 2021
<b>Place Type:</b> House	<b>Architect:</b> Unknown
<b>Grading:</b> Individually Significant	<b>Builder:</b> H Alexander
<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1956



Figure 1 Principal facade facing northeast to Milfay Court. (Source GML 2021)



Figure 2 Detail of principal facade. (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 Second World War*

### *6.7.2 Making homes for the middle classes*

North Balwyn is a residential suburb situated 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south is Balwyn, which is separated from Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North, 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 North



Balwyn 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 7 Milfay Court, 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.

William Wilson, fruit grower, purchased twenty-one acres of Elgar's land in 1906 (CT V3157 F364). Wilson held the land until 1949 at which stage it was sold to Frank Armstrong Broussard, orchardist. Broussard on sold the land in 1952 to the Metropolitan Land Investment Company Pty Ltd who subdivided the land creating Gardenia Road, Koonung Street, Dale court, Ailsa Court, and Milfay Court. The subject site is located on what was Lot 19 of this subdivision (CT V7746 F023).

Franz Krammer (later known as Francois Kramer) acquired the subject site in 1956 (CT V8143 F220). In April the same year the City of Camberwell issued a building permit for Krammer's new residence, described as a six-roomed timber house costing £3,000 (BP 18189). No architect is named on the index card, and working drawings, which would have accompanied the application, have not survived in council archives.

Electoral rolls reveal that Francois Kramer lived in at 7 Milfay Court with Lilly Maria Kramer, receptionist (ER1957). The Kramer's remained living there for over a decade.

In 1972 the house sold to Lloyd McMahon, a solicitor and Ngaere Jennifer McMahon (CT V7746 F023). The McMahon's engaged a design and drafting service to enlarge the house, adding a carport and two-storey rear addition that comprised a rumpus room below and a dining room above (BP 51676, 52129). The original butterfly roof has been replaced with a flat metal roof at some stage.

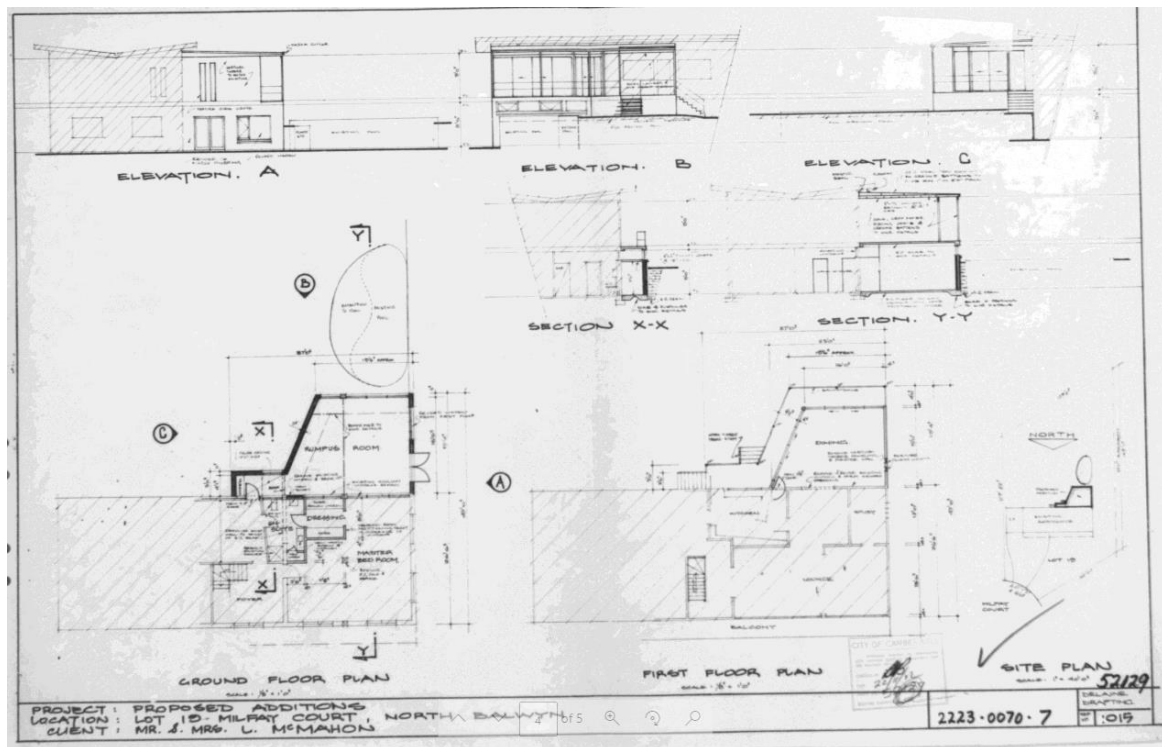


Figure 3 Working drawing of rear extension undertaken in 1972 adding a rumpus room and dining room.  
(Source: BP 52129)

Council building cards record no further alterations or additions to the property since 1972.

## Description

7 Milfay Court is a two-storey Modernist house built in 1956 on a long rectilinear plan, with a shallow flat roof, full-width balcony at the upper level and an integrated double garage at the lower level. Originally rectangular in plan form, a small rear addition (added in 1972) now gives it an overall asymmetrical T-shaped footprint. The low-pitched roof has unusually deep eaves with exposed rafters. The elongated street facade has random coursed Castlemaine slate cladding at ground level, and vertical timber boarding to the first floor. The cantilevered balcony, with exposed beams that echo the exposed rafters of the eaves, has a simple metal railing. Fenestration is balanced without being symmetrical, comprising regular bays of tall, paired windows or French doors at each level, with white-painted joinery. At ground level, the main entrance is set into the central bay, which has a pair of panelled timber doors. At the far (west) end of the balcony, there is a much wider window bay with sliding glass doors. To the left (side) of the ground floor is the double garage with its metal sheet tilt-up door. There is also a skillion-roofed carport attached to that side, which is not original, but dates from 1972.

The house is set back at an angle on its unusual wedge-shaped block, so that it is not symmetrical to the street frontage. This creates a generous front garden, which incorporates a lawn, narrow garden beds edged with volcanic rock, and a single smooth-barked mature gum tree (*Corymbia* sp) alongside the concrete paved driveway.

## Integrity

7 Milfay Court, Balwyn North is largely intact with some changes visible to original or early fabric. The house retains its original built form, deep eaves with exposed rafters, cantilevered balcony with exposed beams, paired full height window/doors, window wall with large sliding doors, vertical boarding (first level) and Castlemaine slate cladding (ground level).

Alterations include the replacing of the original low pitched butterfly roof with a flat roof and a two-storey rear addition to the south west corner of the house and a single carport at the eastern end of the house. The replacing of the original low pitched butterfly roof with a flat roof has had little impact on the original appearance of the house. The original roof was very low pitched with its butterfly form only visible from side (secondary) elevations. The original roof overhang and exposed rafter ends all appear to remain. When viewed from the street the house still presents as originally intended. The rear addition is not visible from the street and does not impact on the integrity of the house. It is probable that the garage door has been added (but not recently) and that the garage was originally an open carport. The carved front door may also be a later addition. The integrity of the place is enhanced by its setting which includes the orientation and setback of the house, and single mature gum tree (*Corymbia* sp) alongside the concrete paved driveway.

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 the 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 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 to spend on housing.

There are very few postwar houses in the Balwyn/ North Balwyn area that survive with such high integrity so as to potently evoke the prevailing tastes and fashions of 1950s residential architecture. As was widely promulgated in the pages of the popular housing press of that time (that is, in magazines such as *Australian Home Beautiful*, *Australian House & Garden* and the *Australian Homemaker*), smart contemporary housing – which need not necessarily have been architect-designed – was characterised by the use of large windows, low-pitched roofs with deep eaves, and

outdoor living areas such as terraces, sun-decks and balconies. A simple palette of materials was preferred, with vertical timber boarding being especially popular – often stained or painted in deep earthy colours, with window joinery, fascias and other trim emphasised in a pale colour. A contrasting eye-catching element (such as an area of crazy stonework, Castlemaine slate cladding or a screen of timber louvres, slats or concrete breeze block) created a ‘feature’.

As North Balwyn was one of Melbourne's epicentres for postwar residential architecture, these sorts of houses once proliferated across the suburb. Five decades later, however, many striking examples have disappeared – either demolished, or substantially remodelled in reflect changing tastes.

The house at 7 Milfay Court, Balwyn North 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:



Figure 4 300 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.



‘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



Figure 5 Gillson House 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn designed by Robin Boyd in 1952 (HO177) (Source: Docomomo Journal 65,2019)



Figure 6 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)

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.

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.

There are also several postwar houses on the Heritage Overlay in the broader Boroondara context that are comparable to 7 Milfay Court, Balwyn North. Examples include:



'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

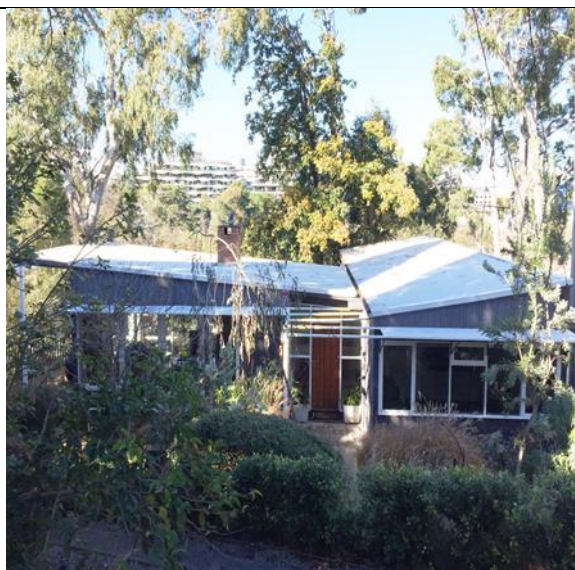
Figure 7 'Robin Boyd House I', 664-666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell designed by Robin Boyd in 1947 (VHR H0879; HO116) (Source: National Trust of Australia (Victoria))

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 8 '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.



'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.



Figure 9 6 Reeves Court, Kew designed by Ernest Milston in 1955 (HO822) (Source: Trethowan 2017)

over the windows to the south that allow light penetration.



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 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.

Figure 10 18 Yarra Street, Kew designed by McGlashan & Everist in 1961 (Significant within HO530) (Source: Hermes)



Figure 11 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 12 Cukierman Residence, 29 Leura Grove,

'Cukierman Residence' 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

Hawthorn East designed by Hayden & Associates (attributed to Anthony Hayden) in 1966 (HO857) (Source: Context in association with Trethowan 2018)

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

7 Milfay Court, Balwyn North exhibits key elements of postwar Modernist housing typology. It compares to the earlier (1947) 'Robin Boyd House I' (VHR H0879; HO116) 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.

Robin 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 (1989) describe 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. 7 Milfay Court exhibits these qualities of the style, which are also present in examples of Robin Boyd's work in Boroondara: 300 Balwyn Road, Balwyn North 1949 (HO616), 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn, built in 1952 (HO177) and 12-14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North, built in 1948-49, 1959, 1971 (HO928).

While the overall design of 7 Milfay Court is not considered to be especially innovative, it encapsulates many of the forms, elements and details that were considered highly fashionable at that time it was built, notably the use of broad eaves with exposed rafters, large windows and French doors, a balcony and vertical timber cladding. These attributes were similarly utilised by 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, HO857). What differs at 7 Milfay Court is the use of a special 'feature' element, specifically the Castlemaine cladding to the walls of the ground floor podium which breaks up the uniformity of the materiality of the façade.

Overall, the subject house is a highly intact representative example of an early Modernist house, exhibiting key characteristics of the style.

## 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).*

7 Milfay Court, Balwyn North, is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of Balwyn North and Balwyn as a locus for postwar Modernist houses. Although an architect has not been possible to identify, the house strongly exhibits the attributes of Modernist design applied to 1950s residential architecture in Melbourne. Built in 1956 the house represents the high concentration of fashionable 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).*

7 Milfay Court, Balwyn North is significant as a representative, largely intact and evocative example of a 1950s Modernist house. It exemplifies the style through its expression as a partially elevated lightweight box-like volume which sits above the landscape on a Castlemaine-clad podium. Although the very low pitched butterfly roof has been replaced with a flat roof, because the broad eaves and exposed rafters have been kept the original design intent of the roof form remains legible. Original walls of vertical timber cladding and large areas of glazing and a balcony facing north survive intact. The house is enhanced by its setting which is dominated by the sculptural form of the single mature gum tree in the front garden.

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

N/A

*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 Kramer House at 7 Milfay Court, Balwyn North, built in 1959, is significant.

Elements that contribute to significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- long rectilinear plan
- deep eaves with exposed rafters
- full-width balcony at the upper level with expressed structural beams
- paired windows/doors and window wall
- vertical timber cladding and walls clad in Castlemaine slate.

The rear 1972 extension, side carport, garage door and front door are not significant.

### How Is It Significant?

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

### Why Is It Significant?

7 Milfay Court, Balwyn North, is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of Balwyn North and Balwyn as a locus for postwar Modernist houses. Although an architect has not been possible to identify, the house strongly exhibits the attributes of Modernist design applied to 1950s residential architecture in Melbourne. Built in 1956 the house represents the high concentration of fashionable Modernist houses built in Balwyn and Balwyn North during the 1950s and 60s. (Criterion A)

7 Milfay Court, Balwyn North is significant as a representative, largely intact and evocative example of a 1950s Modernist house. It exemplifies the style through its expression as a partially elevated lightweight box-like volume which sits above the landscape on a Castlemaine stone-clad podium. Although the very low pitched butterfly roof has been replaced with a flat roof, because the broad eaves and exposed rafters have been kept the original design intent of the roof form remains legible. Original walls of vertical timber cladding and large areas of glazing and a balcony facing north survive intact. The house is enhanced by its setting which is dominated by the sculptural form of the single mature gum tree in the front garden.

(Criterion D)

## 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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<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>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<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 2015



## References

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LANDATA. Certificates of Title (CT), as cited.

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR), as cited.

## Plotkin House (former)

Prepared by: GML Heritage

**Address:** 47 Mountain View Road BALWYN NORTH

<b>Name:</b> Plotkin House (former)	<b>Survey Date:</b> December 2021
<b>Place Type:</b> House	<b>Architect:</b> CONARG Architects (Grigore Hirsch)
<b>Grading:</b> Individually Significant	<b>Builder:</b> Fulton Constructions Pty Ltd
<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1966



Figure 1 47 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 2 47 Mountain View Road, 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 Second World War*

### *9.3.2 Designing fine buildings*

Balwyn North is a residential suburb about 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south is Balwyn, which is separated from Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North (called North Balwyn at that time). Occupied with orchards and small farms, this was the one of the last remaining expanses of undeveloped land relatively close to the city. Balwyn North 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 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 tramway from East Kew to Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North, 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, in Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North.

Since the 1990s a significant influx of new residents 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 highly rated co-educational government secondary school with more than 2000 students.

The mid-to late 1960s, when the former Plotkin House was built, represented part of a broader boom in suburban residential development that had resumed after a lull caused by a brief recession in the early 1960s. In Balwyn and (especially) Balwyn North, new and established subdivisions had already significantly filled out by that time, and, by the mid-1960s choice vacant allotments were starting to become more difficult to obtain. By the early 1970s there were very few left.

## History

The land at 47 Mountain View Road, 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.

Joseph Shilton and Thomas Brown purchased 200 acres of Edgars Special survey in 1875. Thomas Brown died in 1878, leaving his share of the land to his widow Mary. Joseph Shilton died in 1878, leaving his share to his widow Fanny. Mary Brown transferred her portion of the land to Fanny Shilton in 1881. Fanny Smith retained the land until she sold it to various members of the Smith family as joint proprietors in 1918 (CT V767 F215; CT V1320 F808).

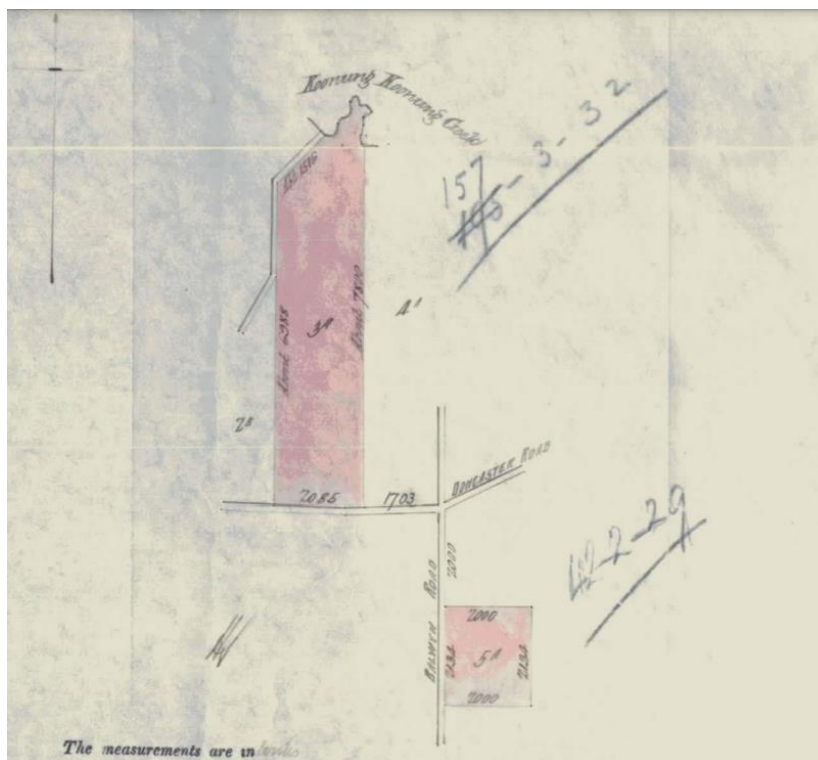


Figure 3 Detail from the certification of title showing land (shaded red) owned by Joseph Shilton and Thomas Brown in 1875. (Source: CT V767 F215)

In 1928 the land was purchased by Camberwell City Heights Pty Ltd and subdivided into residential allotments as part of what became known as the Camberwell City Heights Estate (CT V05438 F462).

Lots 741 and 742 of this estate were purchased in 1939 by Leonard Archbold Gray, who built a house on the land (now 45 Mountain View Road) (CT V6331 F073). In 1948 the property was sold to Marjorie Walker, who subdivided the land in 1963. The boundary for the new allotment had to be stepped around the existing house in an L shape, resulting in a narrow street frontage of 50 feet (15 metres) widening to 80 feet (24 metres) at the rear (CT V8458 F113)

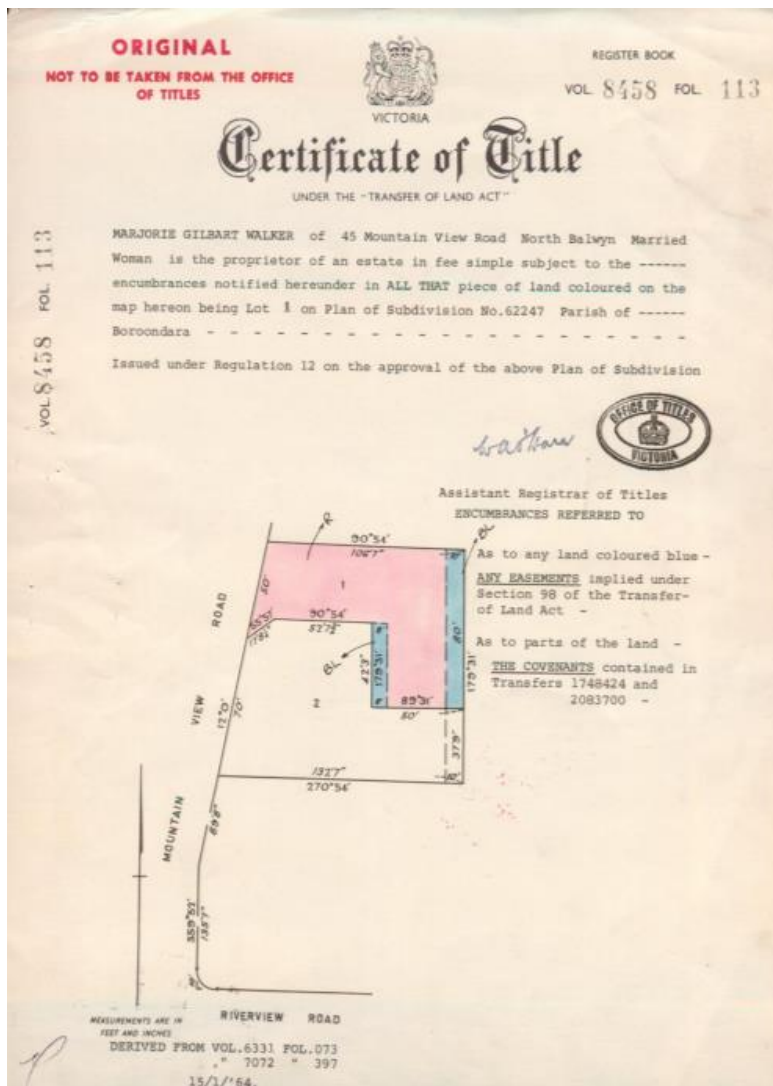


Figure 4 Certificate of title showing Lot 1 after Marjorie Walker subdivided her land in 1963. Bernard and Mira Plotkin purchased this lot in 1964 and built the subject house. (Source: CT V8458 F113)

Solicitor Bernard Plotkin and his wife Mira purchased the newly formed block of land in October 1964.

The Plotkins initially had plans prepared by two different architects: Harry Ernest and Grigore Hirsch of CONARG. They eventually opted for the design by Grigore Hirsch, a Rumanian émigré and highly respected designer whom Mira Plotkin knew through a family connection. According to her, Hirsch disliked private residential commissions and only undertook them on a very selective basis (pers. comm).

In September 1966, when the Plotkins' recently completed dwelling was profiled in the property column of the *Herald* newspaper, it was dubbed the 'luxury house on a problem site' and praised for the way in which it 'demonstrates some of the important advances in domestic architecture in recent years'. A catalogue of rarely seen innovations was cited, including the fully automatic air-conditioning system (with its own plant room), laundry chute, ducted vacuum system and a front door with panoptic spyhole, remote-controlled release and intercom connection to the kitchen. The Plotkins lived there for almost 40 years. During that time, they made virtually no changes to the house, except to replace the original laminate kitchen benches with granite counterparts shortly before they sold the property in 2000. The house was sold again in 2020. Council building cards record no alterations or additions to the property since 1963.

### CONARG

CONARG, a contraction of Contemporary Architecture Group, was founded in 1953 by Romanian émigré architect and town planner Grigore Hirsch (1906–1987). He trained at the University of Bucharest, receiving his Diploma of Architecture in 1930. He immediately commenced private practice in Bucharest, but in 1933 became an in-house architect to a subsidiary of the Shell oil company. Aware of the changing political situation in Europe, Hirsch and his family opted to emigrate to Australia in 1941. On the way they stopped in India, where they remained until 1949. In India Hirsch practised as an architect in Bombay (now Mumbai), where he completed houses, flats and commercial projects. In 1946 he won first prize in a competition for the design of the Bengal Central Bank in Calcutta (now Kolkata) (Built Heritage 2020).

The Hirschs moved to Australia in 1949, and Grigore worked initially in the office of Frank Heath, a leading Melbourne architect, whose practice (unusually for the time) also included town planning. Hirsch established his own firm in 1953. In what was an unusual move at the time, its title did not reference any personal names; instead it was simply the Contemporary Architecture Group, subsequently styled as CONARG. According to a former client, Hirsch was disinclined to accept residential commissions, and consequently relatively few houses were completed during his career. Hirsch reportedly converted to Catholicism from Judaism while in India, which might explain why CONARG completed several ecclesiastical commissions, including churches, denominational schools and a convent (Built Heritage 2020).

### Description

The house at 47 Mountain View Road is a two-storey, flat-roofed Modernist residence of grey concrete brick construction. Many of the interior walls of the house are constructed with a slimmer version of the same concrete brick. Set well back on an L-shaped site that slopes down west to east from the street, the house was deliberately designed so that its principal frontage was to the rear (with easterly views of the Dandenong Ranges) rather than to the street. Consequently, the overall form of the house is difficult to interpret from Mountain View Road. Broadly following the shape of the block, the house has an L-shaped plan spread across three levels. The carport, entrance hall and plant room are at street level; the hall opens onto a mezzanine stairwell that leads upstairs to the bedroom level and downstairs to the living areas.

When viewed from the street, a flat-roofed double carport occupies about two-thirds of the frontage. The house, which sits behind the carport, is seamlessly integrated into its garden setting by a slightly projecting walled courtyard standing in front of the main entrance, and other low, retaining and taller structural walling in matching concrete brick. The driveway, paved in rectangular concrete slabs, is

flanked by retaining walls (in narrower slab-like concrete bricks), which are stepped to create a series of terraced garden beds, and a single wide, concrete brick pillar gateway feature that incorporates a recessed letterbox. A recent screen created from evenly spaced heavy timber posts returns along the street frontage, enclosing the front yard.



Figure 5 Letter box at 47 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North, constructed of concrete bricks to match the house and garden walls. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 6 Concrete brick garden walls (integral to the original design) and timber fencing (recent) at the entry screening the front door from the street and creating an entry court. Note the integration of the carport roof over the top of the walls to give shelter to the front door. (Source: GML 2021)

The principal elevation of the house faces east, overlooking the rear garden. Two storeys in height, the rear wall of the house has a recessed upper balcony at its southern end and a projecting eaves overhang that is supported by a wing wall at its northern end and a rectangular pier at its southern end. The deep concrete floor of the balcony cantilevers past the pier, which is detailed with a vertical dentil course. Windows are the original timber-framed units and are typically floor to ceiling; those opening onto the balcony are fitted with oversized sliding doors, providing a seamless integration between indoors and out.

As the interior of the house was not inspected for this project, it could not be determined whether any of the luxurious internal finishes and features, noted in contemporary write-ups, are still in place.

## Integrity

47 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North, is highly intact; very few changes are visible to the original or early fabric. The house retains its original built form, flat roof with concealed gutters, walls of unpainted concrete brick, pattern of fenestrations, and door openings and joinery. It is distinguished by its sophisticated integration of the house into its unusually shaped site and the retention of original concrete brick boundary walls, retaining walls, pillar with integrated letterbox and courtyard fencing. It is further distinguished by the use of a slimmer version of the external concrete bricks for many of its interior walls.

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 a push for new housing and services in the suburbs of Melbourne.

Despite various subdivisions in the late 1800s and the early twentieth century, the vast majority of the housing stock in Balwyn North was built in 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 many used 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 the postwar styles offered at the time, many of which were simply scaled-down versions of 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.

Landscaping adopted a distinct aesthetic relationship to architecture in this period, when house design was increasingly informed by the topographic setting. Many modern houses were designed as integral components of the landscape; for example, on platforms terraced in relationship to a sloping site. This created a sense of living within the landscape rather than being removed from it (Goad 2002:253).

Departing from the traditional concept of the house as an isolated object bound by a polished front garden and more utilitarian backyard, the postwar period started to see many suburban gardens take on a less cultivated appearance. Changes to established landscaping techniques included the loss of the boundary fencing and greater tendency to leave plantings in their natural shape. Yards became zoned for outdoor living, largely focusing on comfort and leisure.

Although Grigore Hirsch is said to have eschewed private residential commissions, his firm, CONARG Architects, is known to have designed houses in various parts of the metropolitan area, including Heidelberg, Doncaster, Vermont and Mornington. Within Boroondara there is only one other known surviving example of CONARGs residential work; 118 Glen Iris Road, Glen Iris (HO897). Three other examples of CONARGs residential commissions previously identified in the City of Boroondara have since been demolished: 6 Goldthorns Avenue, Kew (1952), demolished by 2017; 16 Riverview Road, Balwyn North (1958), demolished in 1988; and a house in Simpson Street, Kew (1958), demolished at an unknown time.





Figure 7 'former Hirsch House and Office' at 118 Glen Iris Road, Glen Iris, designed by Grigore Hirsch (CONARG Architects) in 1954-55 (HO897) (Source: Trethewan 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.

Built ten years earlier, Hirsch's own home and office at 118 Glen Iris Road, Glen Iris (HO897) compares well to the subject site in the way that both house provided a sophisticated design response to complex sites. In both cases Hirsch's subtle use of materials embeds a textural quality and warmth to the design which maintains his design philosophy of European modernism, skilfully adapted to their Melbourne context.

The materiality of the Plotkin House links it closely to one of Grigore Hirsch's largest and most long running projects: the Sandringham and District Memorial Hospital, commenced in the mid-1950s to plans by Tasmanian architect (and former Sandringham resident) Esmond Dorney, and completed during 1964. Both projects used modular concrete bricks and notched corners, recessed headers and interlocking volumes expressed in the brick walling, to striking effect. In both projects Hirsch was responsible for the completion of all contract documentation, the design and detailing of elevations, most of the internal planning, and the site landscaping. The polygonal-planned hospital building was built of modular blockwork, with notched corners, and incorporated garden walls and piers articulated as massive interlocking volumes — a clear precedent for the similar detailing seen in the Plotkin House.

The house at 47 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North, can be compared more broadly to a number of contemporaneous houses in Balwyn and Balwyn North that exhibit a similar use of volumetric massing, flat roofs and full-height glazing. Despite the dominance of houses built in the years

following World War II, Heritage Overlay coverage of postwar houses in Balwyn is limited. Comparable examples include the following:



Figure 8. 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 9. 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn, designed by Robin Boyd in 1952 (HO177) (Source: GM 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 visual extreme, in the design of the writer's study.



Figure 10. 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)

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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Postwar houses on the Heritage Overlay in the broader Boroondara context that are comparable to 47 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North, include the following:



Figure 11. 'Robin Boyd House I', 664-666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell designed by Robyn 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.

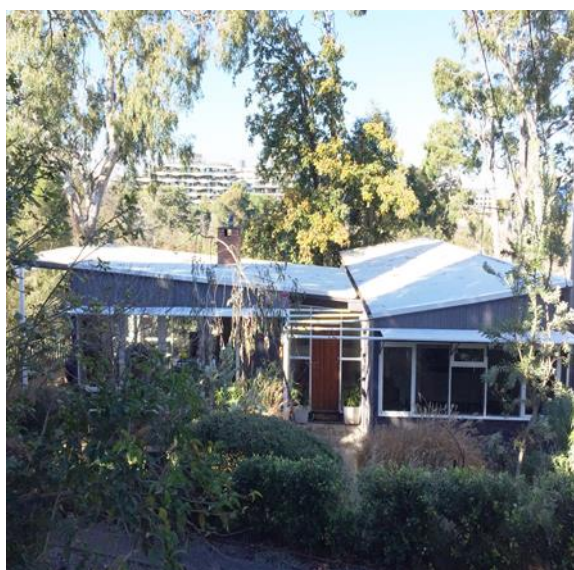


Figure 12. 6 Reeves Court, Kew, designed by Ernest Milston in 1955 (HO822). (Source: Trethowan 2017)

'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



Figure 13. The Guss House, 18 Yarra Street, Kew, designed by McGlashan & Everist in 1961. (Significant within HO530) (Source: Hermes)

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.

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 14 Dickie House, 6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn, c.1961–64 (HO784). (Source: Context 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.

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Figure 15 Cukierman Residence, 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn East, designed by Hayden & Associates (attributed to Anthony Hayden) in 1966 (HO857). (Source: Context 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.

47 Mountain View Road, 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. Typical of other postwar Modernist residential architecture, it exhibits a simplicity of structure and a sparseness of detail, rectangular planning, and low box-like forms with a horizontal emphasis. Its flat roof clad with lightweight sheeting, integrated carport prominently placed at the front of the house, and recessed entry concealed from view were also characteristic of postwar Modernist houses.

47 Mountain View Road is comparable to the earlier (1947) 'Robin Boyd House 1' (VHR H0879; HO116) which is widely recognised as the prototype for postwar modernist 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.

As also seen at Hirsch's own home in Glen Iris (1954-55, HO896), 47 Mountain View Road embraces the typical characteristics of architect-designed Modernist houses, including a sophistication of design and planning that reflects the skill of its architect. In response to its irregularly shaped and sloping block, the architect designed a house and landscape setting that is integrated into the landscape. The house is linked to its site through a series of interlocking boundary walls, creating courtyards that provide privacy as well as structure for the carport. Following the natural topography of the site, split levels are used to zone living and sleeping areas, and the living areas open seamlessly through walls of glass to the garden.

47 Mountain View Road is comparable to the works of other notable Modernist architects, including Ernest Milston (6 Reeves Court, Kew), McGlashan & Everist (18 Yarra Street, Kew, 1961) and Hayden & Associates (Cukierman Residence, 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn East). Similar characteristics across all these houses include a flat roof, an expressed structural modularity in the design with an integration of the house into its site through the use of large walls of glazing that



connect the interior with the exterior, simple unadorned planar wall surfaces and a simple rectilinear planning, and landscape design that was integral to the design of the house.

When compared to other Modernist houses included in Boroondara's Heritage Overlay, 47 Mountain View Road demonstrates the principal characteristics of the style, which was an important phase in the residential development of the area. Responding to a difficult site, the architects have used a sophisticated design response which orientates the house towards the rear of the block with only the carport visible from the street. Distinctive for its low roofline, its stark and apparently windowless façade, and especially its modular concrete brickwork, which introduces almost sculptural effects through stepped planes, interlocking volumes, recessed headers and dwarf walls of contrasting narrow tile-like bricks, Hirsch has embedded a textural quality and warmth to the design while maintaining the design philosophies of European modernism, adapted to the Melbourne context.

### **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).*

47 Mountain View Road, 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 1966 by Rumanian émigré architect Grigore Hirsch, principal of CONARG Architects Pty Ltd, this house is one of relatively few private residential projects that the practice completed. Featured in the *Herald* for its sophisticated integration into its unusually shaped site it is distinctive for its low roofline, stark and apparently windowless façade, and the sculptural use of modular concrete brickwork. The house 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).*

47 Mountain View Road, Balwyn, is of local aesthetic (architectural) significance for its unusual design, expression and integration of forms (house and landscaping) and materiality. Although set well back from the street and specifically designed to address the rear of the property and capitalise on distant views east to the Dandenong Ranges, the house nevertheless remains an eye-catching



element when seen from Mountain View Road. It is distinctive for its low roofline, its stark and apparently windowless façade, and especially its modular concrete brickwork, which introduces almost sculptural effects through stepped planes, interlocking volumes, recessed headers and dwarf walls of contrasting narrow tile-like bricks. The massive, slab-like letterbox, which boldly intersects with two garden walls, is an especially prominent element on the street boundary.

*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 Plotkin House at 47 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North, designed by Rumanian émigré architect Grigore Hirsch, principal of CONARG Architects Pty Ltd in 1966, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- sculptural split level built form of the house created through stepped planes, interlocking volumes, recessed headers and dwarf walls of contrasting narrow tile-like bricks
- pattern of fenestration and door openings with original joinery
- flat roof with deep fascia's and concealed gutters
- materials and detailing of the house and landscaping, in particular the modular concrete bricks in both standard and narrow widths
- the integral landscape design of the front garden, including walling, retaining walls, terraced garden beds and gateway feature.

The section of timber front fence is not significant.

### How is it significant?

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

### Why is significant?

47 Mountain View Road, 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 1966 by Rumanian émigré architect Grigore Hirsch, principal of CONARG Architects Pty Ltd, this house is one of relatively few private residential projects that the practice completed. Featured in the *Herald* for its sophisticated integration into its unusually shaped site, it is distinctive for its low roofline, stark and apparently windowless façade, and the sculptural use of modular concrete brickwork. The house exemplifies the high concentration of architect-designed modernist houses built in Balwyn and Balwyn North during the 1950s and 60s. (Criterion A)

47 Mountain View Road, Balwyn, is of local aesthetic (architectural) significance for its unusual design, expression and integration of forms (house and landscaping) and materiality. Although set well back from the street and specifically designed to address the rear of the property and capitalise on distant views east to the Dandenong Ranges, the house nevertheless remains an eye-catching element when seen from Mountain View Road. It is distinctive for its low roofline, its stark and apparently windowless façade, and especially its modular concrete brickwork, which introduces almost sculptural effects through stepped planes, interlocking volumes, recessed headers and dwarf walls of contrasting narrow tile-like bricks. The massive slab-like letterbox which boldly intersects with two garden walls, is an especially prominent element on the street boundary. (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:

<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>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<b>Outbuildings and fences exemptions</b>	
<i>Are there outbuildings or fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	Yes, front and side concrete brick fencing and gateway feature/letterbox
<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 2012





## References

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Victorian Heritage Register (VHR), as cited.

## HOUSE

**Prepared by:** GML Heritage

**Address:** 24 Orion Street BALWYN NORTH

<b>Name:</b> House	<b>Survey Date:</b> December 2022
<b>Place Type:</b> Residential Building	<b>Architect:</b> Davis Bité
<b>Grading:</b> Individually Significant	<b>Builder:</b> Samuel High McCorkell
<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1958



Figure 1 Principal façade, facing Orion Street to the north. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 2 Presentation to Libra Street. (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 Second World War*

### *9.3.2 Designing fine buildings*

Balwyn North is a residential suburb situated 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south is Balwyn, which is separated from Balwyn North 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. Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North.

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.

The period from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s, when 24 Orion Street was built, represented something of a heyday of post-war homebuilding in North Balwyn. This phase followed on from the more tentative settlement of the area in the late 1940s and early 1950s, subsequently burgeoning at such an intense rate that, by the mid-1960s, vacant allotments in Balwyn North were hard to come by.

## History

The land at 24 Orion Street, 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.

William James Woodmason, Dairyman purchased fifty-nine acres of Elgars Special Survey in 1915. Woodmason's land was subdivided in 1925 with the subject site becoming lot 313 of the subdivision (CT V3948 F 486). It appears that the land was slow to sell and by 1942 the subdivision had been purchased by the Mayor, Councillors and Citizens of the City of Camberwell (CT V6561 F159). The subject site became part of a smaller subdivision becoming lot 5 of the Boulevard Estate which was subdivided into 13 residential allotments in 1954 (*Argus*, 14 July 1956:25). The City of Camberwell issued tenders for the construction of Orion, Aquila, Musca, Taurus and Libra streets the same year (*Argus*, 14 July 1954).

Orion Street was aligned at a slight angle parallel to Koonung Creek to the north. As a result many of the allotments on the street are irregularly shaped, including the subject site; located on the corner of Orion and Libra Streets, it has an asymmetrical kite-like shape (CT V8145 F617).

Graham Dunshea, accountant, purchased the land in 1956 (CT V8145 F617). In 1958, the City of Camberwell issued a permit for the construction of a six-roomed brick veneer house worth £7000 (BP). Wanting to build a modern house that took advantage of the elevated site and its views, Dunshea engaged Davis Bité, a young architectural student and personal acquaintance. The project became Bité's first commission (Dunshea, pers. comm., 2010). Construction of the house was completed in 1958 by builder Samuel Hugh McCorkell (BP 22785).



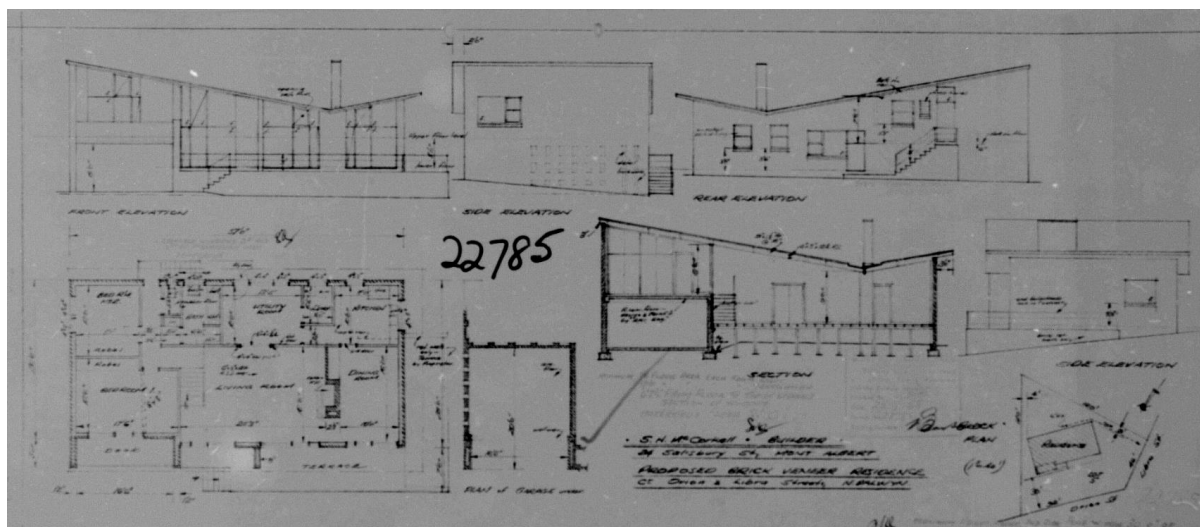


Figure 3 Working drawing sheet for 24 Orion Street, Balwyn North showing floor plan, elevations, section and site plan (Source: BP 22785)

The Dunsheas lived in the house for six years before moving to England, whereupon it was rented out until 1967, when it was sold to jewellery manufacturer Anthony Clancy and his wife, Ethel (CT V6561 F159). The same year the City of Camberwell issued a permit for the construction of a single storey brick room addition at the rear of the house, on the house's south-eastern corner (BP).

Since 1983 ownership of the property has changed hands three times (CT V6561 F159). Council building cards record no alterations or additions to the property since 1967.

#### **Davis Vladas Bité 1936–1987, Architect**

Born in Lithuania, Davis Vladas Bité (pronounced *Bee-tay*) migrated to Australia in 1948 with his father Vladas (who was also an architect), his mother and sister. He studied architecture at RMIT where, in the words of fellow student Daryl Jackson, “his skills as a designer and illustrator were well known amongst his peers” (Jackson 1987:33). Exploiting his talent for the latter, Bité went on to become an architectural renderer of considerable – even international – repute. By 1960, he was working in the USA, where he created presentation drawings for such eminent architects as Eero Saarinen (North Christian Church in Columbus, Ohio and the Dulles International Airport in Virginia), Paul Rudolph (Creative Arts Centre at Colgate University in New York), Walter Netsch (Cadet Chapel at US Air Force Academy in Colorado) and Philip Johnson, as well as others like William Morgan, Ulrich Franzen and Harrison & Abrahamovitz. Immediately recognisable for their dense line-work and almost obsessive attention to detail in evoking texture, Bité’s renderings frequently appeared in leading American architectural journals such as *Architectural Record*. (Built Heritage 2015)

Returning to Australia in 1965, Bité worked as a design architect for various firms, including Eggleston & McDonald, before taking a position in the office of Peter McIntyre. Bité became a director of that firm in 1974 and was elevated to full partner in 1980. His eminent career was cut short when he died of a heart attack in New York City on 20 May 1987, at the age of only 50 years. He was posthumously acknowledged in a textbook on architectural delineation, Robert W Gill’s *Basic Rendering* (1991), which republished some of his classic drawings from the 1960s (Built Heritage 2015).



## **Description**

Set back on a gently sloping corner site, the house at 24 Orion Street, Balwyn North, is a split-level Modernist dwelling of brick veneer construction. Its external form is dominated by a distinctive butterfly roof – that is, comprising two roof planes that slope inwards to a box gutter rather than outwards, as in the case of a traditional gabled roof. The butterfly roof is asymmetrical; although its two roof planes are of identical pitch, one is longer than the other so that they intersect at a point approximately two-thirds along the length of the house. This point is marked not only by the box gutter, but also by a wide slab-like chimney constructed of brick that extends up from the living area within.

The asymmetry of the roof form is echoed in the principal (Orion Street) elevation. Taking advantage of the sloping site, this elongated frontage incorporates a double garage at the left (east) end, underneath the raised bedroom wing. The front of the garage projects slightly forward to create a narrow balcony to the master bedroom above, enclosed by wing walls and a solid balustrade. A broad L-shaped terrace, with a random-coursed stone feature wall and steps, extends along the remainder of this frontage, and returns down the side (Libra Street) elevation.

The principal street frontage, which faces north, has four large full-height window bays with multi-paned timber-framed sashes, while the elevations to the side and rear have smaller and more conventional windows. The two street boundaries of the property are delineated by a volcanic stone retaining wall with deeply recessed mortar that curves around the corner and by other retaining walls that use pale modular bricks of varying sizes. Stone retaining walls were commonly seen in gardens of Modernist houses and are therefore thought to be part of the original or early landscaping on the site. The brick wall to the Libra Street side incorporates a planter box and a flight of steps with slate treads.

## **Integrity**

24 Orion Street, Balwyn North is largely intact, with very few changes visible to original or early fabric. The house retains its original built form, distinctive butterfly roof, walls and central chimney of face brickwork, pattern of fenestration and door opening with original joinery, L shaped terrace with stone rubble wall base and steps, a balcony above the enclosed garage and a volcanic rock retaining walls. The third bedroom, added to the rear in 1967, is not visible from the street and does not impact on the integrity of the place.

Integrity is enhanced by the landscape setting with the house set at an angle to the corner, elevated above the street and discrete sections of the front retaining wall in pale modular bricks of varying sizes.

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 the 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 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.

Landscaping adopted a distinct aesthetic relationship to architecture in this period with house designs increasingly being informed by the topographic setting. Many modern houses were designed as integral components of the landscape; for example, on platforms terraced in relationship to a sloping site. This created a sense of living within the landscape rather than being removed from it (Goad 2002:253).

Departing from the traditional concept of the house as an isolated object bound by a polished front garden and more utilitarian backyard, the postwar period started to see many suburban gardens take on a less cultivated appearance. Changes to established landscaping techniques included the loss of the boundary fencing and greater tendency to leave plantings in their natural shape. Yards became zoned for outdoor living, largely focusing on comfort and leisure (Goad 2002:253).

According to Graham Dunshea, the house at Balwyn North represented Davis Bité's first realised commission (Dunshea pers. comm., 2010). Research by Built Heritage Pty Ltd has not yet identified any other comparable projects that Bité undertook during the early phase of his career. That Bité subsequently worked extensively as a freelance perspective artist (based in the United States from c.1959 to 1965) and later as a design architect for larger firms, might suggest that he did not maintain a sole practice and thus probably carried out very few (if indeed any) private architectural commissions under his own name. This house at Balwyn North, therefore, should be considered as a rare example of Bité's output.

The butterfly roof was a fashionable motif in residential architecture of the 1950s, being introduced to Melbourne at the start of that decade. Writing in 1951, Robin Boyd observed that 'the newest thing on the suburban horizon is the "Butterfly" roof, the inside-out roof, the upside-down gable. There are not half a dozen around at present, but there will be more, for the idea is not altogether ridiculous' (Age 15 February 1971:3). One of the first examples to gain widespread attention was actually located in Balwyn North – the residence of architect Kenneth McDonald at 50 Tuxen Street (1952). Prominently sited in what was then largely undeveloped suburbia, the house was much published in the architectural and popular housing press. The house at 50 Tuxen Street has since been demolished. Another local example, also designed by an architect for himself, was the residence of Frank Dixon at 6 Carrigal Street, Balwyn (1953). Although it remains extant, it has been substantially altered. While a number of other butterfly-roofed houses survive, these tend to have much lower-pitched roofs that are

not expressed quite so boldly, such as the former Kramer House at 7 Milfay Court, Balwyn North (1956), where the butterfly profile is not even evident from the street.

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 24 Orion Street, Balwyn North, 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:



Figure 4 '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 5 'Gillson House', 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn, designed by Robin Boyd in 1952 (HO177). (Source: VHD)

'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 6 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.

There are also several postwar houses on the Heritage Overlay in the broader Boroondara context that are comparable to 24 Orion Street Balwyn North. Examples include:



Figure 7 '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 8 '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.

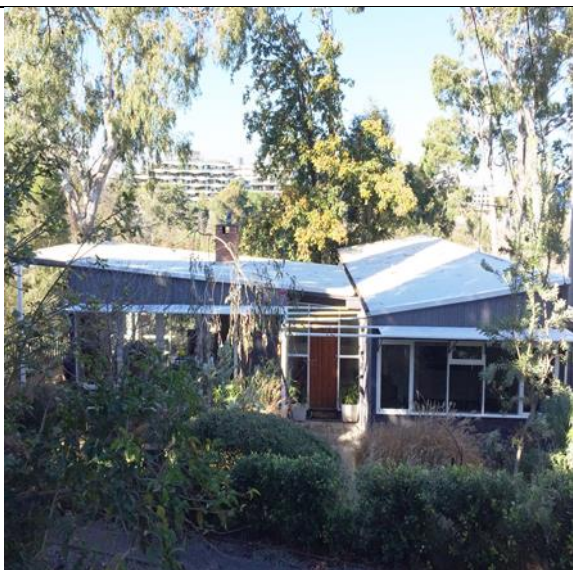


Figure 9 'Milston House', 6 Reeves Court, Kew, designed by Ernest Milston in 1955 (HO822). (Source: Trethowan 2017)

'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 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.

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'Guss residence', 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 '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.

Figure 10 'Guss residence', 18 Yarra Street, Kew designed by McGlashan & Everist in 1961 (Significant within HO530). (Source: Hermes)



Figure 11 '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.

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Figure 12 '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)

'Cukierman Residence', 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn is of local historical, architectural, aesthetic and technical 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.

24 Orion Street, Balwyn North exhibits key elements of postwar Modernist houses; 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 modern homes, in its clever adaptation to the 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.

Robin 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 (1989) describe 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 Robin 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, built in 1952 (HO177) and 12-14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North, built in 1948-49, 1959, 1971 (HO928).

24 Orion Street, Balwyn North embraces these characteristics with a sophistication of design and planning that reflects the skill of its designer, Davis Bité, who was still an undergraduate at the time of commissioning. It is comparable to the works of other more recognised 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, 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.



The house is particularly comparable to 118 Glen Iris Road, Glen Iris, (HO897) designed by Grigore Hirsch in 1954-55 and 6 Reeves Court, Kew (HO822) designed by Ernst Milston in 1955. All of these houses use a butterfly roof form, although in the case of Hirsch's house it has a very shallow pitch and at Milston's house it is formed by two separate skillion roofs over separate wings of the house that intersect. Bite's use of the form is more dramatic with a stepper pitch emphasised by its asymmetry. This gives the house a sculptural presence that sits above the landscape. Coupled with its contrasting use of materials – stone rubble base and modular brick walls, and expression of Modernist detailing – rectilinear planning with bays of full height windows and planar wall surfaces, the house has a remarkable street presence making it a striking example of postwar residential architecture in the locality.

Overall, the subject site is an exceptionally fine and innovative example of an early mid-century Modernist house, which exhibits key characteristics of the style including attributes consistent with the regional expression of the style that developed in Melbourne.

### **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).*

24 Orion Street, 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 1958 by then undergraduate architect Davis Bité, this highly intact house is notable for its sophisticated and evocative manipulation of Modernist features which include its rectilinear planning with bays of full height windows and planar wall surfaces and a steeply pitched asymmetrical butterfly roof form. Elevated above the landscape on a base of rubble stonework the house has a remarkable street presence and exemplifies the high concentration of architect designed modernist houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn 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).*

Aesthetically, 24 Orion Street is significant as a striking example of postwar Modernist residential architecture in the Balwyn/Balwyn North area. With its steeply pitch asymmetrical butterfly roof,



rectilinear and elevated massing, contrasting stone rubble walls, modular brick work and window walls, the house ably illustrates the basic tenets of postwar Modernism with attributes consistent with the regional expression of the style. Situated on a sloping block and designed to sit above the site on a stone base, the house has a sculptural presence that can be appreciated from various vantage points because of its corner site. Consequently, this highly intact house has a remarkable streetscape presence, enhanced by retention of early retaining walls delineating the front boundary, and remains as a notable and evocative example of post-war residential architecture.

*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 Dunshea House at 24 Orion Street, Balwyn North, designed by architect Davis Bité while still a student in 1958, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- original built form
- distinctive butterfly roof
- walls of face brickwork
- pattern of fenestration and door opening and original joinery
- L shaped terrace with stone rubble wall base and steps
- front boundary retaining wall of volcanic rock.

The bedroom, added to the rear in 1967, is not significant.

### **How is it significant?**

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

### **Why is it significant?**

24 Orion Street, 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 1958 by then undergraduate architect Davis Bité, this highly intact house is notable for its sophisticated and evocative manipulation of Modernist features which include its rectilinear planning with bays of full height windows and planar wall surfaces and a steeply pitched asymmetrical butterfly roof form. Elevated above the landscape on a base of rubble stonework the house has a remarkable street presence and exemplifies the high concentration of architect designed modernist houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn during the 1950s and 1960s.

Aesthetically, 24 Orion Street is significant as a striking example of postwar Modernist residential architecture in the Balwyn/Balwyn North area. With its steeply pitch asymmetrical butterfly roof, rectilinear and elevated massing, contrasting stone rubble walls, modular brick work and window walls, the house ably illustrates the basic tenets of postwar Modernism with attributes consistent with the regional expression of the style. Situated on a sloping block, and being designed to sit above the site on a stone base, the house has a sculptural presence that can be appreciated from various vantage points because of its corner site. Consequently, this highly intact house has a remarkable streetscape presence, enhanced by retention of early retaining walls delineating the front boundary, and remains as a notable and evocative example of post-war residential architecture.

## **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:



<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>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<b>Outbuildings and fences exemptions</b>	
<i>Are there outbuildings or fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	Yes Front boundary retaining walls
<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 2012



## References

Age, as cited.

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LANDATA. Certificates of Title (CT), as cited.

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR), as cited.

## Vedere

Prepared by: GML Heritage

**Address:** 44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North

<b>Name:</b> Vedere	<b>Survey Date:</b> October 2017/ December 2021
<b>Place Type:</b> Residential	<b>Architect:</b> Unknown
<b>Grading:</b> Individually Significant	<b>Builder:</b> JH Campbell
<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1947



Figure 1 44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North (Source: Context 2017)

## Historical Context

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

*3.5.3 Expanding the network (the MMTB era)*

*6.3.3 Creating Middle class suburbs in the early twentieth century*

*6.3.4 Suburban infill after the Second World War*

Balwyn North is a residential suburb situated 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south is Balwyn, which is separated from Balwyn North 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.

The last pre-war addition to the tram network in Boroondara during the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board (MMTB) era, was the extension of the tram route along Doncaster Road to Balwyn North, which opened in 1938. This encouraged yet another burst of residential subdivision (although construction of houses was delayed by the onset of the Second World War and the consequent introduction of restrictions on private building activity) and opened the floodgates for the settlement boom that was to characterise the area in the postwar period (Built Heritage 2012:71, 132).

#### *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. Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North.

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 homeowners for access to Balwyn High School—a co-educational government secondary school with nearly 2000 students.



## History

The subject land at 44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North, is located on lot 291 of the Camberwell City Heights subdivision, allotments of which were first sold in 1922 ('Camberwell City Heights', 1922). The first auction was attended by 800 people, but many of the allotments remained available for purchase until the late 1940s (Age 5 December 1922:14; 'Camberwell City Heights', 193-; MMBW Detail Plan no. 4845, 1940).

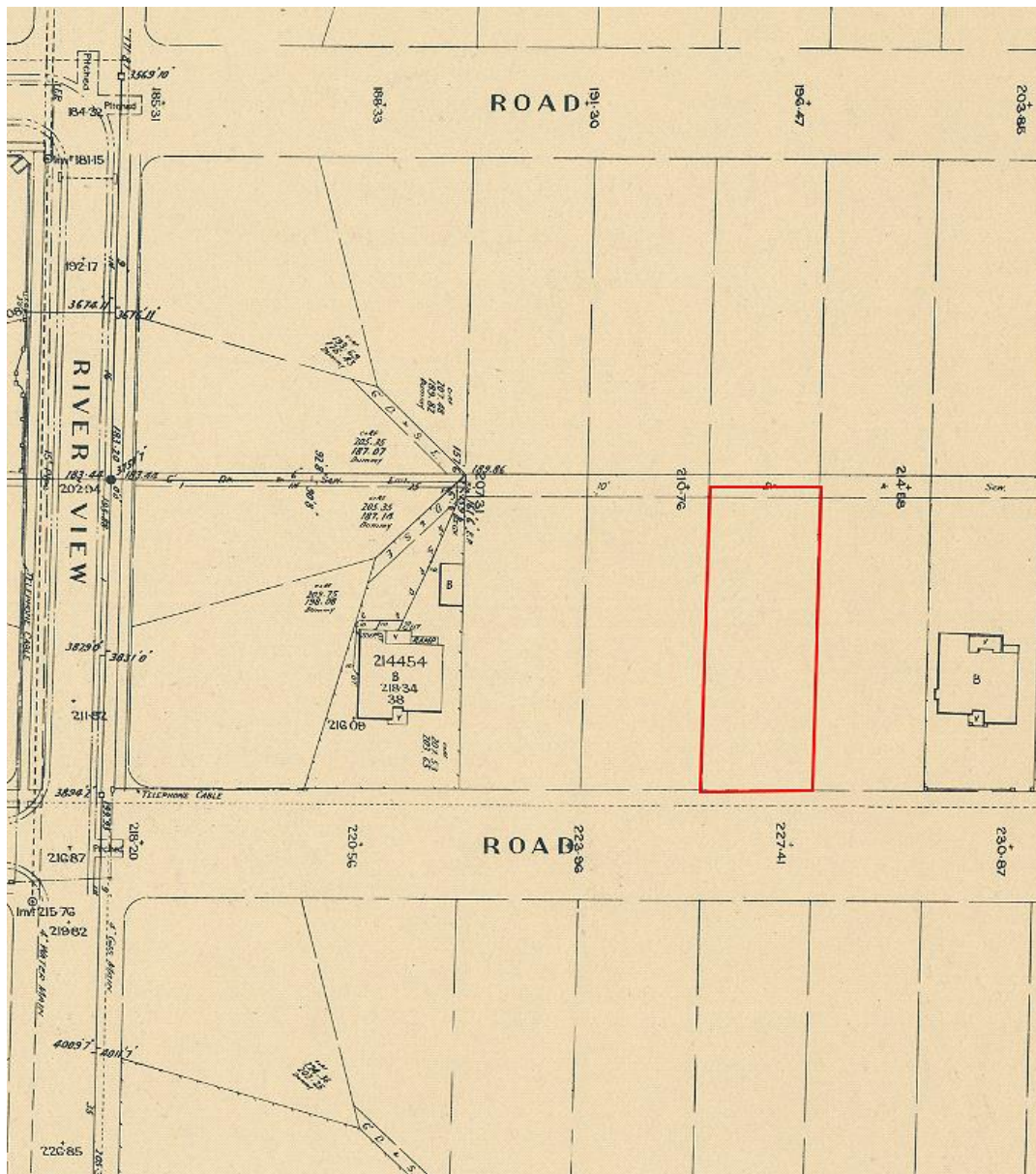


Figure 2. An extract from Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Detailed Plan No 4845, 1940, showing the unoccupied land. (Source: SLV).

In late 1947, the two-storey clinker brick residence at 44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North, was constructed by Ormond builder, J H Campbell for owner, Roy Douglas Peacock. The cost of the construction was £3000 (BP).



Roy Douglas Peacock and his wife Bertha Beatrice were pastrycooks and conducted businesses in Abbotsford and Hawthorn during the 1940s (ER 1942 and 1949). The Peacocks occupied the subject house until 1968 (ER 1968).

On 31 August 1968, an auction of 44 Panoramic Road was held. The house was described as 'a North Balwyn house with the flavour of the Alps' with a steep pitched roof. The garden was planted with spruce and cedar trees. The insulated roof was supported by Oregon (Douglas fir) beams. The interior consisted of three bedrooms and den or fourth bedroom, lounge-dining room, kitchen, patio, laundry and two bathrooms. The house was described as having 'a view as far as Mount Macedon to the north-west and the high parts of Kew to the west,' and from the upstairs den, the view extended to the roofs of the neighbourhood, the city towers and the Heidelberg clock tower (Age 31 August 1968:23).

In February 1971, the property was auctioned again (Age 24 February 1971:29). In 1972, additions were made by the then owner, Mrs L V Stewart, which involved the construction of a sunroom adjoining the rear of the house (BP) (see Figure 4).

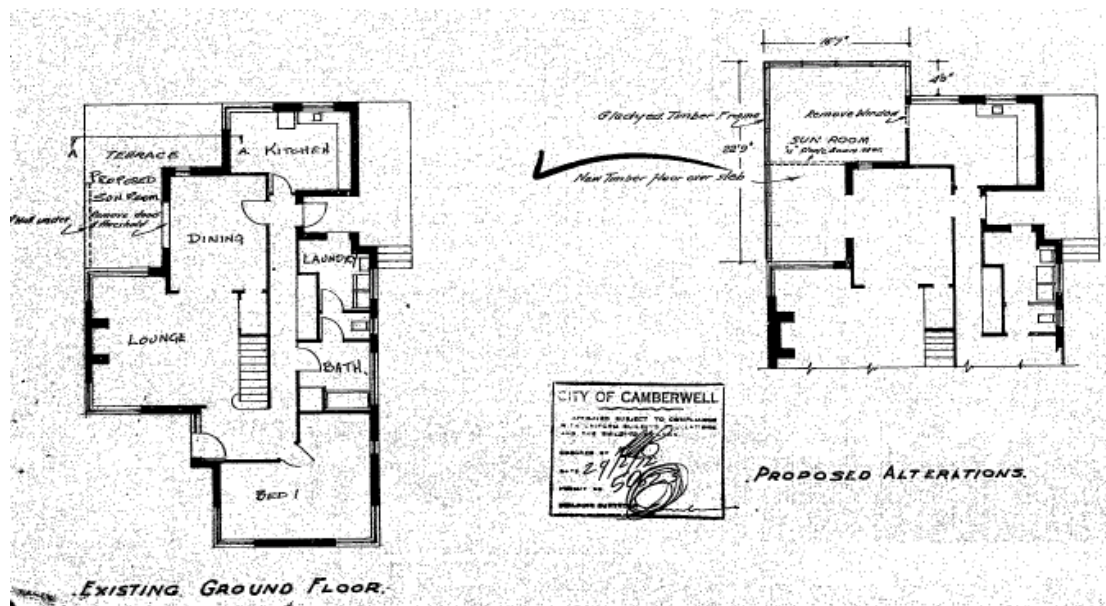


Figure 3. Detail from the 1972 building permit plan showing the proposed sunroom addition at the rear of the house. (Source: BP 50623)

## Description

'Vedere', 44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North, a substantial, two-storied residence built in the postwar era, is sited on the western side of Panoramic Road, a leafy residential street. The allotment slopes gently from the front property boundary toward the principal entrance of the house, combining with a generous setback to enhance the mature front garden setting, containing a large Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*) amongst other mature plantings. An early, rubble slate-clad front fence, with mild-steel infill, and a matching gate sitting slightly off-centre, delineates the eastern (front) property edge. The pitch of the steeply tapered stone fence pier tops echoes the prominent pitched roof of the dwelling. To the northern periphery is a low, solid fence of the same stone. The fencing, coupled with the same

treatments to the garden bed edgings, adds a layer of rusticity and contrasts with the overall refined presence of the dwelling.



Figure 4. The early masonry front fence with mild-steel infill and gate. (Source: Context 2017)

The glazed terracotta tiled roof comprises a pair of gables with extremely steep pitches covering a T-shaped plan, resting on deep boxed eaves. To the rear, a subsidiary hipped section projects to the south from the main gabled section running east-west, nestled with the truncated stem of the 'T'. Rising from the eastern declivity (downward slope) of this gable is a clinker brick chimney, stepped in plan, each step capped with manganese brick.

The entrance to the house is contained within a semi-circular arched porch of manganese brick, and serviced by three paved steps flanked with squat piers. The visual impact of the porch is enhanced by its slightly curved catslide roof extending from the southern declivity of the main gable, which contrasts with the rigid and angular roof lines of the building's main roof form.





Figure 5 The semi-circular arched porch with catslide roof. (Source: Context 2017)

The walls are of red-blue clinker brick with dark brown manganese brick borders to the windows and verge-less gable ends. The sheer gable end to the projecting front room has a basket weave pattern of clinker brick stretchers at its apex, the weave comprising three stretchers with the middle brick glazed.



Fenestration is intact, consisting of steel-framed glazing with rectangular panels which were typical for 1940s houses. Three prominent corner windows punctuate the front-facing facades at ground level, while a central steel-framed window features at the first-storey of the principal gabled bay. A hipped dormer window projects from the main gabled roof section to the north.

Clad with slate crazy paving, the early front fence comprises chunky pointed piers that increase in size as they approach the mild-steel gate. The top member of the mild-steel infill echoes this gradation, sloping upwards to meet the piers flanking the property's gated entrance. A curved concrete drive snakes around the Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*) at the property's south-eastern corner, and continues past a mild-steel side gate, down the southern side of the residence. At this elevation is a flat-roofed room adjoining the house at the rear, constructed as a sunroom in 1972, which is not visible from the public domain. To the north-east of the property, the front garden consists of a large grassed area bordered by mortared stone edged garden beds planted with low profile plantings.

### **Integrity**

'Vedere' is highly intact with very few changes visible to original or early elements of the place. The building retains its original building form and roof forms, porch and fenestration. The integrity of the building is enhanced by the high level of intactness of its main elements, which include the original chimney, tiled roof, unpainted face brickwork, gable and porch decoration, as well as other details such as original windows and unpainted window sills. The integrity of the place is further enhanced by the retention of the original garden setback and front fence, and early garden elements including stone edging and an early garden planting, the Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*).

Overall, the place has 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.

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. While many of these couples turned to young progressive architects to design their homes in the Modernist style, houses drawing on the design influences from the more conservative interwar styles were still being built.

Often referred to as Tudor, the interwar Old English style had its roots in the English Arts and Crafts movement of the mid to late nineteenth century. The revival of this style, along with many other English and American revival styles became popular with the upper end of the housing market.

The brick nogging or half timbering in gables of upper storeys, and steeply pitched (and generally tiled) gable roofs was typical of Old English architecture. From the 1930s onward, there was less variation in cladding materials, with many houses clad solely in red and/or clinker brick, often enlivened with brick patterning and decorative brick forms (e.g., brown glazed manganese bricks,



patterned tapestry bricks, narrow Roman or heeler bricks). Other hallmarks of the Old English style included picturesque asymmetry, pursued with multiple fronts and offset massing, prominent chimneys, and snug porches under the main roof sweep.

Old English styled houses evoked the 'Home country' in the British Empire, using the associations of the manor to convey wealth and social status. The movement gained much momentum in the 1930s as the 'bungalow' and 'Spanish Mission' styles began to fade in popularity, though simplified versions of typical Old English elements continued to present themselves in residences built in the postwar period.

There are a number of good examples of houses that exhibit the defining characteristics of the Old English styling in Boroondara included in the Heritage Overlay.



Figure 6 2 Daracombe Avenue, Kew (HO293) built in 1926. (Source: Hermes)

2 Daracombe Avenue, Kew, is of local historical and architectural significance as a fine, representative and externally intact example of a substantial two-storey interwar Old English / Tudor-style residence, which retains a sympathetic setting including its original fence.



'Figure 7 Stratford' 458 Camberwell Road, Camberwell (individually significant in HO373) built in 1933 (Source: Hermes)

'Stratford', at 458 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, is of local historical and architectural significance as a fine and generally intact example of an interwar suburban residence combining contemporary Tudor references. The careful integration of a garage into the front elevation of the house is of note and the survival of the original fence and driveway configuration contributes to the setting of the house.





Figure 8 19, 21, 23 & 25 Howard Street, Kew  
(Individually Significant in HO528), built in 1934-36.  
(Source: Hermes)

Clockwise from top left: 19 Howard Street (1935-36; significant); 21 Howard Street (1935-36; significant); 25 Howard Street (c1934; significant); 23 Howard Street (c1934; significant).

The Howard Street precinct is historically and architecturally significant to the City of Boroondara. Of particular architectural note the individually significant houses at 19-23 Howard Street all skilfully employ decorative brickwork and dramatic pitched roof forms and retain mature garden settings with original low brick and/or stone fences.



7 Glenroy Road, Hawthorn (HO450) of 1935-36.  
(Source: Hermes)

7 Glenroy Road, Hawthorn is of local ... significance. It is a two-storey brick flats building designed to look like a single house. The walls are of clinker brick with tapestry and herringbone brick accents, and one half-timbered gable. The building successfully combines projecting bays, brickwork patterning and gabled roofscape, to help break up the large composition. It also displays competent detailing and application of the Tudor mode, with many of the principal characteristics evident such as clinker, tapestry and herringbone brickwork, and appliqué half-timbering in a picturesque composition



Figure 9 12 Tara Avenue, Kew (HO348) built in c1938.  
(Source: Hermes)

12 Tara Avenue, Kew is of local historical and architectural significance as a good and externally relatively intact example of a substantial two-storey residence of the late interwar period designed in the Old English mode, which incorporates a range of forms and detailing common to the style. The walls are mainly of clinker brick with render to the first-floor façade. The main decorative elements are the tall, corbelled chimneys. The transverse gabled roof is clad with terracotta shingles and engaged chimneys have corbelled tops.





Figure 10 75 Studley Park Road, Kew (Individually significant in HO346) built in 1938. (Source: Hermes)

75 Studley Park Road, Kew is of local historical and architectural significance as a good and externally relatively intact example of a two-storey brick house in the Old English Style as expressed in Melbourne houses of the 1930s. . Designed by architects Marsh & Michaelson, the steeply pitched gabled roof is finished with glazed terracotta tiles, with dentilled brickwork to the eaves and is punctuated by tall brick chimneys with octagonal form and corbelled caps; prominent gables feature half-timbering with tapestry brick herringbone and basket weave patterned noggings. The house retains its original front fence, path and steps.



Figure 11 660 Riversdale Road, Camberwell (HO402) built in 1938. (Source: Hermes)

660 Riversdale Road is of local historical and architectural significance as a substantial brick residence in the Old English manner. It is distinctive for its incorporation of a garage (now converted) into the main body of the house, and for its use of materials in expressing texture, using a vivid tapestry brick, interspersed with relieving bricks in burnt sienna and blue clinker.



Figure 12 7 Muriel Street, Glen Iris (HO398) built in c1940. (Source: Hermes)

7 Muriel Street, Glen Iris, is of local historical and architectural significance and is representative generally of the larger Tudor-flavoured houses in Camberwell of the 1930s, Designed by architect Harold Desbrowe Annear the house is a large two-storey house with half-timbered walls, a jettied first floor and a double gable. The house is of additional interest as one of a series of eclectic houses with conspicuous half-timbering and projecting upper stories from later in architect Harold Desbrowe Annear's career.

Though a relatively late example, 'Vedere' is a highly intact example of a finely executed Old English residence. It compares well to the above examples skilfully incorporating a similar range of forms and



detailing demonstrative of the style. These include an asymmetric plan with complex picturesque roof form (seen in all comparable examples), walls of clinker brick often with decorative patterning ( seen at 2 Daracombe Avenue, Kew, 'Stratford' 458 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, 7 Glenroy Road, Hawthorn, 75 Studley Park Road, Kew, 660 Riversdale Road, Camberwell), a steeply pitched prominent gable roof with vergeless eaves (particularly evident at 19, 23 and 25 Howard Street, Kew and 75 Studley Park Road, Kew), tall prominent chimney (seen at 2 Daracombe Avenue, Kew, 21 & 23 Howard Street, Kew, 7 Glenroy Road, Hawthorn, 12 Tara Avenue, Kew, 75 Studley Park Road, Kew, 660 Riversdale Road, Camberwell) and the retention of its original front fence and gates (also at 2 Daracombe Avenue, Kew, 'Stratford' 458 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, 19, 21, 23 & 25 Howard Street, Kew, 75 Studley Park Road, Kew).

What truly sets 44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North apart is the extreme pitch of its gable roof giving the house an idiosyncratic picturesque character. The use of decorative brickwork detailing in the gable ends is indicative of its later date of construction when there was less variation in cladding materials, with many houses clad solely in red and/or clinker brick, often enlivened with brick patterning and decorative brick forms. Other distinctive elements when compared to earlier examples include the use of steel-framed windows, manganese brick work detailing around the windows and entry porch and catslide roof to the porch. Although an architect could not be found for the house design, this skilful combination of stylistic elements renders it a fine example of how interwar details were interpreted into the postwar period.

### **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).*

44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of the settlement boom that was to characterise the area in the postwar period. The settlement boom was spurred on by the extension of the electric tram route along Doncaster Road to Balwyn North, which opened in 1938, but which was delayed by the onset of WWII and associated restrictions on private building activity. Although the land was part of the 1929 Camberwell City Heights subdivision, the success of this and other 1920s and 1930s subdivisions in the area were delayed because of the sheer distance from useful public transport links.

Although an architect could not be found for the house design, the house exemplifies the concentration of high quality individually designed houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn during the postwar period.

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

NA

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

NA



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

NA

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

44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North is of aesthetic significance for its skilful execution of a highly original and complex design in the interwar Old English mode, with its exaggerated roof pitch and catslide entry porch, dramatic massing and picturesque setting within an established garden. The retention of the early stone front fence, with mild-steel infill and matching gate adds to the picturesque setting of the dwelling, adding a layer of rusticity and contrasting with the overall refined presence of the place. The mature Atlas Cedar in the front garden enhances its setting.

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

NA.

*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).*

NA

*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).*

NA





## Statement of Significance

### What is significant?

'Vedere,' 44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North, built in 1947 by builder J H Campbell is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include:

- asymmetrical built form with attic storey
- glazed terracotta tiled roof with extremely steep pitches and vergeless gable ends and deep boxed eaves
- red-blue clinker brick walls and slim manganese Roman brick borders to the windows and vergeless gable ends
- clinker brick chimney, stepped in plan and each step capped with manganese brick.
- circular arched entrance porch of slim manganese Roman brick and catslide roof
- slim manganese Roman brick dwarf piers either side of entry arch
- steel framed windows
- front fence clad in slate crazy paving including pointed piers and mild steel infill panels and gates.

Significance is enhanced by the mature garden setting which includes a large Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*).

The 1972 sunroom addition at the rear of the house is not significant.

### How is it significant?

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

### Why is it significant?

44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of the settlement boom that was to characterise the area in the postwar period. The settlement boom was spurred on by the extension of the electric tram route along Doncaster Road to Balwyn North, which opened in 1938, but which was delayed by the onset of WWII and associated restrictions on private building activity. Although the land was part of the 1929 Camberwell City Heights subdivision, the success of this and other 1920s and 1930s subdivisions in the area were delayed because of the sheer distance from useful public transport links.

Although an architect could not be found for the house design, the house exemplifies the concentration of high quality individually designed houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn during the postwar period. (Criterion A)

44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North is of aesthetic significance for its skilful execution of a highly original and complex design in the interwar Old English mode, with its exaggerated roof pitch and catslide entry porch, dramatic massing and picturesque setting within an established garden. The retention of the early stone front fence, with mild-steel infill and matching gate adds to the picturesque setting of the dwelling, adding a layer of rusticity and contrasting with the overall refined presence of the place. The mature Atlas Cedar in the front garden enhances its setting. (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:

<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>Solar Energy System Controls</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<b>Outbuildings and fences exemptions</b>	Yes—front fence and gates
<i>Are there outbuildings or fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	
<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 2015



## References

Age, as cited.

Australian Electoral Commission, Australia Electoral Rolls (ER) 1903-1980, as cited.

Building permit cards (BP) for 44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North.

Building permit 50623 (BP) for 44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North.

Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2012. 'City of Boroondara Thematic Environmental History.' Prepared for the City of Boroondara. May 2012.

Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2015, 'Balwyn and Balwyn North Heritage Study', prepared for the City of Boroondara.

'Camberwell City Heights,' 1922 & 193-, State Library of Victoria Maps Collection.

Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works. Detail Plans, City of Camberwell, various plan numbers (State Library Victoria).

Young, John c1950, 'Hill road, North Balwyn', *Victorian Places* John Young Collection, <http://www.victorianplaces.com.au/node/69337>, accessed 3 October 2018.

## HOUSE

**Prepared by:** GML Heritage

**Address:** 22 Riverview Road BALWYN NORTH

<b>Name:</b> House	<b>Survey Date:</b> December 2021
<b>Place Type:</b> Residential	<b>Designer:</b> F J Sanders
<b>Grading:</b> Individually Significant	<b>Builder:</b> F J Sanders
<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1949; 1952-53 (second storey/garage)



Figure 1 22 Riverview Road, Balwyn North viewed from corner of Riverview Road and Panoramic Road. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 2 Detail of bow window at 22 Riverview Road, Balwyn North. (Source: GML 2021)





## Historical Context

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

*3.5.3 Expanding the network (the MMTB era)*

*6.3.3 Creating Middle class suburbs in the early twentieth century*

*6.3.4 Suburban infill after the Second World War*

Balwyn North is a residential suburb situated 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south is Balwyn, which is separated from Balwyn North 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.

The last pre-war addition to the tram network in Boroondara during the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board (MMTB) era, was the extension of the tram route along Doncaster Road to Balwyn North, which opened in 1938. This encouraged yet another burst of residential subdivision (although construction of houses was delayed by the onset of the Second World War and the consequent introduction of restrictions on private building activity) and opened the floodgates for the settlement boom that was to characterise the area in the postwar period (Built Heritage 2012:71, 132).

### *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. Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North.

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 22 Riverview Road, 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. Joseph Shilton and Thomas Brown purchased two hundred acres of Edgars Special survey in 1875. Thomas Brown died in 1878 leaving his share of the land to his widow Mary. Joseph Shilton also died in 1878 leaving his share to his widow Fanny. Mary Brown transferred her portion of the land to Fanny Shilton in 1881. Fanny Smith retained the land until she sold it to various members of the Smith family (as joint proprietors) in 1918.

In 1928 the land was purchased by Camberwell City Heights Pty Ltd and subdivided into residential allotments as part of what became known as the Camberwell City Heights Estate.



Figure 3 Camberwell City Heights Estate, North Balwyn plan of subdivision. Lot 375 in outlined in blue. (Source: Batten & Percy Pty Ltd 1929, State Library of Victoria, with GML overlay)



Lot 375 of the estate was purchased by Sarah Ellen Orchard in 1938. The block remained vacant until it was sold to builder Francis John Sanders in 1949 (CT V6250 F911). Sanders constructed the current house on the block in two stages; initially in 1949 and then substantially enlarged in 1952-53.

The drawings, entitled 'Proposed Brick Residence for F J Sanders, Esq' were submitted for council approval in 1949. They depict a flat-roofed single-storey brick dwelling in the fashionable Moderne mode, with the living room boldly expressed in the form of a projecting semi-circular bay. Provision was made for a future second storey, following the same general plan but incorporating an open terrace above the living room. Although a building permit was issued by the City of Camberwell on 15 August 1949, the house did not appear in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* until 1952, when it was listed as a "house being built" on the south side of Riverview Road, between an existing dwelling at No 24 and the intersection of Panoramic Road. The house continued to be listed as such in 1953 and again in 1954. This prolonged status evidently related to the addition of the second storey, for which a separate permit was issued on 20 November 1952. Rather than complete the second floor to match the Moderne stylings of the existing house, as had been proposed in the 1949 drawings, Sanders prepared entirely new plans that reconceived the addition as a cluster of steeply gabled roofs in the interwar Old English mode. A separate permit, for a garage, was issued in September 1953.

The property was purchased by Robert Taylor, manufacturer and his wife Alice in 1953. The completed house was listed for the first time in the 1955 *Sands & McDougall* directory, at which time it was officially designated as No 22, with R J Taylor listed as occupant. Electoral rolls record Taylor, as an engineer Taylor and his wife, continued living at 22 Riverview Road until 1966 when the property was sold to Clement Ling, research chemist and Lois Ling, librarian. Ownership of the property changed several times until the current owners purchased 22 Riverview Road in 1986.

Building card records held by council show that a permit was granted for the addition of a family room at the rear of the property in 1981 and to extend the freestanding garage and build a carport in front of it in 1986. There are no other records of any further alterations or additions to the property.

### **F.J Sanders (d.2001)**

The following biography of the designer of 22 Riverview Road has been compiled by Simon Reeves:

*F J Sanders [was] a designer/builder who was notably active in Balwyn North during the 1940s and '50s. The son of a metal spinner, Francis John Sanders was born in Wunghnu in northern Victoria but grew up in East Brunswick, where, by the late 1930s, he had begun his career as a boot repairer. During the Second World War, Sanders served both with the Citizen Military Force (CMF) and the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). ... Sanders was discharged in February 1945 with the rank of Lieutenant, along with the War Medal, the Australian Service Medal and the Pacific Star. Sanders returned to East Brunswick where, in October 1947, he married English-born Ettie Hunter Newton (1919-2003), whose family had migrated to Australia when she was five years old.*

*By this time, Sanders had radically altered the direction of his career by opting for a future in building construction rather than boot repair. In December 1946, ...[Sanders] was granted a building permit to erect a modest brick house at the corner of Burroughs and Clayton Roads in Balwyn North, which was designed in an idiosyncratic Tudor Revival [or interwar Old English] style. Sanders and his wife resided there for several years, during which time they undertook additions for which a second building permit was issued in May 1948. That same year, Sanders prepared plans for a second brick residence for himself in*



*the same area, on Kalonga Road. He began the project by erecting a combined garage/store in 1949-50, which he reportedly occupied until the main house was completed in 1951. He and his wife remained living in Kalonga Road until 1962, when they moved to Leongatha to take up farming.....(Built Heritage 2013)*

## Description

The house at 22 Riverview Road is a substantial attic-storeyed cream brick house, asymmetrical in both plan form and elevational treatment, with a very steep gabled roof clad in glazed terracotta shingles. Built in two stages, the lower and upper levels reflect two very different styles – respectively, Moderne and Old English – that are very seldom combined in a single building. At the lower level, the Moderne influence is most strongly reflected in a large semi-circular flat-roofed bay, with wide and curving picture windows separated by piers of manganese Roman brick. The remainder of the frontage to Panoramic Road is triple-fronted, with large steel-framed corner windows to two of the projecting bays and an entry porch to the innermost one. This porch is partly enclosed by a projecting wing wall of manganese Roman brick with an archway that opens onto a concrete slab terrace that follows the curve of the adjacent semi-circular living room bay. It has a simple but very elegant mild steel balustrade that incorporates a narrow central rail of three narrow horizontal rods, scrolled brackets and the occasional cluster of volutes. A curved flight of steps, with matching balustrade, leads down from the front door to the driveway level. Clad with crazy stonework, these steps are integrated with a matching retaining wall/planter box that defines the driveway, leading up to a garage at the half-basement level. The garage retains its original hinged timber doors with small, glazed panels.



Figure 4 Detail of curved entry steps showing cladding to retaining walls and sub basements walls and mild steel balustrade. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 5 Gable end detail above protruding semi-circular room showing chimney set on 45 degree angle and fine brickwork detail. (Source: GML 2021)

At the first-floor level, the attic storey is articulated as a series of interlocking gables and dormers, creating an irregular and picturesque roof-line. The gable ends, variously infilled with painted weatherboard, half-timbering or face brickwork, have scalloped timber bargeboards and, in some cases, corbelling at the eaves line and narrow louvred vents. The largest gable, facing north, incorporates a central chimney (set into the wall at a 45° angle) with a corbelled base and a blind archway of manganese Roman brick that defines a feature panel of glazed red brick in a basket-weave bond. The chimney is flanked by two ornate metal lanterns and by a pair of doorways, with





glazed doors, that open onto the terrace formed by the flat roof of the curved living room wing below. This terrace is enclosed by a metal balustrade, identical to those at the lower level.

Occupying a corner site, the property has a low cream brick fence along both street boundaries, with manganese brick capping and curved bays of timber palings between tall piers with steep gabled tops clad in terracotta tiles. Each frontage also has a vehicle entrance gateway: the gateway on Panoramic Road provides access to the sub-floor garage, and the gateway on Riverview Road to a driveway that leads to a rear freestanding garage which was added in 1953 (BP 12798).

The garden contains a dense and diverse collection of mature large shrubs and small trees, including Italian Cypress, which create an overall garden character that reads as typical of interwar and early postwar suburban gardens.

### **Integrity**

22 Riverview Road, Balwyn North, is largely intact to its 1949 and 1952-53 built form with very few changes visible to original or early fabric. The house retains its original built form, cream brick walls, steel framed windows, projecting semi-circular flat-roofed bay and attic storey articulated as a series of interlocking gables and dormers, creating an irregular and picturesque roof-line clad in terracotta shingles. The house is distinguished by a particularly fine attention to design detail including contrasting manganese brick work; decorative mild steel balustrading; stone crazy paved cladding to retaining walls and front steps; central chimney set into the wall at a 45° angle with a corbelled base and a blind archway of manganese roman brick and a feature panel of glazed red brick in a basket-weave bond; two ornate metal lanterns; scalloped bargeboards; early timber garage door with glazed upper panels and original low brick fence with pillars.

Overall, the place has high integrity. The integrity of the house is enhanced by the character of the front garden created by a diverse collection of large shrubs and small trees, and the retention of the front fence designed to match the detailing of the house.

### **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.

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. While many of these couples turned to young progressive architects to design their homes in the Modernist style, houses drawing on the design influences from the more conservative interwar styles were still being built.

Often referred to as Tudor, the interwar Old English style had its roots in the English Arts and Craft Movement of the mid to late nineteenth century. The revival of this style, along with many other English and American revival styles became popular with the upper end of the housing market.



The brick nogging or half timbering in gables of upper storeys, and steeply pitched (and generally tiled) gable roofs was typical of Old English architecture. From the 1930s onward, there was less variation in cladding materials, with many houses clad solely in red and/or clinker brick, often enlivened with brick patterning and decorative brick forms (e.g., brown glazed manganese bricks, patterned tapestry bricks, narrow Roman or heeler bricks). Other hallmarks of the Old English style included picturesque asymmetry, pursued with multiple fronts and offset massing, prominent chimneys, and snug porches under the main roof sweep.

Old English styled houses evoked the 'Home country' in the British Empire, using the associations of the manor to convey wealth and social status. The movement gained much momentum in the 1930s as the 'bungalow' and 'Spanish Mission' styles began to fade in popularity, though simplified versions of typical Old English elements continued to present themselves in residences built in the postwar period.

The Moderne style was to architecture what Art Deco was to the decorative arts - a modern break from past styles, escapist rather than intellectual, inherently decorative rather than stridently functional. The style straddled the Depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, when simple lines held the promise of reduced cost and decoration was an achievable form of home improvement, an economical sentiment that carried through to the years of World War II.

Moderne architecture favoured geometric forms, especially sheer wall planes, curved corners and copings, interpenetration of volumes and surfaces, and a beguilingly brisk articulation of forms, often emphasising horizontal, vertical, or diagonal lines in a pleasing blend of fluidity and starkness. Key design elements include a layered geometric massed form, a strong horizontal emphasis, open upper terraces and the use of contemporary materials such as corner and steel framed windows.

There are only four examples of Sanders' work identified in the Balwyn/Balwyn North area. The first of these was his own house at 25 Burroughs Road (currently not in a HO), which in many ways can be considered the progenitor to 22 Riverview Road. Although a smaller building, it similarly uses cream brick with corbels corners, splayed sills and manganese Roman brick trim, and prominent irregular roof clad in terracotta shingles with a weatherboard clad dormer and one half-timbered gable end. The chimney is rotated at a 45° angle, as at 22 Riverview Road, and the front fence somewhat similarly expressed. Despite its quirky detailing (which includes a highly unusual bellcast roofline), the house is essentially in the Old English mode, with the only Moderne influence being the large rectangular windows (including a corner window) with multi-paned steel-framed sashes.

The Moderne influence, however, was more pronounced in *Rangoon*, a small cream brick dwelling that Sanders designed at 13 Porter Road in 1949. This flat-roofed single-storey house has an eye-catching triple-fronted facade where each successive bay is boldly rounded, with a large, curved window and a continuous projecting concrete sun-hood. The house at 22 Riverview, combining Old English and Moderne influences in a surprisingly cohesive fashion, ultimately represents an amalgam of these two earlier efforts.

Sander's only other known work in the area is the larger house that he designed for himself at 1-3 Kalonga Road, completed in 1951 (HO176). This building is another idiosyncratic composition, albeit primarily in the Moderne mode. Yet again of cream brick construction, it has a canted plan form with a central curved bay, flat concrete slab roofs and a prominent slate-clad chimney.



Figure 6 25 Burroughs Road, Balwyn North, designed and built by F J Sanders in 1946 as his own home. (Source: GML 2022)

Constructed using a variegated cream brick with corbeled corners, splayed sills and manganese Roman brick trim, 25 Burroughs Street, Balwyn North features typical Old English characteristics such as a prominent picturesque hip and gabled roof clad in terracotta shingles with a weatherboard clad dormer a half-timbered gable end and a chimney rotated at a 45° angle. Moderne influences can be seen in the curved glass of the corner windows to the projecting bay along Clayton Road.



Figure 7 13 Porter Road, Balwyn North designed and built by F J Sanders in 1949. (Source: GML 2022)

13 Porter Road is a flat-roofed single-storey house with an evocative triple-fronted facade where each successive bay is boldly rounded, with a large, curved window and a continuous projecting concrete sunhood. Elevated above the street and retaining its original front fence, this house is a highly intact and skilfully executed residential example of the Moderne style.



Figure 8 3 Kalonga Road, Balwyn North designed and built by F J Sanders between 1948 and 1955 as his own home. (Source: Hermes )

3 Kalonga Road, Balwyn North, is of local historical and architectural significance. Architecturally, a most unusual design which combines the streamlined Moderne style of the 1930-40 era with the skillion/butterfly roof form of the 1950s. The long construction time is presumably due to the immediate post-war embargo on house construction above a certain floor area. Historically, of interest as a builder's own home and possible connection with conservation of building materials after the Second World War.

There are a number of contemporaneous (or slightly earlier) large houses in Boroondara that are included in the Heritage Overlay and exhibit characteristics of either the Old English or Moderne styling. There are none that incorporate both styles in combination.



Postwar houses that are in the Heritage Overlay that exhibit influences from either the interwar Moderne or Old English style include:

*Moderne*



Figure 9 6 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North designed and built by CS Cameron (builder) in 1951 (HO170). (Source: Hermes)

6 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North, is of local historical and architectural significance. Designed and built by prolific Camberwell builder/investor, C.S. Cameron in 1951 as his own home. 6 Bulleen Road, Balwyn north is architecturally significant as a superior residential example in the Moderne manner. It utilises all of the Moderne stylistic trappings, including curves, layered massing, flat roofs, nautical imagery, patterned brickwork and steel-framed window joinery.



Figure 10 32 Hill Road, Balwyn North built by Toll Constructions in 1951 (assessed as significant in this study). (Source: GML 2021)

32 Hill Road, Balwyn North, is a three-storey brick dwelling built in 1951 by Toll Constructions. Picturesquely massed the house is constructed of cream brick walls with contrasting brown brick banding and sits below a hipped brown terracotta tiled roof. The house incorporates detailing that is reminiscent of the earlier interwar Moderne style which includes a layered geometric massed form, a strong horizontal emphasis, open upper terraces and the use of contemporary materials such as curved steel framed windows.





Figure 11 2 Belvedere Street, Kew, built for Norman Smorgan in 1942 (Significant in HO313). (Source: Hermes)

2 Belvedere Street, Kew (also known as 28 Holroyd Street, Kew), is a single storey, triple-fronted brick house in the interwar Streamline Moderne style. Situated on a prominent corner site, the house features cream face brick on a manganese brick plinth, tapestry brick string lines and curved steel-framed picture windows. Fluted Doric columns support a concrete roof slab above a recessed entrance porch. The house retains relatively high integrity, with minor cosmetic changes undertaken in the mid-1960s.

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### *Old English*

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Figure 12 'Vedere', 44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North, constructed in 1947 (assessed as significant in this study). (Source: Context 2017)

'Vedere', 44 Panoramic Road, Balwyn North is of local architectural and aesthetic significance. Though a relatively late example, 'Vedere' is a fine and highly intact example of a substantial Old English residence incorporating elements of the Moderne style. Overall, it incorporates typical details of the late Old English style including the use of red-blue clinker brick, steeply pitched gables, and decorative brickwork detailing, as well as Moderne-style steel-framed glazing and corner window. This combination of stylistic elements renders it a good example of how interwar styles details commonly lingered into the postwar period.

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Influences of the Moderne at 22 Riverview Road include its use of cream brick walls and the incorporation of a projecting semi-circular bay. These stylistic characteristics can also be seen at 6 Bulleen Road, Balwyn North, 32 Hill Street, Balwyn North, and 2 Belvedere Street, Kew. Otherwise the design rejects other Moderne influences and embraces the Old English style. This is particularly evident in its steeply pitched irregular roof line. 44 Panoramic Road (assessed as significant in this study) has a comparably irregular roof-line formed by very steep tile-clad gabled roofs, face brick walls that introduce contrasting texture (e.g. Roman bricks or basket-weave brickwork) and metal balustrades. This house, however, is more faithful in its application of the Old English style and does not exhibit the hybrid stylism and quirky detailing evident at 22 Riverview Road.



Ultimately, what sets this house apart is its idiosyncratic design that freely combines two of the most popular housing styles of the late 1930s: Old English and Moderne. While these two idioms are, to some extent, at opposite ends of the spectrum, they have been confidently merged here in a way that is striking yet cohesive, and individualistic without being cumbersome or awkward.

### **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).*

22 Riverview Road, Balwyn North is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of the settlement boom that was to characterise the area in the postwar period. The settlement boom was spurred on by the extension of the electric tram route along Doncaster Road to Balwyn North, which opened in 1938, but which was delayed by the onset of WWII and associated restrictions on private building activity. Although the land, purchased in 1938, was part of the 1929 Camberwell City Heights subdivision, the success of this and other 1920s and 1930s subdivisions in the area were delayed because of the sheer distance from useful public transport links.

Although idiosyncratic, and although its designer, Sanders, was not an architect, the house represents the skilful execution of a highly original and complex design. As such, the house exemplifies the concentration of high quality individually designed houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn 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).*

Aesthetically, 22 Riverview Road, Balwyn North is significant as a striking example of a postwar house that incorporates an eclectic fusion of the earlier interwar Old English and Moderne styles. While these two idioms are, to some extent, at opposite ends of the spectrum, they have been confidently merged in a way that is striking yet cohesive, and individualistic without being cumbersome or awkward. The large house – spread over three levels – expresses a lively asymmetry in both plan and elevation, with an irregular and picturesque roof-line of intersecting gables, a half-round projecting bay at ground level, curved terraces and front staircase. It displays a highly unusual juxtaposition of materials and finishes: cream brickwork enlivened with manganese and clinker



brickwork as Roman bricks or basket-weave bond, weatherboarding and half-timbering to gable ends, terracotta shingles to the roof and crazy stone cladding to the retaining walls and integrated garage. The front fence has been designed to match detailing of the house. Much of the exterior detailing, such as the rotated chimney with blind archway and corbelled base, the bulbous coach-lamps and the elegant but very minimalist steel railings, is also highly atypical. Prominently sited on an elevated corner allotment, this extremely unusual house and matching front fence remains a striking element in the streetscape.

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

*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?**

22 Riverview Road, Balwyn North, designed and built by designer and builder F J Sanders between 1949 and 1953, is significant.

Elements that contribute to significance include:

- asymmetrical built form with attic storey articulated as a series of interlocking gables and dormers, creating an irregular and picturesque roof-line clad in glazed terracotta shingles
- large semi-circular flat-roofed bay, with wide and curving picture windows separated by piers of manganese Roman brick
- terrace formed by the flat roof of the curved living room wing below
- two ornate metal lanterns attached to terrace wall
- large steel-framed corner windows to ground floor
- manganese Roman brickwork detailing
- mild steel balustrades
- gable ends and infill of painted weatherboard, half-timbering or face brickwork
- scalloped timber bargeboards
- corbelling at the eaves line and narrow louvred vents.
- central chimney
- curved flight of entry steps, with matching balustrade, linking the front door and driveway
- crazy stonework cladding to steps and retaining wall/planter box
- basement garage's original hinged timber doors with small, glazed panels
- low cream brick fence along both street boundaries, manganese brick capping, curved bays of timber palings, tall piers with steep gabled tops clad in terracotta tiles
- freestanding garage which was added in 1953.

Significance is enhanced by the mature garden setting that includes a diverse collection of large shrubs and small trees.

### **How is it significant?**

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

### **Why is it significant?**

22 Riverview Road, Balwyn North is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of the settlement boom that was to characterise the area in the postwar period. The settlement boom was spurred on by the extension of the electric tram route along Doncaster Road to Balwyn North, which opened in 1938, but which was delayed by the onset of WWII and associated restrictions on private building activity. Although the land, purchased in 1938, was part of the 1929 Camberwell City Heights





subdivision, the success of this and other 1920s and 1930s subdivisions in the area were delayed because of the sheer distance from useful public transport links. (Criterion A)

Although idiosyncratic, and although its designer, Sanders, was not an architect, the house represents the skilful execution of a highly original and complex design. As such, the house exemplifies the concentration of high quality individually designed houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn during the 1950s and 1960s. (Criterion A)

Aesthetically, 22 Riverview Road, Balwyn North is significant as a striking example of a postwar house that incorporates an eclectic fusion of the earlier interwar Old English and Moderne styles. While these two idioms are, to some extent, at opposite ends of the spectrum, they have been confidently merged in a way that is striking yet cohesive, and individualistic without being cumbersome or awkward. The large house – spread over three levels – expresses a lively asymmetry in both plan and elevation, with an irregular and picturesque roof-line of intersecting gables, a half-round projecting bay at ground level, curved terraces and front staircase. It displays a highly unusual juxtaposition of materials and finishes: cream brickwork enlivened with manganese and clinker brickwork as Roman bricks or basket-weave bond, weatherboarding and half-timbering to gable ends, terracotta shingles to the roof and crazy stone cladding to the retaining walls and integrated garage. The front fence has been designed to match detailing of the house. Much of the exterior detailing, such as the rotated chimney with blind archway and corbelled base, the bulbous coach-lamps and the elegant but very minimalist steel railings, is also highly atypical. Prominently sited on an elevated corner allotment, this extremely unusual house and matching front fence remains a striking element in the streetscape. (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:

<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>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<b>Outbuildings and fences exemptions</b>	
<i>Are there outbuildings or fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	Yes Fencing along both street frontages;

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	basement garage; free standing garage; crazy paved retaining walls
<hr/>	
<b>Victorian Heritage Register</b>	
<i>Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?</i>	No
<hr/>	
<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
<hr/>	
<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
<hr/>	
<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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Sands & McDougall (S&Mc), Melbourne and Suburban Directories, as cited.

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR), as cited.

## Mitchell House (former)

Prepared by: GML Heritage

**Address:** 2 Salford Avenue BALWYN

<b>Name:</b> Mitchell House (former)	<b>Survey Date:</b> December 2021
<b>Place Type:</b> Residential	<b>Architect:</b> Taddeusz (Tad) Karasinski
<b>Grading:</b> Individually Significant	<b>Builder:</b> Angelo Sist
<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1963-64



Figure 1 Detail of the principal facade. (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 Second World War*

*9.3.2 Designing fine buildings*

Balwyn is a residential suburb situated 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.

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 the new suburb of 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 immigrants into the area has seen the extensive replacement of interwar and 1940s homes with new residential development. The suburb of Balwyn today is favoured by many new home-owners for access to Balwyn High School—a co-educational government secondary school with nearly 2000 students.

The period from the mid to late 1960s, when 2 Salford Avenue was built, is associated with what might be termed the latter phase of postwar homebuilding in Balwyn. The home building that occurred in Balwyn was representative of a broader boom in suburban residential development that had resumed after the lull caused by the economic downturn of the early 1960s. In Balwyn and (especially) Balwyn North, new and established subdivisions had already significantly filled out by that time, and, by the mid-1960s, choice vacant allotments were starting to become more difficult to obtain. By the early 1970s, there were very few left.

## **History**

The land at 2 Salford Avenue, 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.

Edgar Charles Bell, Shipping Clerk purchased one acre of Elgars Special Survey facing Balwyn Road in 1881. Bell built a large house set back off Balwyn Road named Vailma. Bell died in 1919 with the property being purchased by Ada Mylius in 1923.



Figure 2 Part of MMBW detail plan No1998 dated 1927 showing original one acre allotment purchased by Edgar Bell in 1881 (outlined in red). Note that by this time Salford Avenue existed and was extended in 1962. (Source: SLV with GML overlay)

Bell's one acre allotment was subdivided into 2 lots in 1945 with lot 1 facing Balwyn Road being sold in 1945 and lot 2 facing Salford Avenue in 1950 to William Mackay (CT V7616 F047). Mackay sold his land to William and Doris Wachsmann in 1962 who in turn subdivided the land into four lots. George and Ellen Mitchell purchased lot 2 of this subdivision (subject site) in 1963.

The Mitchells commissioned Polish-born *émigré* architect Tadeusz (Tad) Karasinski to design their new house. In an interview with architectural historian Simon Reeves, Mrs Ellen Mitchell recalled that she and her husband both had an interest in modern architecture and design. Growing up in Berlin before migrating in 1955, she was keenly aware of postwar reconstruction in that city, and she wanted their new house in Balwyn to reflect 'German influences' – both the progressive open-planned flat-roofed houses of the Bauhaus as well as the more traditional vernacular architecture. (Mitchell pers. comm 2012.) As shown in the working drawings, dated May 1963, the new house satisfied both criteria: a modern flat roofed house on a C-shaped courtyard plan, with a street frontage incorporating a room with a steeply-gabled A-framed roof to evoke traditional German rural houses. While designated on the original plans as a study, the space was intended as a music room for George Mitchell, an amateur violinist and an admirer of classical music. The City of Camberwell issued a building permit on 11 September 1963 and the house was completed in August 1964. (BP 33716)

Just before completion, the house was published in the *Herald* property column, which drew attention to its unusual integration of features inside and out: tinted glazing, hand-carved timber screens, opaque Japanese sliding doors, and rough marble tiling to the refrigerator alcove. (*Herald*, 3 July 1964:20). A more extensive write-up followed in the *Australian Home Beautiful* in 1967, with a cover photograph showing the inside of the A-framed music room. The central courtyard was landscaped by

landscape designer Ellis Stones and included an informal pond with flagstone surround, a creeper-clad trellis, pergola and 'strategically placed floodlights'. (*Australian Home Beautiful*, September 1967:18-21)

The Mitchells undertook two phases of later addition to accommodate their growing family. In 1967, a small rear wing was added to provide a rumpus room and third bedroom, and this was further extended in 1974 with a fourth bedroom, enlarged rumpus room and cellar. These extensions were designed by a drafting service. An inground pool and detached cabana room were also added at this time. The Mitchells owned the property until 2008 when they sold it. It was resold in 2021 (CT V8967 F413).

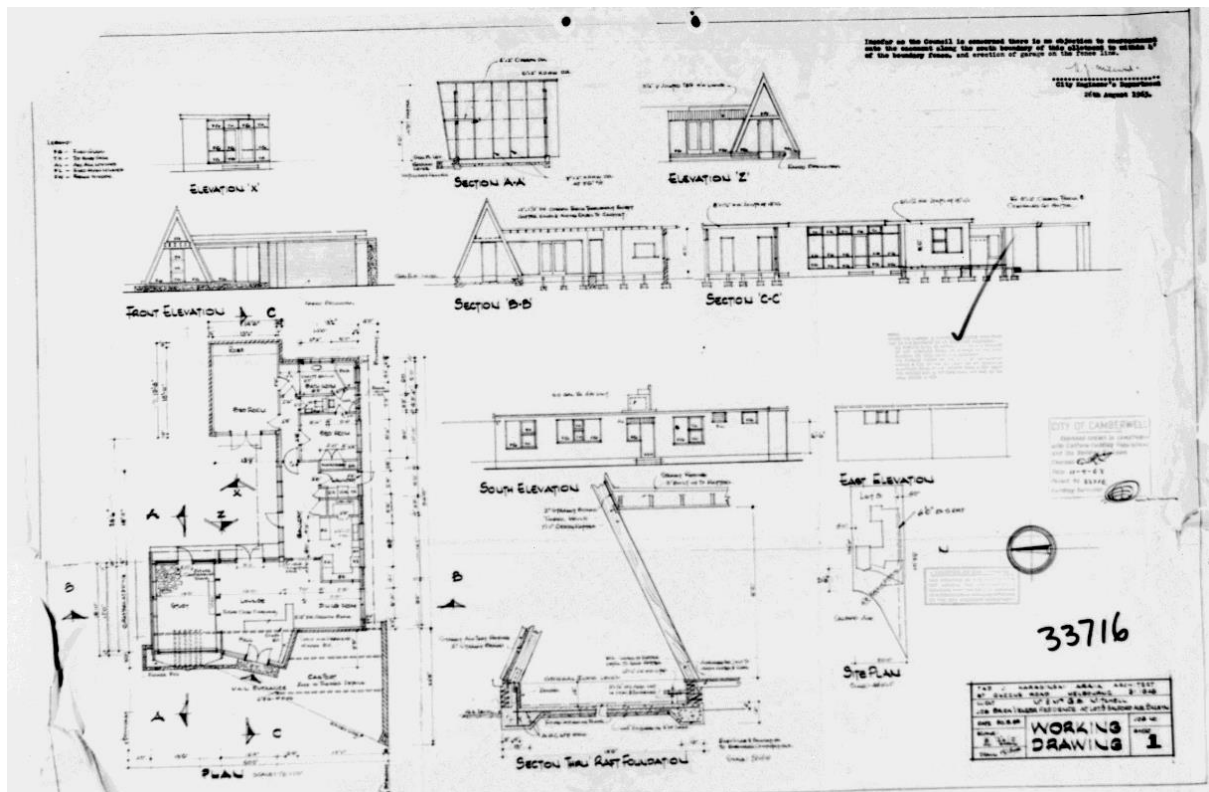


Figure 3 Original working drawing for house at 2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn designed by Taddeusz (Tad) Karasinski. (Source: BP33716)

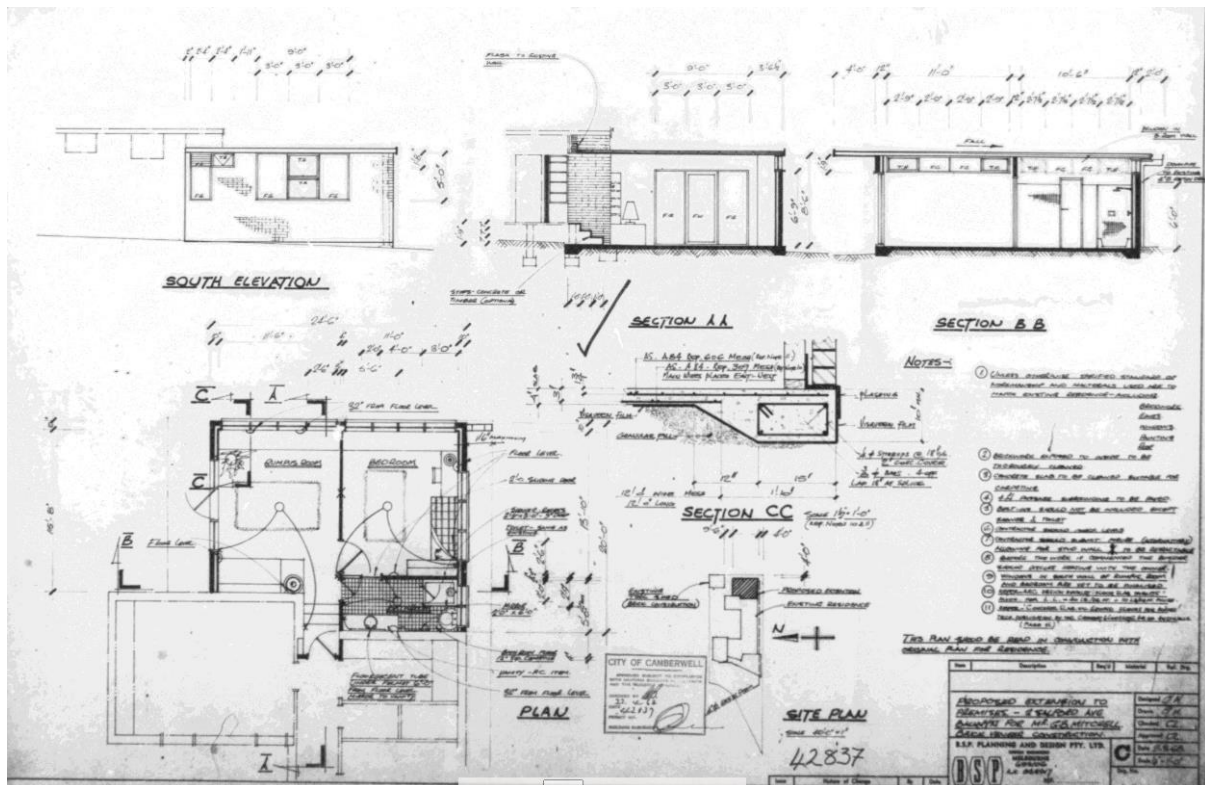


Figure 4 Working drawing of extension undertaken in 1967 adding a bedroom and rumpus room to the rear of the house. (Source: BP 42837)

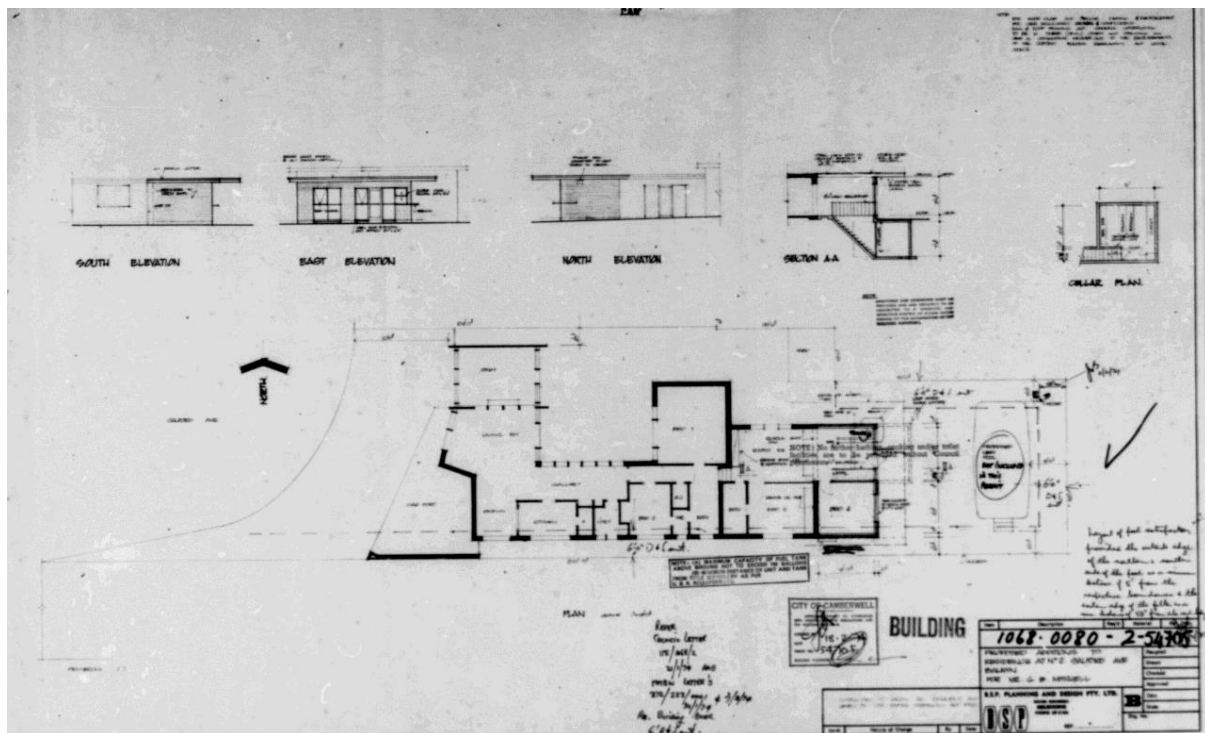


Figure 5 Working drawing showing addition of a bedroom, cellar and extension to rumpus room in 1974 at the rear of the house. (Source: BP 54705)





## **Tadeusz (Tad) Karasinski**

Tadeusz 'Tad' Josef Karasinski was born in Zakopane, in southern Poland, in 1903. He moved north-east, to the Polish city of Lwów (now L'viv, in Ukraine), where he completed a four-year degree in architecture and engineering at the University of Lwów. After graduating in 1931, Karasinski was employed as an architect to the City of Lwów for four years, during which time he was involved in the design and construction of sports fields, stadiums and swimming pools across the city. In 1934, he became the District Architect to the city of Luck (now Lukst, also in Ukraine), and was promoted to Director of the Technical Board for the City of Luck (Built Heritage Pty Ltd).

Following the Second World War, Karasinski moved to Germany and opened his own practice in Stuttgart. In 1948 he migrated to Australia arriving in Melbourne in 1949. After spending two years working as a carpenter for the State Electricity Commission, he obtained a position with AV Jennings Construction Company, remaining there for two and a half years. In 1954 he undertook a short stint with prominent architects Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb; however, by 1957 he moved back to AV Jennings, designing houses for the Trentwood Estate in Norh Balwyn. From the late 1950s until his death in 1968 he undertook many private commissions including houses, blocks of flats and residential additions. (Built Heritage Pty Ltd)

## **Description**

The house at 2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn is a single-storey brick house designed on a courtyard plan, primarily flat roofed except for an integrated room at the far left (north) end of the street frontage, which has a steep A-framed roof. Originally C-shaped in plan, the house was extended at the rear by the original owners (in two phases of addition in 1967 and 1974) and, as a result, now has a F-shaped footprint. The house occupies an irregular shaped allotment that has parallel side boundaries and an acutely angled street boundary. This geometry is echoed in the facade, which incorporates a central angled bay containing the front door, and a flat-roofed double carport that is wedge-shaped in plan. Most of this facade is stark and windowless, realised in dark brown brickwork with only one narrow but full-height window alongside the front door. The adjacent A-framed section, however, is fully glazed, with broad raked eaves and a transom enlivened with a row of projecting (but entirely decorative) timber beams that align with the fascia of the flat roof. Internally the walls to the courtyard are all fully glazed with window walls that are regularly divided with timber mullions.

The double carport is approached by a curving crazy-paved driveway. The front garden, which extends to an acute angle in the south-west corner of the block, is otherwise densely landscaped with large spreading shrubs and small trees. It is not known whether evidence of the original 1960s landscaping to the central courtyard by landscape designer Ellis Stones remains.

## **Integrity**

2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn is highly intact with very few changes visible to original or early fabric. The house retains its original built form, built around an internal courtyard, with a flat roof except for an integrated room at the far left (north) end of the street frontage, which has a steep A-framed roof. The house also retains its walls of brown brick, original pattern of fenestrations and door openings with timber joinery and open carport that is angled to follow the line of the street.

The rear additions to the house made in 1967 and 1974 have been sympathetically designed and are not visible from the street. They do not detract from the overall integrity of the house. While it is

unclear if any of the Ellis Stone landscaping survives, the use of crazy paving (both externally and internally) is consistent with landscape trends at the time and enhances the setting of the place.

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 the 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 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.

Landscaping adopted a distinct aesthetic relationship to architecture in this period with house design increasingly being informed by the topographic setting. Many modern houses were designed as integral components of the landscape; for example, on platforms terraced in relationship to a sloping site. This created a sense of living within the landscape rather than being removed from it (Goad 2002:253).

Departing from the traditional concept of the house as an isolated object bound by a polished front garden and more utilitarian backyard, the postwar period started to see many suburban gardens take on a less cultivated appearance. Changes to established landscaping techniques included the loss of the boundary fencing and greater tendency to leave plantings in their natural shape. Yards became zoned for outdoor living, largely focusing on comfort and leisure (Goad 2002:253).

Despite the acclaim that Tad Karasinski achieved for his architectural career in Europe in the 1930s and '40s, little is known of his later private practice in Melbourne. Variouslly employed by the Department of Works, A V Jennings and by architectural firm Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, he seems to have undertaken little or no private work until 1960. In 1958 he designed a house for himself at 13 Banksia Street, Beaumaris (demolished 2015), expressed in a pure European modernist mode: an elevated flat-roofed box with full-height windows and a projecting stone-clad feature wall. He designed some early houses on the Trentwood Estate at Balwyn North (1958-59), while employed as design architect for A V Jennings. The best example, at 17 Trentwood Avenue (1958-59), assessed as significant in this study, has much in common with Karasinski's own house in

Beaumaris. Apart from the Mitchell House, only one other Karasinski commission has been identified in Balwyn/Balwyn North – a large two-storey brick dwelling at 6 Belle Vue Road, Balwyn North (1961), which was a residence for Angelo Sist, the builder who subsequently erected the Mitchell House. The dwelling at 6 Belle Vue Road, Balwyn North is strikingly different in conception, having a rectilinear expression, large multipaned window bays and a projecting front wing (with balcony) that forms a *porte-cochere* at the lower level.

The use of the A-framed form in the Mitchell House, which was a special request from Mrs Ellen Mitchell to pay homage to her German background, is highly unusual in a suburban context. The motif first appeared in Victoria in the later 1950s, when it was used for several churches including the chapel at Geelong Grammar's Timbertop campus (Buchan, Laird & Buchan, 1959). By the early 1960s, A-frames had been adapted for residential architecture, albeit almost exclusively in the arena of holiday houses. Over the next decade, A-framed holiday houses (variously designed by architects, builders, drafting companies, project housing firms or owners themselves) had proliferated across many parts of regional Victoria, notably the Mornington Peninsula and other seaside resorts along the south-western and south-eastern coastline. So strongly associated with seasonal accommodation, A-framed houses were much rarer within the metropolitan area. While examples could sometimes be found on the outer fringe (e.g. Croydon, Eltham and Warrandyte), they were virtually unknown in the more traditional inner suburbs. No other examples have been identified in Balwyn/Balwyn North, nor in the broader City of Boroondara. Amongst the extremely few examples recorded elsewhere in the metropolitan area are an artist's house and studio at 20 Rose Avenue, Glen Waverley (Chancellor & Patrick, 1959, demolished 2014) and prototypical A-framed project house at 922 Nepean Highway, Moorabbin (Peter Hooks, 1965) also demolished.

In spite of the dominance of houses built in the years following World War II, Heritage Overlay coverage of postwar houses in Balwyn and North Balwyn is limited. 2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn can be compared broadly to a number of contemporaneous houses in the Balwyn and Balwyn North area. These include:



Figure 6 300 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 7 Gillson House 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn designed by Robin Boyd in 1952 (HO177) (Source: GML 2022)



Figure 8 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)

'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 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.



There are also several postwar houses on the Heritage Overlay in the broader Boroondara context that are comparable to 2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn. Examples include:



Figure 9 '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 10 '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.

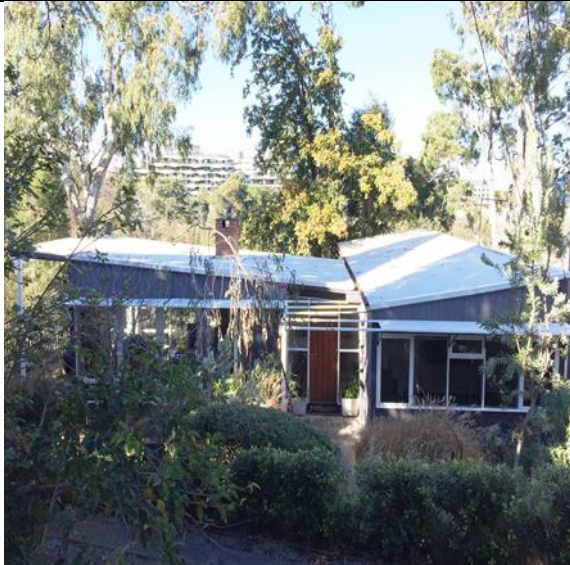


Figure 11 6 Reeves Court, Kew designed by Ernest Milston in 1955 (HO822) (Source: Trethowan 2017)

'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 12 Guss residence, 18 Yarra Street, Kew designed by McGlashan & Everist in 1961 (Significant within HO530) (Source: Hermes)

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 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.





Figure 13 Dickie House, 6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn c.1961-64 HO784 City of Boroondara (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 14 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)

'Cukierman Residence' 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

Other than the A-framed music room, the house at 2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn exhibits key elements of the postwar Modernist housing typology. It compares to the earlier (1947) 'Robin Boyd House I' (VHR H0879; HO116) which is widely recognised as the prototype for postwar modern homes, for its 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 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 (1989) describe 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 Robin 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).

2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn demonstrates detailing typically found in other architect designed postwar Modernist houses; a simplicity of structure and a sparseness of detail, rectilinear planning, low box-like form with (in large part) a horizontal emphasis, a flat roof, simple unadorned planar wall surfaces, large walls of glazing that connect the interior with the exterior, integrated carport, recessed entry and a landscape design for the courtyard and driveway that was integral to the design of the house (although the Ellis Stones courtyard may or may not still remain). In this way it is directly 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 in HO530) and Hayden & Associates (Cukierman Residence, 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn East - HO857).

2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn stands out as an unusual and provocative modernist house which, at the request of its German born owner, successfully integrates the clean lines of Modernist design derived from the Bauhaus (evidenced by the flat-roof and courtyard) and the traditional vernacular housing of regional and alpine areas of Germany (shown by the A-framed roof).

### **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).*

2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn, is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of Boroondara as a locus for leading architect-designed public and private buildings from the 1850s into the postwar period. Built in 1963-64 to a design by Polish-born émigré architect Taddeusz Karasinski, the house displays a highly innovative and provocative design which seamlessly integrates an A-framed music room into the principal façade of what is otherwise a finely executed Modernist house. The house exemplifies the high concentration of architect designed modernist houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn 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).*

2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn is of aesthetic significance as one of the more remarkable and striking 1960s houses in Boroondara. Commissioned by a client of German origin, it was designed (at the client's request) to reflect 'German influences' – both the prevailing Modernist style derived from the Bauhaus (shown by the flat-roof, broad expanse of brickwork, extensive glazing and courtyard plan) and traditional vernacular housing of regional and alpine areas (shown by the A-framed roof). The unusual brief resulted in a confidently realised design by architect Tad Karasinski, who had studied and worked as an architect in Germany in the 1940s. With its unusual facade skilfully integrating a low flat roof with angled carport and the prominent A-frame at one end, the house is an eye-catching element in the streetscape.

*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 Mitchell House at 2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn, designed by Polish *emigre* architect Taddeusz "Tad" Karasinski in 1963-64, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- original built form including original C-shaped footprint
- internal courtyard
- flat roof with integrated A-framed roof
- walls of brown brick
- original pattern of fenestrations, door openings and timber window joinery
- open carport that is angled to follow the line of the street.

While it is unclear, if any of the Ellis Stone landscaping to the central courtyard survives, the use of crazy paving (both externally and internally) is consistent with landscape trends at the time and enhances the setting of the place.

The rear additions to the house made in 1967 and 1974 are not significant.

### **How is it significant?**

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

### **Why is it significant?**

2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn, is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of Boroondara as a locus for leading architect-designed public and private buildings from the 1850s into the postwar period. Built in 1963-64 to a design by Polish-born émigré architect Taddeusz Karasinski, the house displays a highly innovative and provocative design which seamlessly integrates an A-framed music room into the principal façade of what is otherwise a finely executed Modernist house. The house exemplifies the high concentration of architect designed modernist houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn during the 1950s and 1960s. (Criterion A)

2 Salford Avenue, Balwyn is of aesthetic significance as one of the more remarkable and striking 1960s houses in Boroondara. Commissioned by a client of German origin, it was designed (at the client's request) to reflect 'German influences' – both the prevailing Modernist style derived from the Bauhaus (shown by the flat-roof, broad expanse of brickwork, extensive glazing and courtyard plan) and traditional vernacular housing of regional and alpine areas (shown by the A-framed roof). The unusual brief resulted in a confidently realised design by architect Tad Karasinski, who had studied and worked as an architect in Germany in the 1940s. With its unusual facade skilfully integrating a low flat roof with angled carport and the prominent A-frame at one end, the house is an eye-catching element in the streetscape. (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:

<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>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<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 2012.



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Victorian Heritage Register (VHR)



## Spitzer House (former)

Prepared by: GML Heritage

**Address:** 9 Tormey Street BALWYN NORTH

<b>Name:</b> Spitzer House (former)	<b>Survey Date:</b> December 2021
<b>Place Type:</b> Residential Building	<b>Architect:</b> Peter McIntyre
<b>Grading:</b> Individually Significant	<b>Builder:</b> Horner & Dodson
<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1958–59



Figure 1 9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 2 9 Tormey Street, 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 Second World War*

### *9.3.2 Designing fine buildings*

Balwyn North is a residential suburb about 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south is Balwyn, which is separated from Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North (called North Balwyn at that time). Occupied with orchards and small farms, this was the one of the last remaining expanses of undeveloped land relatively close to the city. Balwyn North became the suburb of choice for many young married couples building new homes in the 1940s and 1950s, including some who had served in the Second World War. The suburb developed as quintessentially middle class, with a high proportion of brick homes and a notable absence of industrial activity. The ridge along Doncaster Road was an advantage for 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 tramway from East Kew to Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North 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, 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, in Balwyn North, 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 residents into the area has seen the extensive replacement of interwar and 1940s homes with new residential development. The suburb of North Balwyn today is



favoured by many new home-owners for access to Balwyn High School—a co-educational government secondary school with nearly 2000 students. The period from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s, when the Spitzer House was built, represented something of a heyday of postwar homebuilding in Balwyn North. This phase followed on from the more tentative settlement of the area in the late 1940s and early 1950s, subsequently burgeoning at such an intense rate that, by the mid-1960s, vacant allotments in Balwyn North were hard to come by.

## History

The land at 9 Tormey Street, 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.

John Towt (or Tout) purchased Sections 6B, 7B and 18A in the Parish of Boroondara from A.W. Dyce in 1857. Towt's block was bounded by Doncaster Road to the north, Greythorn Road to the east and Belmore Road (originally Ewart's Road) to the south. Following the death of Towt in 1891, and later the deaths of his son-in-law Charles (in 1898) and son John (in 1900), the land was subdivided and sold. A newspaper report of the sale of Towt's estate reveals that all 279 acres of the estate were sold at auction in 20 and 30 acre blocks in December 1902. Ferdinand Finger purchased 114 acres, one rood and 17 perches of Towt's original land, including Lot 2, on 2 February 1920. The Finger family were early settlers in the district and owned extensive fruit orchards and a homestead, 'Tannenwald', in Doncaster. Finger had also purchased part of Towt's estate when it was originally auctioned in 1902. Finger's land appears to have been subdivided in several instalments, commencing in 1919.

The subject site became Lot 16 of a subdivision that created the eastern end of Tormey Street in 1948. Lot 18 was purchased by Stanley Comben in 1950. Comben retained the vacant lot until he sold it to Romanian-born company director Victor Spitzer (b.1924) and his wife Fleur in October 1958. Spitzer had migrated to Australia with his family, arriving in Melbourne, in 1939 (Built Heritage 2014).

At the time, Fleur Spitzer worked in the administration office of the School of Architecture at The University of Melbourne and, through this connection, engaged architect Peter McIntyre (then employed there as a lecturer) to design their new house in Balwyn North (Built Heritage 2014).

McIntyre's working drawings for the Spitzer House, dated June 1958, depicted a strikingly unusual house expressed as an elevated square-planned box, clad externally in pre-cast concrete panels with a low pyramidal roof. On 18 February 1959 the City of Camberwell issued a building permit for what was described as a 'seven roomed concrete and brick veneer' house, for a cost of £8,000. Construction, carried out by Horner & Dodson of East Oakleigh, commenced in March and was completed at the end of October (Built Heritage 2014).

The Spitzers lived in the house for almost 30 years, during which they made several alterations to the undercroft area. In 1968 the lower level of the central core was extended to create a larger laundry. Three years later, following the death of Spitzer's mother in 1970, the covered area to the west of the central core was partially infilled to create a self-contained flat for her husband, Geza Spitzer. When



he decided not to move in, the flat (which had its own street entrance) was adapted as a study. In 1977 architect David Pincus was engaged to undertake a number of alterations that included the conversion of the ground floor study into another bedroom and the provision of a separate study area at the front, extending outwards to a point in line with the front wall of the main house above (Built Heritage 2014).

The Spitzers sold the house in 1986. The property was sold again in 2002 and 2015.

### **Robert Peter McIntyre AO (b.1927)**

The son of an architect, Robert Peter McIntyre grew up in Kew and, after graduating from The University of Melbourne in 1950, opened his own architectural office. He achieved early fame as co-designer (with Kevin Borland, Phyllis and John Murphy, and engineer Bill Irwin) of the prize-winning entry in the competition for Melbourne's new Olympic Swimming Pool (1952–56). Concurrently, interest in his work burgeoned as he completed a string of suburban houses (some co-designed with his architect wife, Dione) in an exuberant Modernist style that meshed unusual plan forms with expressive façades, bold colours and geometric decorative effects. By the end of the decade McIntyre's style had matured to a more serene and formalised strain of Modernism. His career continued to thrive in the 1970s and 1980s, when he embraced larger commercial and town planning projects, winning accolades for the Knox City Shopping Centre (1977) and Dinner Plain Alpine Village (1982–87). In 1982 McIntyre was awarded the honour of Officer of the Order of Australia for service to architecture and to urban planning. He is still practising after more than 70 years (McIntyre Partnership 2022).

### **Description**

The house at 9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North, is a two-storey Modernist house designed on a square plan. As originally conceived in 1958, it was expressed as a rectilinear volume raised up on a grid of steel pipe columns, and a small central core enclosing a stairwell and laundry area. This lower area, which served as an open undercroft/carport, was partly infilled in the early 1970s, leaving only the east (left) portion open. This has not overtly impacted on an understanding of the original design intent of the house as an elevated box hovering above the site.

The elevated house has a low pyramidal roof and external walls in textured pre-cast concrete panels, which are supported on an expressed steel frame of pipe columns and I beams. This creates a modular rhythm to the elevations and allows for regular fenestration. On the street façade, full-height panels alternate with shorter panels that incorporate awning sash windows above, which extend to the eaves line. Windows to the side and rear elevations are similarly arranged in repetitive and symmetrical bays. At the edges of the façade the concrete panels are slightly recessed from the corner, creating a distinctive stepped effect.

At the lower level, the eastern half of the former undercroft is used as a carport, and one of the original brick spur walls (now painted pale grey) is still apparent. The central circulation and service core, as well as the infill to the west side, are both largely concealed from the street by an elevated garden bed and dense planting.

The rear north elevation of the house has large window walls of glass that are divided by regularly spaced timber mullions. An upper timber deck at the elevation's western end is supported off steel columns that run past the deck's floor to balustrade height.





The house is set behind a garden planted with an informal band of specimen eucalypts, a native frangipani tree, introduced and Australian native shrubs which partially screen the undercroft, and an understorey of grasses. The planting scheme creates filtered views of the principal elevation of the house from the street. A mature tea-tree of unknown age stands at one side of the garden. There is no front fence, which was typical of garden settings to Modernist houses. A row of boulders defines each side of the driveway, transitioning to a bluestone retaining wall forming an apron along the front of the house. Most of the plantings appear to be relatively recent. However, the tea-tree, boulders and bluestone retaining wall closer to the house may be part of an early garden scheme.

### **Integrity**

9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North, is largely intact, although some changes are visible to the original or early fabric. The original built form of the house remains legible as a rectilinear volume raised above the ground with a central ground level core enclosing a stairwell. The house retains its textured pre-cast concrete walls, low pyramidal roof and modular rhythm of openings along its south, east and west façades and large window walls of glass to the north.

Alterations include the enclosure of the western end of the undercroft area in the 1970s to create further accommodation. The alterations are fairly unobtrusive and do not overtly impact on an understanding of the original design intent of the house. The expressed structural system of steel beams supported off steel pipe columns remains visible from the street giving the house the appearance of hovering above the site. The protrusion of an evaporative air conditioning unit from the low pyramidal roof is intrusive, but this unit could be easily removed.

The front garden setting, while mostly relatively recent plantings, is sympathetic to the Modernist design ethos of using natural organic forms in landscape, in contrast to the stark Modernist architecture.

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 early twentieth century, the vast majority of the housing stock in North Balwyn was built in 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 many used 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 the postwar styles offered at the time, many of which were simply scaled-down versions of 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.

Peter McIntyre grew up in Kew and has carried out many commissions in what is now the City of Boroondara. These include a celebrated house he built for himself on a site overlooking the Yarra River at 2 Hodgson Street, Kew (the McIntyre House, HO72), as well as two other houses built on the same land; Sumer House and Cliff House (HO937). During the early 1950s he designed two other houses in North Balwyn that were both written up in the local architectural and popular housing press: Stargazer House (1952) at 2 Taurus Street (HO188) and the Hudson House at 14 Orion Street (now demolished) (VHR).

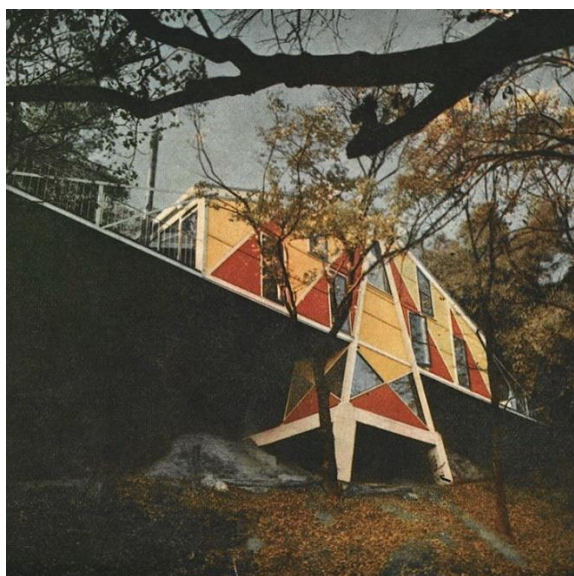


Figure 3 River House, 2 Hodgson Street, Kew, designed by Peter McIntyre in 1952 (HO72). (Source: Instagram @peter.mcintyre)



Figure 4 Stargazer House, 2 Taurus Street, Balwyn North, designed by Peter McIntyre in 1952. (HO188) (Source: GML 2021)

Commissioned in 1959, the Spitzer House in Tormey Street represented a marked departure from the more whimsical style that characterised McIntyre's earliest houses. With its centralised plan and use of pre-cast concrete panels, the project reflected its architect's developing interest in modular construction systems which, up until this time, were more commonly used in commercial architecture and the flexibility of open planning which, a few years before, he had explored in a series of standardised dwellings based on grid plans and prefabricated bow-trussed roofs, such as Grant House at 14 Pasadena Avenue, Beaumaris, built in 1956 (VHR H2392). It marked the beginning of a more formalised approach that would characterise McIntyre's work in the 1960s (Built Heritage 2014).

The use of pre-cast concrete panels in the Spitzer House was highly unusual at the time. Although this type of modular construction had been used in a number of commercial, industrial and institutional projects in the 1950s, its application to residential projects at this time had been limited to public housing (namely the structural pre-cast concrete units developed by the Housing Commission of Victoria), low-rise apartment blocks and a few experimental single dwellings (eg the Monocrete system of the early 1950s). From the early 1960s, pre-cast concrete cladding became increasingly popular in multi-storey office and apartment blocks and, by the end of that decade, in many other types of buildings as well. However, the Spitzer House remains the only known example in the Balwyn/ Balwyn North area of a 1950s house with pre-cast concrete cladding. Its nearest counterpart in the City of Boroondara seems to be a later and wholly non-residential example: the Camberwell

Civic Centre (, 8 Inglesby Street, Camberwell, designed by Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell (1967–69, additions 1978) (HO506) (Built Heritage 2014).

The house at 9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North, can be compared more broadly to a number of contemporaneous houses in Balwyn and Balwyn North that exhibit a similar use of volumetric massing, flat roofs and full-height glazing. Despite the dominance of houses built in the years following the Second World War, Heritage Overlay coverage of postwar houses in Balwyn North is limited. The following are some comparable examples.



Figure 5. 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 6. 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 7. 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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Postwar houses on the Heritage Overlay in the broader Boroondara context that are comparable to 9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North, include the following:



Figure 8. 'Robin Boyd House I', 664-666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell designed by Robyn 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

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



Figure 9 '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.

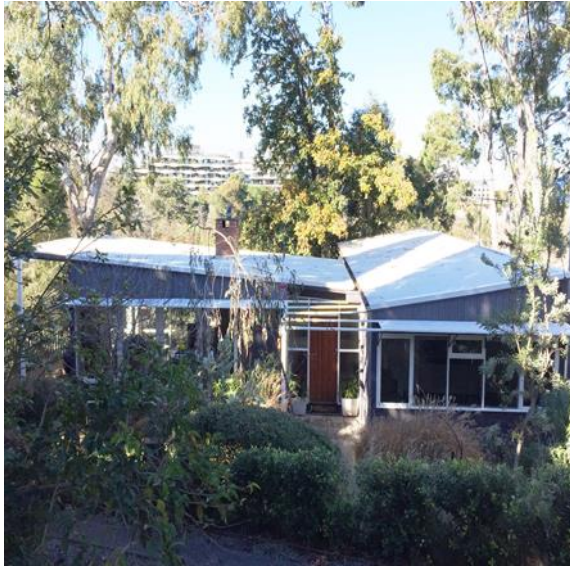


Figure 10. 6 Reeves Court, Kew, designed by Ernest Milston in 1955 (HO822). (Source: Trethowan 2017)

'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 11. The Guss House, 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.

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Figure 12 Dickie House, 6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn, c.1961–64 (HO784). (Source: Context 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 13 Cukierman Residence, 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn East, designed by Hayden & Associates (attributed to Anthony Hayden) in 1966 (HO857). (Source: Context with Trethowan 2018)

'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.

9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North, exhibits key elements of typical postwar Modernist housing, most notably in its flowing spatial arrangements and innovative use of materials. It draws inspiration from the earlier (1947) 'Robin Boyd House 1' (VHR HO879; HO116), 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.

9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North, is comparable to the works of other notable Modernist architects in Boroondara, 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, HO857).

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.

9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North, falls into a subset of Modernist houses developed in the 1950s that responded to the 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). In this way the house at 9 Tormey Street is comparable to the Cukierman Residence, 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn East, designed by Hayden & Associates (attributed to Anthony Hayden) in 1966 (HO857), Dickie House, 6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn c.1961–64 (HO784) and 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North 1954 (assessed as significant in this study).

Together with 9 Tormey Street, all of these houses reflect the profound influence of the Modernist style, which in the 1950s became actively tested by Melbourne architects.

Overall, the subject house is a good representative example of an early mid-century Modernist house. While exhibiting key characteristics of the style it is also highly unusual for its early use of a modular structural steel system and pre-cast concrete wall panels, and is an evocative example of the experimental early work of Peter McIntyre.

### **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).*

Spitzer House, 9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North, is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of Boroondara as a locus for fine public and private buildings designed by leading architects from the 1850s into the postwar period. Designed in 1958–59, the house is significant as a notable example of the later 1950s work of well-known architect Peter McIntyre. Although McIntyre is 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-publicised suburban houses in an exuberant modern style, such as River House at 2 Hodgkinson Street Kew (1952) and Stargazer House at 2 Taurus Street, Balwyn (1952), this particular house provides evidence of his subsequent move towards a more formalised approach, reflecting his developing interest in modular planning and prefabrication. The house exemplifies the high 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).*

Spitzer House, 9 Tormey Street, is aesthetically significant as a striking architect-designed postwar Modernist house in Balwyn North. It combines a number of features to produce an unusual and distinguished composition: a centralised square plan with living rooms arranged around a central circulation core, a very low hipped roof, an elevated expression (whereby the upper level, supported on wing-walls and steel posts, appears to hover weightlessly above a void below) and a stark façade of pre-cast concrete panels. With its elevated spartan façade of alternating bays of solid panels and windows, the house attracted much attention when it was built and, despite the partial infilling of the lower level, remains an unexpected and eye-catching element in a streetscape largely comprised of late interwar and more conventional contemporaneous postwar dwellings.

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

Spitzer House, 9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North, is technically significant for its unusual design—not only for its early use in residential architecture of a modular construction system but predominantly for its use of pre-cast concrete cladding. At the time the house was designed and constructed, pre-cast concrete cladding was almost unknown in small-scale domestic projects, although widely used in industrial, commercial and institutional building projects.

*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 Spitzer House at 9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North, designed by architect Peter McIntyre in 1958–59, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- the centralised square plan with living rooms arranged around a central circulation core
- a very low-pitched pyramidal roof
- an elevated expression of a rectilinear volume raised above the ground on a grid of steel pipe columns which appears to hover above a continuous void below)
- a stark facade of pre-cast concrete panels with the concrete panels being slightly recessed at the buildings corners, creating a distinctive stepped effect
- the modular rhythm of openings along its south, east and west façades and large window walls of glass to the north.

The planting in the front garden, while in keeping with the Modernist design of the house, is not significant.

### **How is it significant?**

The house is of historic, aesthetic and technical significance to the City of Boroondara.

### **Why is it significant?**

Spitzer House, 9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North, is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of Boroondara as a locus for fine public and private buildings designed by leading architects from the 1850s into the postwar period. Designed in 1958–59, the house is significant as a notable example of the later 1950s work of well-known architect 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, such as River House, 2 Hodkinson Street Kew (1952) and Stargazer House 2 Taurus Street, Balwyn (1952), this particular house provides evidence of McIntyre's subsequent move towards a more formalised approach, reflecting his developing interest in modular planning and prefabrication. The house exemplifies the high concentration of architect designed modernist houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn during the 1950s and 1960s. (Criterion A)

Spitzer House, 9 Tormey Street, is aesthetically significant as a striking architect-designed postwar Modernist house in Balwyn North. It combines a number of features to produce an unusual and distinguished composition: a centralised square plan with living rooms arranged around a central circulation core, a very low hipped roof, an elevated expression (whereby the upper level, supported on wing-walls and steel posts, appears to hover weightlessly above a void below) and a stark façade of pre-cast concrete panels. With its elevated spartan façade of alternating bays of solid panels and windows, the house attracted much attention when it was built and, despite the partial infilling of the lower level, remains an unexpected and eye-catching element in a streetscape largely comprised of late interwar and more conventional contemporaneous postwar dwellings. (Criterion E)

Spitzer House, 9 Tormey Street, Balwyn North, is technically significant for its unusual design—not only for its early use in residential architecture of a modular construction system but predominantly for its use of pre-cast concrete cladding. At the time the house was designed and constructed, pre-cast concrete cladding was almost unknown in small-scale domestic projects, although widely used in industrial, commercial and institutional building projects. (Criterion F)

## 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:

<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>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<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 2012.



## References

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## House

**Prepared by:** GML Heritage

**Address:** 17 Trentwood Avenue BALWYN NORTH

<b>Name:</b> House	<b>Survey Date:</b> December 2021
<b>Place Type:</b> Residential	<b>Architect:</b> A V Jennings Architectural Department (design architect: Taddeusz Karasinski)
<b>Grading:</b> Individually Significant	<b>Builder:</b> A V Jennings
<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1958-59



Figure 1 Street presentation of 17 Trentwood Avenue. (Source GML 2021)



Figure 2 Oblique view of principal facade. (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 Second World War*

#### *9.3.2 Designing fine buildings*

Balwyn North is a residential suburb situated 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south is Balwyn, which is separated from Balwyn North 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. Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North.



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.

Broadly, this house is associated with a heyday of postwar homebuilding in Balwyn North – the period from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s, but at a time when. This phase emerged from the more tentative settlement of the area in the late 1940s and early 1950s, subsequently burgeoning at such an intense rate that, by the mid-1960s, vacant allotments in Balwyn North were already becoming much becoming harder to come by.

## History

The land at 17 Trentwood Avenue, 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.

John Wiese, Orchardist purchased approximately seventy-two acres of Elgar's land in 1909. Wiese died in 1920 however the land did not change hands until 1941 when Sidney James Philpotts, Dairyman became the proprietor. The land stayed in the Philpotts family until July 1956 when it was purchased by Alfred Curphey, Manager who immediately on sold the land to the AV Jennings Construction Company Pty Ltd in October 1956.

AV Jennings subsequently subdivided the land creating the Trentwood Estate in 1958.

Amongst of the first residents of the estate, Keith and Barbara Crawford acquired Lot 78 at the intersection of Tudor Court and Trentwood Avenue. Initially, its street address was designated as the former rather than the latter. The working drawings for their house, dated September 1958, simply attribute the design to A V Jennings Construction Company Ltd, without naming the architect individually. While the title block bears the initials of a delineator (AEDH, as yet unidentified), the slick European modernist stylings of the house, with its elevated box-like form, window wall and massive stone chimney, would suggest that the actual design was the work of *emigre* architect Tad Karasinski. A building permit for the house (stated to be worth £4,500) was issued by the City of Camberwell in February 1959. Construction commenced in early March and was completed in October. In April, while construction was still underway, the house was profiled in the property columns of the *Herald* newspaper. The writer praised the effective use of vertical timber cladding and the integration of a double carport underneath the house and noted that "the massive stone chimney has been carried through the front entrance porch and gives the feeling of stability to the whole house". It was also observed that the open-planned interior discloses a convenient room layout with a minimum of passages".

The Crawford's remained living at 17 Trentwood Avenue for almost twenty years. During that time, they undertook only one significant phase of expansion: the construction, during 1967-68, of two projecting rear wings. One contained two additional bedrooms, and the other provided an enlarged



kitchen and laundry with a new family room. Designed by local architect R E (Ted) Gillies, the additions were designed to merge with the existing building, with matching face brick walls and low skillion roofs. After the couple sold the house in 1976, the new owner, Anna Stratos made one minor alteration, in the form of a small wedge-shaped verandah that partially infilled the space between the two rear wings.

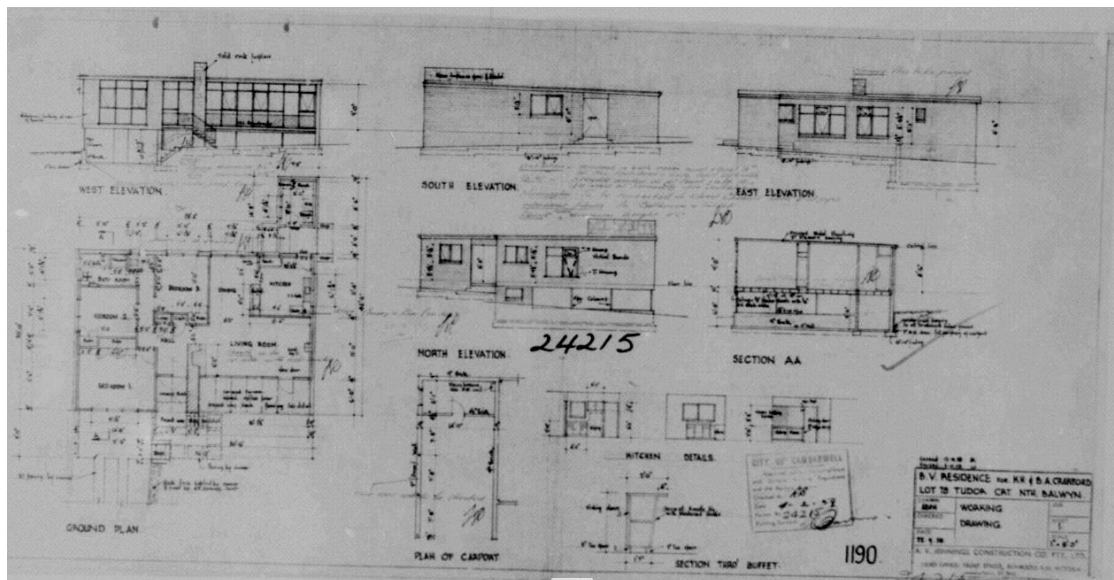


Figure 3 Working drawing for 17 Trentwood Avenue, North Balwyn showing plan and elevations. Note drawing is title blocked AV Jennings and the address is Tudor Court. (Source: BP 24212)

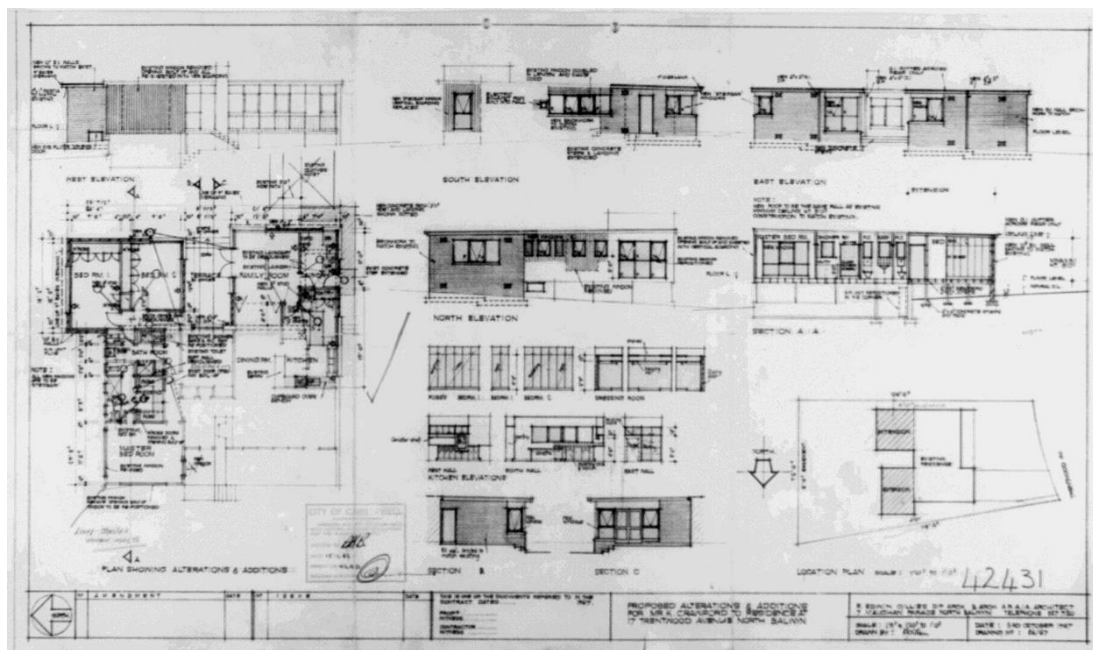


Figure 4 Working drawing for rear additions to 17 Trentwood Avenue, North Balwyn by Edwin Gillies (Source: BP 42431)

Anna Stratos died in 2004 and the property sold the following year. It has changed hand several times since, the last time in 2021. The carport under the house has been enclosed to create a store room and a new carport added in front of it. This new carport was added before 2009 (Nearmap).





Nearmaps imagery shows that the area between the two rear wings was infilled in 2016 and an outdoor alfresco area added to the eastern end of the southern wing. Google streetview imagery shows that the semi-circular wall at the base of the specimen tree in the front garden was constructed between 2009 and 2018. Real estate advertisements from 2021 show that some recent interior alterations have also been made.

### **AV Jennings Industries and the Trentwood Estate, North Balwyn**

As recorded by Don Garden in the official history of AV Jennings, in 1955 managing director Sir Albert Jennings first noticed 25 acres of blackberry-covered land on the north side of Doncaster Road, in which, despite its steep slope, he saw the potential for a housing estate to cater for the “middle and higher income groups” (Garden 1992:153-54).

In the mid-to-late 1950s a number of ambitious residential estates were conceived by A V Jennings Industries, in Mount Waverley, Glen Waverley, Syndal. And Balwyn North. Of these, *Trentwood* Estate at North Balwyn stood out as specifically geared towards the high-end market, incorporating such innovations as the provision of an integrated retail strip and other community facilities. While the estate experienced only mixed success, the lessons learnt paved the way for some of the company's successful post-war projects, such as the 600-acre *Karingal Estate* at Frankston (1962) (Garden 1992:153-54).

The land for the Trentwood Estate was acquired and subdivision plans drawn up, creating a long central curving roadway (Trentwood Avenue), four new culs-de-sac (Earls Court, Lynne Court, Tudor Court and Glamis Court) and an extension to existing Fintonia Street. The new estate comprised 100 allotments, including several along Doncaster Road earmarked for strip retail development (set back to provide off-street parking) and community facilities such as a kindergarten, infant welfare centre and RSL club.

The final subdivision plan was gazetted in February 1958, and land released for sale soon afterwards. Initially, new houses were the responsibility of the company's own architectural department, with individual examples designed by Cecil Baldwin and Tadeusz ‘Tad’ Karasinski. The first houses comprised two fully furnished display models. Development was aimed at a more up-market clientele, yet land sales were initially slow – reportedly because the blocks were too small and awkwardly shaped, and the display homes were ‘unappealing’ (Garden 1992:153-54). Later, the design office was taken over by another Jennings employee, Roy Edwards, who introduced a broader range of house styles. Interest in the estate subsequently burgeoned, with most of the lots being sold and developed by 1960. The following year, the few remaining vacant lots were sold off for private development.

### **Tadeusz (Tad) Karasinski**

Tadeusz ‘Tad’ Josef Karasinski was born in Zakopane, in southern Poland, in 1903. He moved north-east, to the Polish city of Lwów (now L'viv, in Ukraine), where he completed a four-year degree in architecture and engineering at the University of Lwów. After graduating in 1931, Karasinski was employed as an architect to the City of Lwów for four years, during which time he was involved in the design and construction of sports fields, stadiums and swimming pools across the city. In 1934, he became the District Architect to the city of Luck (now Lukst, also in Ukraine), and was promoted to Director of the Technical Board for the City of Luck (Built Heritage).



Following the Second World War, Karasinski moved to Germany and open his own practice in Stuttgart. In 1948 he migrated to Australia arriving in Melbourne in 1949. After spending two years working as a carpenter for the State Electricity Commission, he obtained a position with AV Jennings Construction Company, where he designed houses for the Trentwood Estate amongst other projects. He remained at Jennings for two and a half years. In 1954 he worked for a time with prominent architects Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Newton & Lobb however by 1957 he moved back to AV Jennings, designing houses for the Trentwood Estate in North Balwyn. From the late 1950s until his death in 1968 he undertook many private commissions including houses, blocks of flats and residential additions. (Built Heritage)

## **Description**

The house at 17 Trentwood Avenue is a single-storey flat-roofed brick and timber house in the Modernist style, expressed as a box-like volume that is elevated above the ground on a recessed cream brick plinth. Occupying a sloping site, the house incorporates a carport underneath, where the land falls away to the north (left) side of the block. The elongated street facade is double-fronted and asymmetrical, comprising a broad recessed deck that takes up about two thirds of the width, with a projecting bay to the north (left) side, in alignment with the carport underneath. The recessed portion of the facade contains a full-height window wall, made up of tall timber-framed windows and glazed doors with highlights above. The porch is enclosed at the far (right) end by a cream brick wing wall and is otherwise interrupted by a massive slab-like chimney-breast in uncoursed random stonework (re-mortared in parts). The deck has a simple metal balustrade, which continues down a flight of concrete steps to the garden level. The main entrance, at the top of the steps, is set into an alcove defined by the stone chimney and the side wall of the adjacent projecting bay above the carport.

The external walls of this projecting bay are clad with vertical timber boarding, with a painted finish. On its street facade, it incorporates a wide rectangular window containing three bays of timber-framed sashes (alternately awning and fixed) with narrow highlights above. An original carport underneath, which was depicted as being entirely open on the 1959 perspective drawing, has been enclosed to create a store room under the house. A separate carport, with a flat roof on metal pipe columns has been erected directly in front of it. A small flight of concrete steps, set between cream brick retaining walls, connects to a concrete path leading up to the main entry steps. These elements, along with the random coursed stone retaining wall across the street boundary of the property and lining the driveway, would be early landscape features. .

## **Integrity**

17 Trentwood Avenue, Balwyn North, is largely intact with some changes visible to original or early fabric. The house retains its original built form, flat roof, exposed rafter ends, glazed window walls, door openings, timber joinery, recessed front porch with metal balustrade, massive slab-like chimney-breast in uncoursed random stonework and early landscape elements. . Alterations include the enclosing of the original open carport under the house and the addition of a new carport in front of it. This change does not overly impact on the integrity of the house and the ability to appreciate its original design and innovation

Additions to the rear of the house 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 the 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 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.

Consequent to the circumstances of its initial development, the Trentwood Estate at Balwyn North does not exhibit an especially strong sense of architectural cohesion but, rather, contains a more diverse mix of houses from the late 1950s and early 1960s (as well as some houses of later origin). The first dwellings on the estate, dating from 1958, were designed by architects Cecil Baldwin and Tad Karasinski and comprised two display houses (which have not yet been conclusively identified) as well as others for private clients. When sales proved disappointing, Roy Edwards introduced a broader range of simpler designs.

In the absence of supporting documentation, the earlier houses on the estate can be identified through stylistic analysis. Four extant houses have elements in common with 17 Trentwood Avenue, including two in Fintonia Street (Nos 40, 41), one in Tudor Court (No 1) and one in Earls Court (No 4). These houses tend to exhibit a consistent stylistic vocabulary, with flat or low-pitched skillion roofs, stark rectilinear expression, large full-height multi-paned windows and sometimes a stone-clad chimney or feature wall (e.g. 1 Tudor Court) and/or an open sub-floor carport (e.g. 40 Fintonia Street, 4 Earls Court). These overtly modernist-styled houses, amongst which 17 Trentwood Avenue stands out as the most resolved and striking example, certainly contrast with the more conservative designs that emanated subsequently from the A V Jennings architectural department in 1959-60, which had conventional hipped or gabled roofs and conventional double-fronted or triple-fronted facades. The estate also contains other architect-designed modern houses that date from the early 1960s, built after remaining vacant blocks were sold off for private development. Most notable of these is the flat-roofed brick house at 8 Earls Court (designed by Alexander Harris, 1961), with a long double-fronted facade incorporating a rendered balcony with double garage underneath.

In spite of the dominance of houses built in the years following World War II, Heritage Overlay coverage of postwar houses in Balwyn and North Balwyn is limited. The house at 17 Trentwood

Avenue, Balwyn North can be compared broadly to a number of contemporaneous houses in the Balwyn and Balwyn North area. These include:



Figure 5 6 300 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 7 8 Gillson House 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 visual extreme, in the design of the writer's study.





Figure 9 10 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)

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.



Figure 11 'former Mann House' 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North designed by Montgomery, King & Trengove (Neil Montgomery) in 1954 (recommended as an individually significant place in this study) (Source: GML 2021)

'former Mann House' 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North is of local historical and aesthetic significance. It 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.

There are also several postwar houses on the Heritage Overlay in the broader Boroondara context that are comparable to 17 Trentwood Avenue Balwyn North. Examples include:



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.

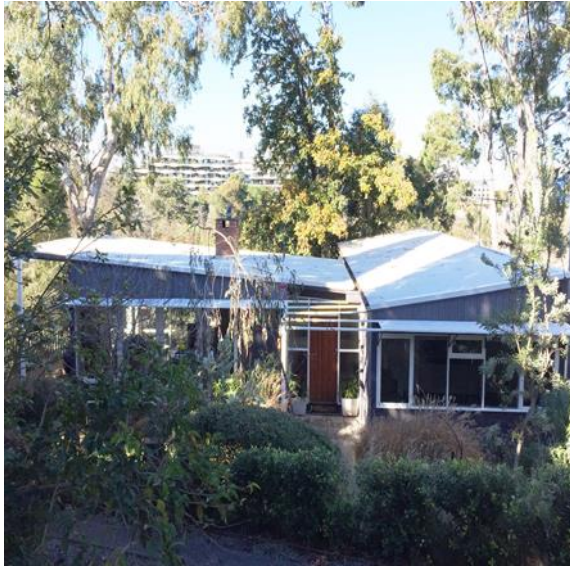


Figure 14 6 Reeves Court, Kew designed by Ernest Milston in 1955 (HO822) (Source: Trethowan 2017)

'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 Guss residence, 18 Yarra Street, Kew designed by McGlashan & Everist in 1961 (Significant within HO530) (Source: Hermes)

'Guss Residence' 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 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.



Figure 16 Dickie House, 6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn  
c.1961-64 HO784 City of Boroondara (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)

'Cukierman Residence' 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn is of local historical, architectural, aesthetic and technical 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

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17 Trentwood Avenue, 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 compares to the earlier (1947) 'Robin Boyd House I' (VHR H0879; HO116) 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.

Robin Boyd first introduced the concept 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) describe 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 Robin 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, built in 1952 (HO177) and 12-14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North, built in 1948-49, 1959, 1971 (HO928).

17 Trentwood Avenue, Balwyn North embraces these characteristics with a sophistication of design and planning that reflects the skill of a trained architect (most probably Taddeusz 'Tad' Karasinski who, with Cecil Baldwin, was working as an architect at AV Jennings at the time). The house is comparable to the works of other notable Modernist architects including 'former Hirsch House and Office' (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.

17 Trentwood Avenue 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). In this way the subject house is comparable to 39 Inverness Way, Balwyn North, by Montgomery, King & Trengrove (assessed as significant in this study). Like 39 Inverness Way and other Modernist houses in Boroondara and across Melbourne, the house at 17 Trentwood Avenue, Balwyn North reflects the profound influence of the International style, 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 an early Modernist house. It exhibits key characteristics of the style and is most likely the work of respected émigré architect Taddeusz 'Tad' Karasinski.

### **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).*

17 Trentwood Avenue, Balwyn North, is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of Boroondara as a locus for leading architect-designed public and private buildings from the 1850s into the postwar period. Built in 1958-59 to a design by A V Jennings Architectural Department (design architect: Taddeusz Karasinski) the house displays a sophisticated design approach to its elevated site, appearing to hover above the landscape and yet anchored to it by its massive slab-like chimney-breast in uncoursed random stonework. The house exemplifies the high concentration of architect designed modernist houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn during the 1950s and 1960s.



Historically, the house is also significant as one of the first houses to be erected on the *Trentwood Estate*, an ambitious residential estate conceived in the late 1950s by industry stalwarts A V Jennings (Melbourne's leading homebuilding company since the 1930s) as a high-end development of prestigious dwellings with community facilities (shops, infant welfare centre, medical clinic) provided. The estate was not an immediate success, with only a relatively small number of blocks sold and developed (including this one) in 1958-59. It was not until 1960, when the company introduced a broader range of more conventional house designs, that the estate finally filled out. One of the most intact, evocative and architecturally sophisticated of the houses dating from the initial (pre-1960) phase of development, the house at 17 Trentwood Avenue illustrates the company's original intent to provide elegantly-designed high-end modern residences.

*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).*

17 Trentwood Avenue, Balwyn North is of aesthetic significance as a notable house designed in 1958 in the Modernist style. With its stark rectilinear massing, its expression as a partially elevated box-like volume, and its wide bay of full-height windows interrupted by a massive projecting stone chimney breast, the house shows the influence and regional expression of International modernism. This particular house is a fine and evocative surviving example of this type of residential architecture that was built (and of fewer still that survive largely intact) in the Trentwood Estate. Its aesthetic significance is enhanced by the retention of early landscaping including the front random coursed retaining wall that matches the chimney.

*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?

17 Trentwood Avenue, Balwyn North, built to a design by A V Jennings Architectural Department (design architect: Taddeusz Karasinski) in 1958-59, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- elongated street façade which is double-fronted and asymmetrical
- flat roof with deep overhang and exposed timber rafter ends
- walls clad with vertical timber boarding
- broad recessed street facing deck and simple metal balustrade
- projecting bay to the north
- original pattern of fenestrations and door openings and original joinery including a full-height window wall (comprising tall timber-framed windows, glazed doors and highlights above).
- massive slab-like chimney-breast in uncoursed random stonework.
- concrete steps to the front door
- uncoursed random stone retaining walls

### How is it significant?

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

### Why is it significant?

17 Trentwood Avenue, Balwyn North, is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of Boroondara as a locus for leading architect-designed public and private buildings from the 1850s into the postwar period. Built in 1958-59 to a design by A V Jennings Architectural Department (design architect: Taddeusz Karasinski) the house displays a sophisticated design approach to its elevated site, appearing to hover above the landscape and yet anchored to it by its massive slab-like chimney-breast in uncoursed random stonework. The house exemplifies the high concentration of architect designed modernist houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn during the 1950s and 1960s. (Criterion A)

Historically, the house is also significant as one of the first houses to be erected on the *Trentwood Estate*, an ambitious residential estate conceived in the late 1950s by industry stalwarts A V Jennings (Melbourne's leading homebuilding company since the 1930s) as a high-end development of prestigious dwellings with community facilities (shops, infant welfare centre, medical clinic) provided. The estate was not an immediate success, with only a relatively small number of blocks sold and developed (including this one) in 1958-59. It was not until 1960, when the company introduced a broader range of more conventional house designs, that the estate finally filled out. One of the most intact, evocative and architecturally sophisticated of the houses dating from the initial (pre-1960) phase of development, the house at 17 Trentwood Avenue illustrates the company's original intent to provide elegantly-designed high-end modern residences. (Criterion A)



17 Trentwood Avenue, Balwyn North is of aesthetic significance as a notable house designed in 1958 in the Modernist style. With its stark rectilinear massing, its expression as a partially elevated box-like volume, and its wide bay of full-height windows interrupted by a massive projecting stone chimney breast, the house shows the influence and regional expression of International modernism. This particular house is a fine and evocative surviving example of this type of residential architecture that was built (and of fewer still that survive largely intact) in the Trentwood Estate. Its aesthetic significance is enhanced by the retention of early landscaping including the front random coursed retaining wall that matches the chimney. (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:

<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>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<b>Outbuildings and fences exemptions</b>	Yes
<i>Are there outbuildings or fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	Front retaining wall
<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 2012.





## References

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Garden D 1992. *Builders to the Nation: The A V Jennings Story*, pp153-54.

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Victorian Heritage Register (VHR), as cited.

## Davis Residence

Prepared by: GML Heritage

**Address:** 32 Ursa Street BALWYN NORTH

<b>Name:</b> Davis Residence	<b>Survey Date:</b> December 2021
<b>Place Type:</b> Residential	<b>Architect:</b> Harcourt Long (original house and additions)
<b>Grading:</b> Individually Significant	<b>Builder:</b> K B Davis (owner/builder)
<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1950-52 1953; 1956 (additions)



Figure 1 32 Ursa Street, Balwyn North (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 2 32 Ursa Street, Balwyn North (Source: GML 2021)



## Historical Context

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

*6.3.3 Creating Middle class suburbs in the early twentieth century*

*6.3.4 Suburban infill after Second World War*

*9.3.2 Designing fine buildings*

Balwyn North is a residential suburb situated 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south is Balwyn, which is separated from Balwyn North 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.

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

### *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. Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North, 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 Balwyn North.

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.

Dating from 1950-52, this house is associated with the emergence of postwar homebuilding in Balwyn North – that is, the period from the late 1940s to the early 1950s.

## **History**

The land at 9 Ursa Street, 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.

John Laidlaw Todd purchased 151 acres of Elgars Special Survey in 1904 (CT V3022 F336). Todd held the land until 1915 when it was sold to Sarah Robinson who subdivided the southernmost portion of the land to create extensions to Cascade Street, Riverside Avenue, Inverness Way and The Boulevard (CT V3868 F411).

In 1923 Robinson subdivided a further section of her land creating Ursa Street with the subject site becoming Lot 68. Unsold land on the subdivision, including the subject site, was sold to the Land Investment Company limited in 1928 (CT V4868 F403; CT V5405 F984).

Philip John Fitzgerald Winch purchased Lot 68 in June 1932. Winch owned the vacant lot until 1949 when it was purchased by Peter and Loyes Tippet. The Tippet's held on to the land for less than a year with lot 68 being sold to Keth and Lynette Davis in September 1950 (CT V5799 F776).



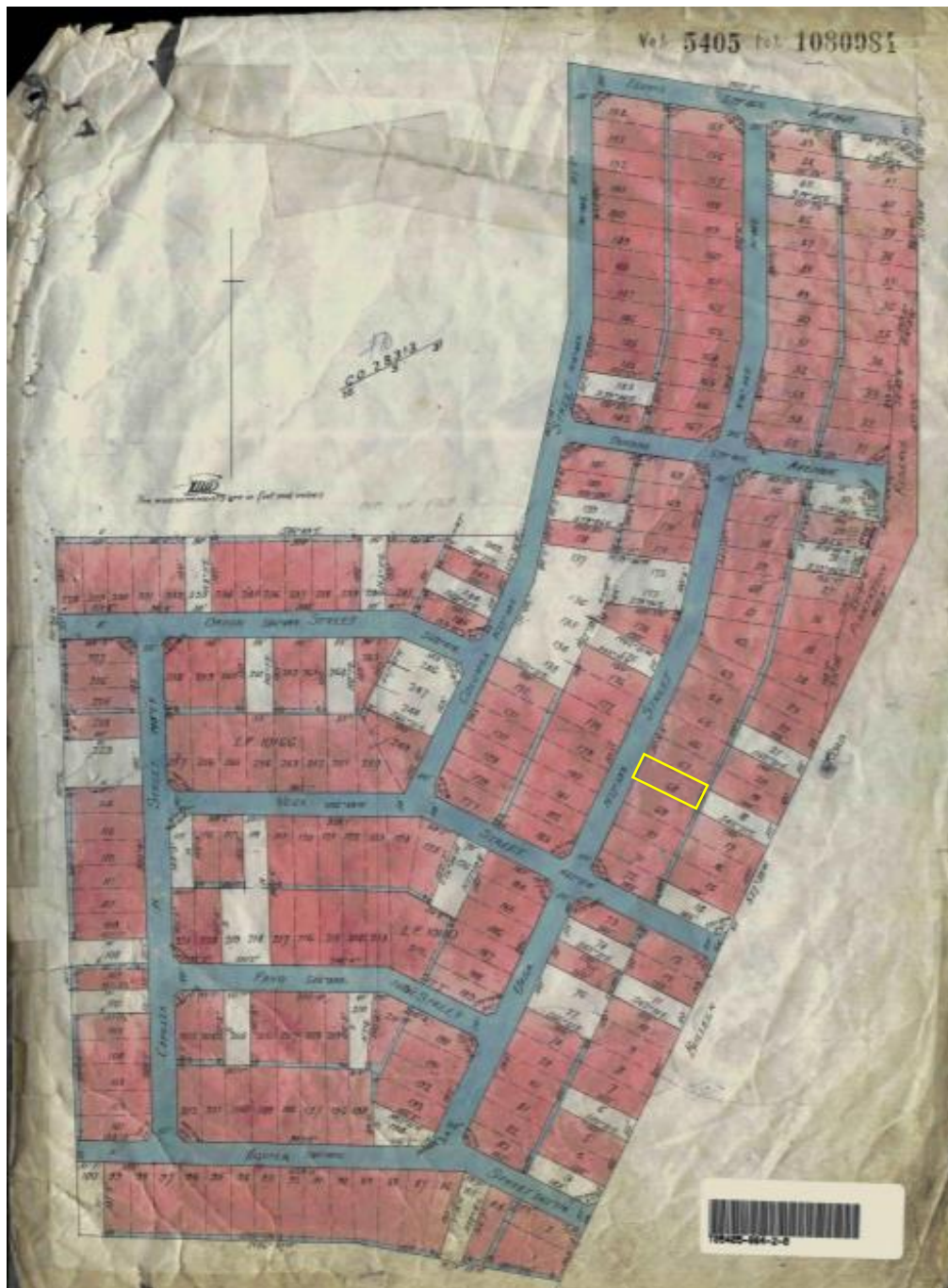


Figure 3 Plan of subdivision in 1923 creating Ursa Street. The subject site is lot 68 of this subdivision and is outlined in yellow. (Source: CT V5405 F984)

To design their new house, the Davises turned to architect Harcourt Hilton Long. At the time that he was engaged to design the house, Long was still a student, two years from graduation. His working drawings, dated 6 August 1950, proposed a modest two-bedroomed single-storey brick house on a J-shaped courtyard plan. Reflecting many of the latest ideas in modern residential architecture, the house was zoned with the bedrooms and living areas isolated at opposite ends, connected by a wide circulation space with north-facing windows (designated as 'sun room') that also provided access to a central core of service areas: bathroom, kitchen, laundry and a dedicated dark room for Davis' photography.

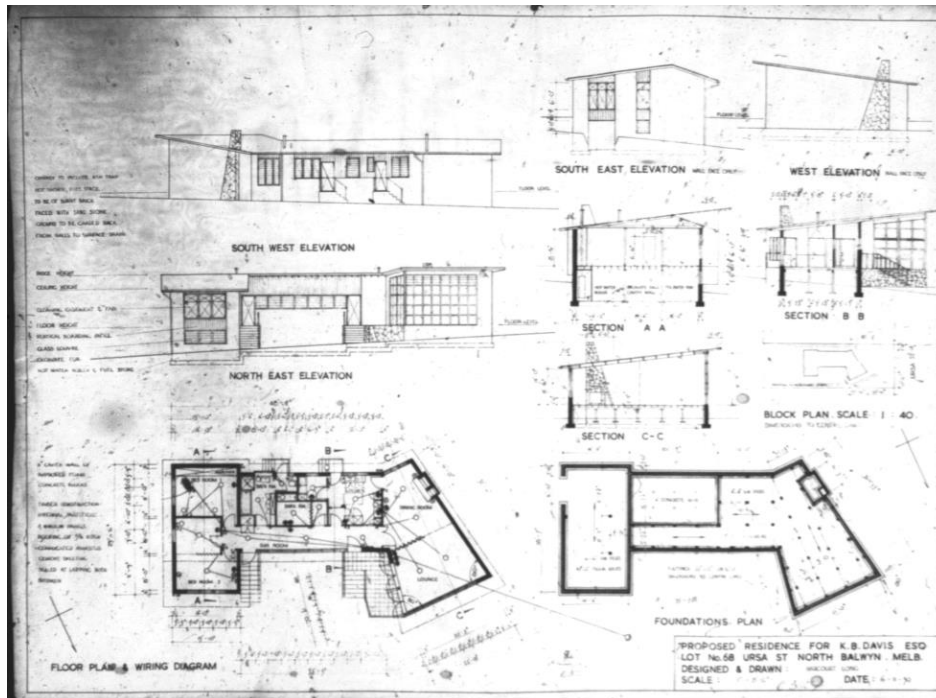


Figure 4 Working drawing sheet showing elevations, floor plan (electrical layout) and foundation plan prepared by Harcourt Long dated 6.8.1950 (Source: BP 57368)

A building permit was issued for the house on 9 January 1951 and construction, which was evidently undertaken by Davis himself, commenced in March 1951 and was completed the following year (BP 6327). While little is known of Harcourt Long's architectural career in Melbourne in the 1950s, he was retained by the Davises to undertake two more phases of additions to their house: a basement storeroom and detached garage (1953, BP 6327, 13110) and a third bedroom at the rear and a second attached garage along the street frontage (1956, BP 18783, 17887).

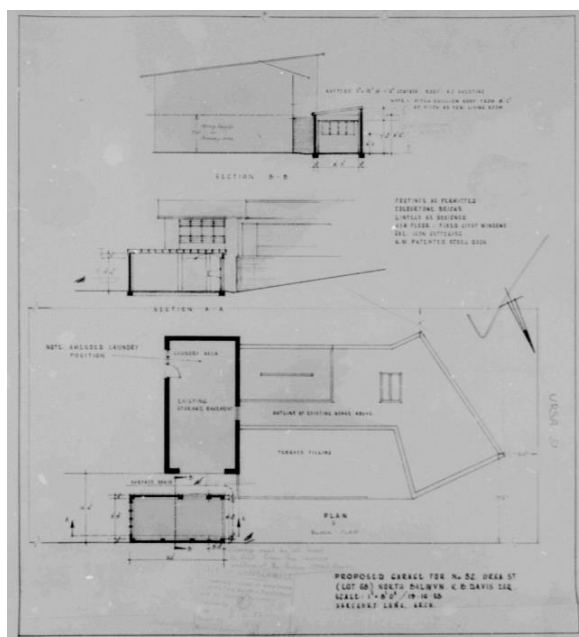


Figure 5 Working drawing dated 1953 for proposed alterations to 32 Ursa Street North Balwyn including a free-standing garage and basement. (Source: BP 6327, 13110)

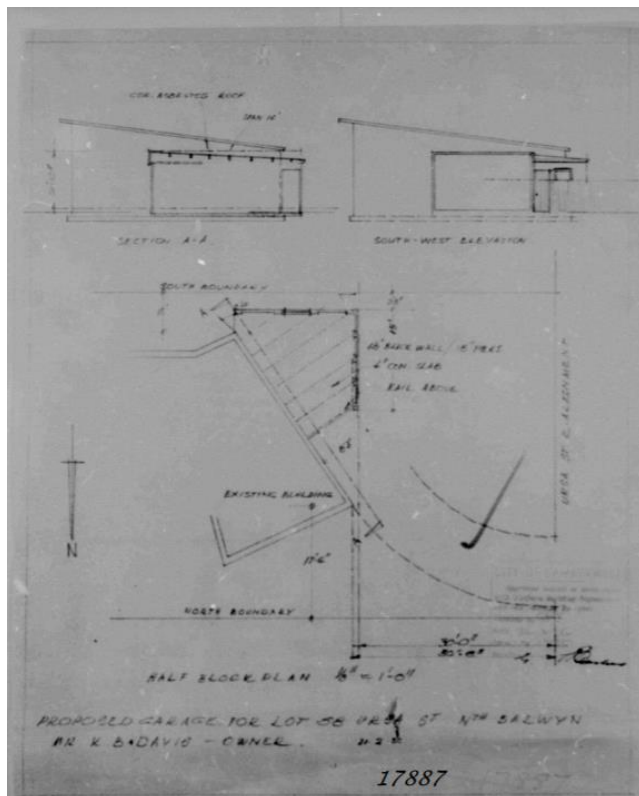


Figure 6 Drawing showing proposed garage at 32 Ursa Street North Balwyn. (Source: BP 17887)

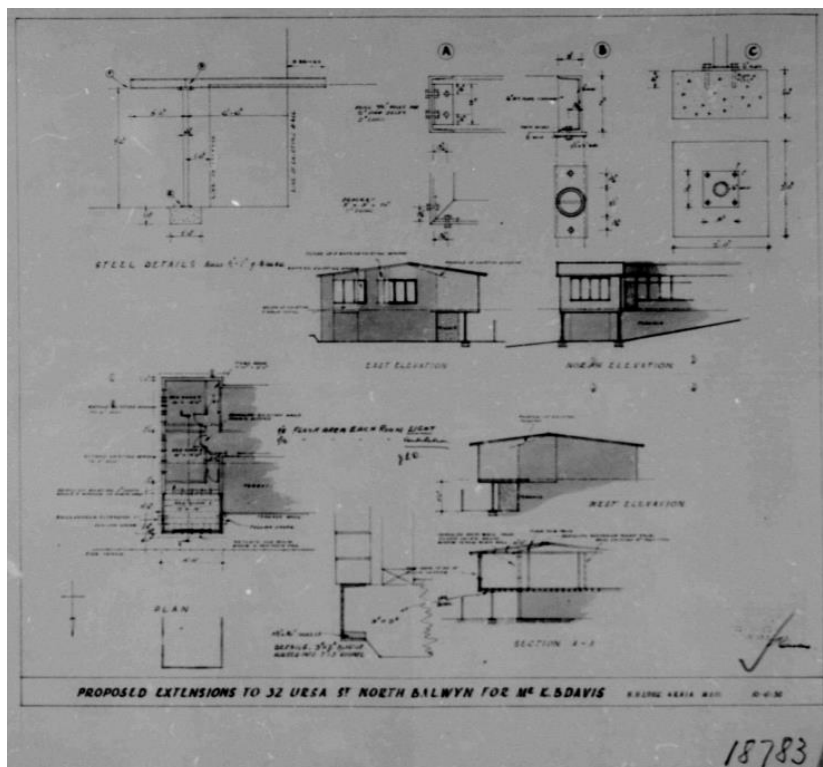


Figure 7 Proposed extension to 32 Ursa street North Balwyn for Mr KB Davis prepared by HH Long ARIA dated 19 June 56. (Source: BP 18783)

Keith and Lyn Davis remained living at the property until 1964. The property changed hands again in 1970 and in 1980. Council building cards record no alterations or additions to the property since 1956.





## Harcourt Long Architect

The following biography of the designer of 22 Riverview Road has been compiled by Simon Reeves:

*The son of an engineer, Long was born in Fremantle in 1922. A returned serviceman, he had enlisted in 1942 and served as a gunner with the 55th Australian Composite Ack-Ack Regiment. Discharged in June 1946, Long commenced his architectural studies at the University of Melbourne and, the following year, was one of a many students from the facilities of medicine, engineering, architecture and dental science to be transferred to a temporary campus established at Mildura to accommodate the flood of post-war enrolments. Long completed his degree in 1952 and graduated the following year. Having selected town planning as the subject for his undergraduate thesis, Long went on to obtain a master's degree in that field from the same university (Long 1953). By 1958, he had returned to his native Western Australia and was working as an architect and town planner in Perth, where he prepared a foreshore redevelopment scheme incorporating a 3,500-seat amphitheatre (Mullumby 2018:64). In 1963, Long was appointed by the Commonwealth administration as the first resident planning officer to the Northern Territory (Hansard 2012). He moved to Darwin, where he prepared a Regional Land Use Concept Plan and an ambitious town planning scheme for Greater Darwin to cover the ten-year period from 1965 to 1975. Long subsequently returned to Melbourne, where he took up the position of city planner to the municipality of South Melbourne. (Built Heritage 2013)*

## Description

Occupying a site that slopes downward from the street frontage, the house at 32 Ursa Street is a single-storey skillion roofed dwelling of pale-coloured clay or concrete brick construction, designed in an austere post-war modernist style. Laid out on a J-shaped north-facing courtyard plan, the house is zoned by function, effectively comprising three distinct and discretely-expressed parts: a prominent wedge-shaped living/dining room fronting the street and a rear wing containing the bedrooms, connected by an elongated link that contains the service areas and a north-facing 'sun room'. A fourth element, in the form of a small, attached garage (added 1956) projects from the west side of the street facade.

The street frontage of the house is dominated by the tall wedge-shaped living/dining room, where the skillion roof is particularly prominent. It has wide eaves to the north side, shading a substantial timber-framed and multi-paned window wall with spandrel clad in vertical timber boards. The brickwork is notched at the external corners, consequent to the intersection of its walls at an angle less than ninety degrees. The side wall of the front wing, facing Ursa Street and incorporating the small, attached garage, is blank and entirely windowless, enlivened only by a decorative pattern of projecting header bricks to the garage wall. The main entrance to the house is located off the central courtyard and not visible from the street, via steps that lead up to a small, paved sun-deck at the intersection of the front wing. The house is set behind a front garden with low shrubs, and specimen Chinese Fan Palms (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) and cordylines. Garden beds and the front boundary are defined by volcanic rock. A single brick pillar with integrated letterbox stands at the edge of the concrete paved driveway entry. There is no front fence, as was typical of gardens associated with Modernist houses of this time.



## Integrity

32 Ursa Street, Balwyn North, is largely intact with very few changes visible to original or early fabric. The house retains its original built form with prominent skillion roof, 'J' shaped plan, north facing central courtyard, pale brick walls and large window walls of glass. Early additions designed by the same architect include a basement storeroom and detached garage (1953) and a third bedroom at the rear and a second garage along the street frontage (1956). These additions are both very discrete in scale and, being designed by the same architect, are sympathetic in form, materials and style. They have neither diminished nor detracted from the distinctive form of the original 1950-52 house, which still dominates. The garden retains features that are typical of Modernist houses including no front fence and volcanic rock edged garden beds.

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.

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 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.

This house can be considered as a representative example of the progressive architect-designed dwellings that began to proliferate in Balwyn North from the early 1950s. Many of the defining characteristics of this house (namely the north facing courtyard plan, the bold skillion roof forms, prominent window walls, sun-decks and the compartmentalising of the plan into separate zones for living and sleeping, linked by a service area) were being explored by a number of architects at that time.

These elements are evident in the contemporaneous residential work of Robin Boyd, as well as those who prepared house plans for the Age/RVIA Small Homes Service (established in 1947) of which Boyd was foundation director. As such, this house can be broadly compared with surviving examples of Boyd's early work in the area, namely the Wood House at 12-14 Tannock Street designed in 1948-49 (HO928) and the Dunstan House at 17 Yandilla Road designed in 1949-50 (assessed as

significant as part of this study). Both these houses similarly incorporate a substantial window wall but were substantially enlarged – to Boyd's design – during the late 1950s and '60s. While these two Boyd houses are undeniably important in their own right, they are perhaps now slightly less evocative of the humbler aspirations of the first generation of post-war homebuilders in Balwyn North, and of the modest houses that they built there. By contrast, the original portion of the Davis House, dating from 1950-52, remains dominant and evocative of the aspirations and limitations at the time of construction, amidst much smaller-scaled additions (also by the same architect).



Figure 8 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)

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.



Figure 9 East elevation of 17 Yandilla Street, Balwyn designed

17 Yandilla Street, Balwyn is of representative significance as a notable achievement in modern homebuilding at a time when materials and labour were still in short supply due to wartime restrictions. In the face of such limitations, Boyd conceived the design as a three-stage process, which was subsequently realised (to his design and supervision) in 1951 and 1963. The house encapsulated many ideas, such as open-planning, split-levels and window walls, that were extremely innovative at the time.

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by Robin Boyd in 1949-50 with additions by Boyd in 1951 and 1963 (assessed as significant in this study). (Source: GML 2021)

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While modest (but still Modernist) houses of this type dotted Balwyn/Balwyn North in the early 1950s, little evidence of them remains today. Several equally evocative examples are known to have been demolished or substantially altered in very recent years. Chief amongst these was a single-storey rendered house at 10 Stephen Street, erected in 1951 using a standard design of the *Age*/RVIA Small Homes Service, which was similar to 32 Ursa Street in its use of bold skillion roofed wings and generous glazing. Another modestly-scaled skillion-roofed example, at 8 Carrigal Street, also dating from 1951 and designed by architect R Griffiths, has since been substantially remodelled.

No other example of the architectural work of Harcourt Long has been identified in Balwyn/Balwyn North, the broader City of Boroondara, or elsewhere in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Given that Long chose to pursue a career in town planning rather than architecture (and was absent from Victoria for more than a decade from c.1957 until the 1970s), it seems likely that this house – probably undertaken as a favour to a close friend – represents a rare or even unique example of his work, designed when Long was still an undergraduate student.

The house at 32 Ursa Street, Balwyn North can be compared more broadly to a number of contemporaneous houses in Balwyn and Balwyn North that exhibit a similar use of volumetric massing, flat roofs and full-height glazing. Despite the dominance of houses built in the years following World War II, Heritage Overlay coverage of postwar houses in Balwyn North is limited. Comparable examples in Balwyn and Balwyn North include:



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.

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Figure 11 Gillson House 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn designed by Robin Boyd in 1952 (HO177) (Source: Docomomo Journal 65,2019)

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

Postwar houses in the Heritage Overlay in the broader Boroondara context that are comparable to 32 Ursa Street, Balwyn North, include:



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.



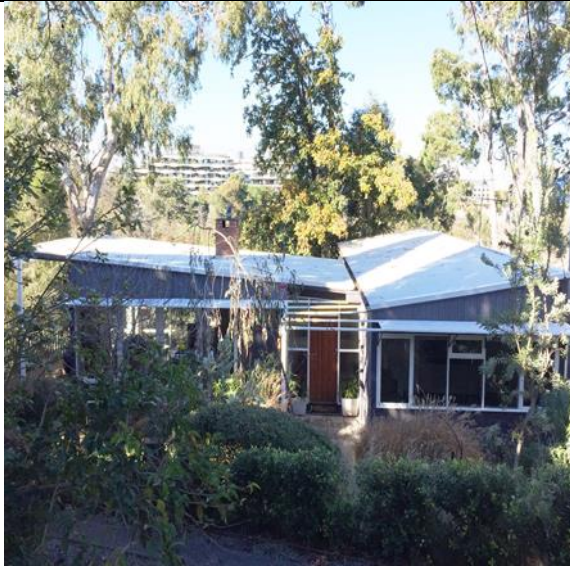


Figure 13 6 Reeves Court, Kew designed by Ernest Milston in 1955 (HO822) (Source: Trethowan 2017)

'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 14 18 Yarra Street, Kew designed by McGlashan & Everist in 1961 (Significant within HO530) (Source: Hermes)

'Guss residence', 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 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.



Figure 15 Dickie House, 6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn c.1961-64 HO784 City of Boroondara (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 16 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)

'Cukierman Residence' 9 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

32 Ursa Street, Balwyn North exhibits key elements of postwar Modernist houses; 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 modern homes, 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 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 (1989) describe 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 Robin 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, built in 1952 (HO177) and 12-14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North, built in 1948-49, 1959, 1971 (HO928).

Architecturally and aesthetically 32 Ursa Street is most comparable to 6 Reeves Court designed by Ernest Milston in 1955 (HO822). Both houses are zoned by function, effectively comprising distinct and discretely-expressed living/dining room fronting the street and rear wings containing the bedrooms. Each zone sits under separate skillion roofs. Both houses feature extensive modular timber framed glazing.

32 Ursa Street can also be compared to 18 Yarra Street, Kew designed by McGlashan & Everist in 1961 (Significant within HO530), 6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn c.1961-64 (HO784) and 17 Cukierman Residence, 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn East designed by Hayden & Associates (attributed to Anthony Hayden) in 1966 (HO857) for its use of a bold roof plane, large walls of glazing that connect the interior with the exterior and simple unadorned planar wall surfaces. However, 18 Yarra Street, Kew, 6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn, and 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn East, are all of a later build date (1960s), more substantial in size and more elaborate in their detailing. They represent a second period of modernism where residential architecture was no longer restrained by the austerity measures in place immediately after the war allowing for a greater elaboration in design and size of house.

Overall 32 Ursa Street, Balwyn North is an exceptionally fine and intact example of an early modernist house. It exhibits key characteristics of the style being distinguished by its bold skillion roof forms, prominent window walls, sun-deck and the compartmentalising of its unique J shaped plan into separate zones for living and sleeping, linked by a service area.

### **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).*

32 Ursa 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 1950 by architect and planner Harcourt Long while still a student, this house is one of relatively few modernist residences that survive in Boroondara from the austere early postwar years of the late 1940s to early 1950s. The house is notable for its sophisticated and evocative manipulation of modernist features which include a unique J shaped floor plan that zones living and sleeping areas and a wedge shaped living/dining room with steeply pitched skillion roof and large north facing window wall. The house exemplifies the high concentration of architect designed modernist houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn 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).*

Aesthetically 32 Ursa street, Balwyn North is significant as an unusual, early and substantially intact example of an early modernist house in Balwyn North. The house demonstrates many of the qualities that interested the emerging generation of progressive young architects in the immediate postwar period, notably the use of north-facing courtyard plans, sun decks, generous glazing and skillion roofs with broad eaves (all to take advantage of the passive solar heating principles) as well as zoned planning. In this case, however, these basic tenets of modern residential architecture were transformed through Harcourt Long's own distinctive vision, introducing such particularly bold elements as its J shaped plan and wedge shaped living room wing, with notched corners and huge timber-framed window wall with grid-like configuration of glazing bars.

Although altered by two very minor and discreet stages of addition (both designed by the original architect), the original 1950-52 building dominates, and remains an evocative example of early post-war residential architecture.

*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 Davis House at 32 Ursa Street, Balwyn North designed by architect and planner Harcourt Long while still a student in 1950, is significant.

Elements that contribute to significance include:

- J shaped plan with north facing central courtyard
- prominent skillion roof
- pale brick walls with brickwork notched at the external corners
- decorative pattern of projecting header bricks to the garage wall
- original pattern of fenestrations, door openings and window and door joinery
- prominent timber-framed and multi-paned window wall with spandrel clad in vertical timber boards
- early additions designed by the same architect include a basement storeroom and detached garage (1953) and a third bedroom at the rear and a second garage along the street frontage (1956)
- front garden open to the street (no front fence).

### **How is it significant?**

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

### **Why is it significant?**

32 Ursa 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 1950 by architect and planner Harcourt Long while still a student, this house is one of relatively few modernist residences that survive in Boroondara from the austere early postwar years of the late 1940s to early 1950s. The house is notable for its sophisticated and evocative manipulation of modernist features which include a unique J shaped floor plan that zones living and sleeping areas and a wedge shaped living/dining room with steeply pitched skillion roof and large north facing window wall. The house exemplifies the high concentration of architect designed modernist houses built in Balwyn and North Balwyn during the 1950s and 1960s. (Criterion A)

Aesthetically 32 Ursa street, Balwyn North is significant as an unusual, early and substantially intact example of an early modernist house in Balwyn North. The house demonstrates many of the qualities that interested the emerging generation of progressive young architects in the immediate postwar period, notably the use of north-facing courtyard plans, sun decks, generous glazing and skillion roofs with broad eaves (all to take advantage of the passive solar heating principles) as well as zoned planning. In this case, however, these basic tenets of modern residential architecture were transformed through Harcourt Long's own distinctive vision, introducing such particularly bold elements as its J shaped plan and wedge shaped living room wing, with notched corners and huge timber-framed window wall with grid-like configuration of glazing bars. Although altered by two very minor and discreet stages of addition (both designed by the original architect), the original 1950-52



building dominates, and remains an evocative example of early post-war residential architecture.  
(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:

<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>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<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 2012.



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Victorian Heritage Register (VHR), as cited.

## Dunstan Residence

Prepared by: GML Heritage

**Address:** 17 Yandilla Street BALWYN

<b>Name:</b> Dunstan Residence	<b>Survey Date:</b> December 2021
<b>Place Type:</b> Residential	<b>Architect:</b> Robin Boyd
<b>Grading:</b> Individually Significant	<b>Builder:</b> Unknown
<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1949-50 1951, 1963 (additions by Boyd)



Figure 1 South elevation of house facing Yandilla Street. (Source GML 2021)



Figure 2 West elevation of house facing Carringal Street. (Source: GML 2021)





## Historical Context

The area of Yandilla, 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 situated 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.

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 the new suburb of 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 immigrants into the area has seen the extensive replacement of interwar and 1940s homes with new residential development. The suburb of Balwyn today is favoured by many new home-owners for access to Balwyn High School—a co-educational government secondary school with nearly 2000 students. The period from the late 1940s to the early 1950s, when 17 Yandilla Street was built, is associated with the emergence of post-war homebuilding in Balwyn. Large parts of Balwyn and Balwyn North had remained notably underdeveloped until 1938, when the extension of the electric tram route to Doncaster Road spurred a significant residential boom. This, however, was soon cut short by the onset of the Second World War, and it would not resume until the later 1940s. Even then, private homebuilding was still hampered by restrictions on labour and materials that had been imposed during the War. As a result, the initial burst of post-war homebuilding in the suburb was relatively modest compared to the massive influx that took place from the early 1950s, when wartime restrictions were finally relaxed.

## History

The land at 17 Yandilla Street, Balwyn North, originally formed part of Elgar's Special Survey Crown purchased and surveyed by Henry Elgar in 1841 (CT V6838 F528).

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 93 of the 'Kenny's Hill Estate' The estate contained 32 allotments located between Union and Belmore Roads, Balwyn (CT V6838 F528 *Herald*, Percy & Batten 1929; 20 November 1929:19).

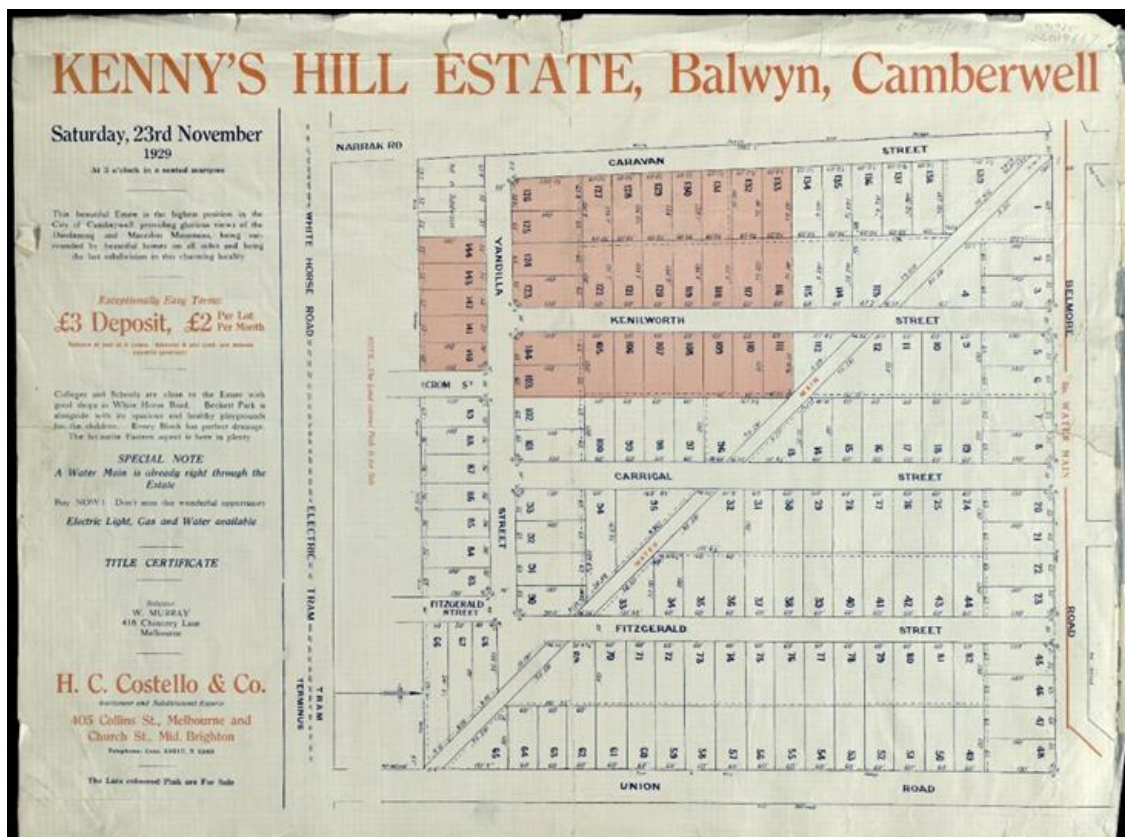


Figure 3 Kenny's Hill Estate, Balwyn plan of subdivision. Lot 93 is outlined in red. (Source: Batten & Percy Pty Ltd 1929, State Library of Victoria, with GML overlay)

Richard Dunstan, lawyer acquired the subject site in 1946 (CT V6838 F528). To design their new house, they turned to architect Robin Boyd, whom they knew of through his weekly Small Homes Service column in the *Age* newspaper (Lee 2008). The couple were inspired by Boyd's desire to provide modern, liveable and affordable housing solutions at a time when materials and labour were in short supply due to wartime restrictions. The Dunstons met with Boyd and chose an existing design from the Small Homes Service range (Lee 2008). Boyd suggested that the couple contact furniture designer Grant Featherston to discuss their needs, and, when doing so, Featherston urged them to abandon the Small Homes Service design and engage Boyd to design an entirely new house (Lee 2008). The Dunstons visited Boyd in his own house at Camberwell, which he had designed in 1946, and indicated they wanted one just like it (Lee 2008).

Boyd had completed working drawings in early 1949. At a time when the size of new houses was restricted to a maximum of ten squares, Boyd came up with a scheme that would allow for future expansion when these restrictions were lifted (Lee 2008). A building permit was issued by the City of

Camberwell for construction of the house in May 1949 (BP 2993). As Boyd himself was overseas for much of that year, he arranged for the project to be supervised by his friend and former partner Kevin Pethebridge (Lee 2008).

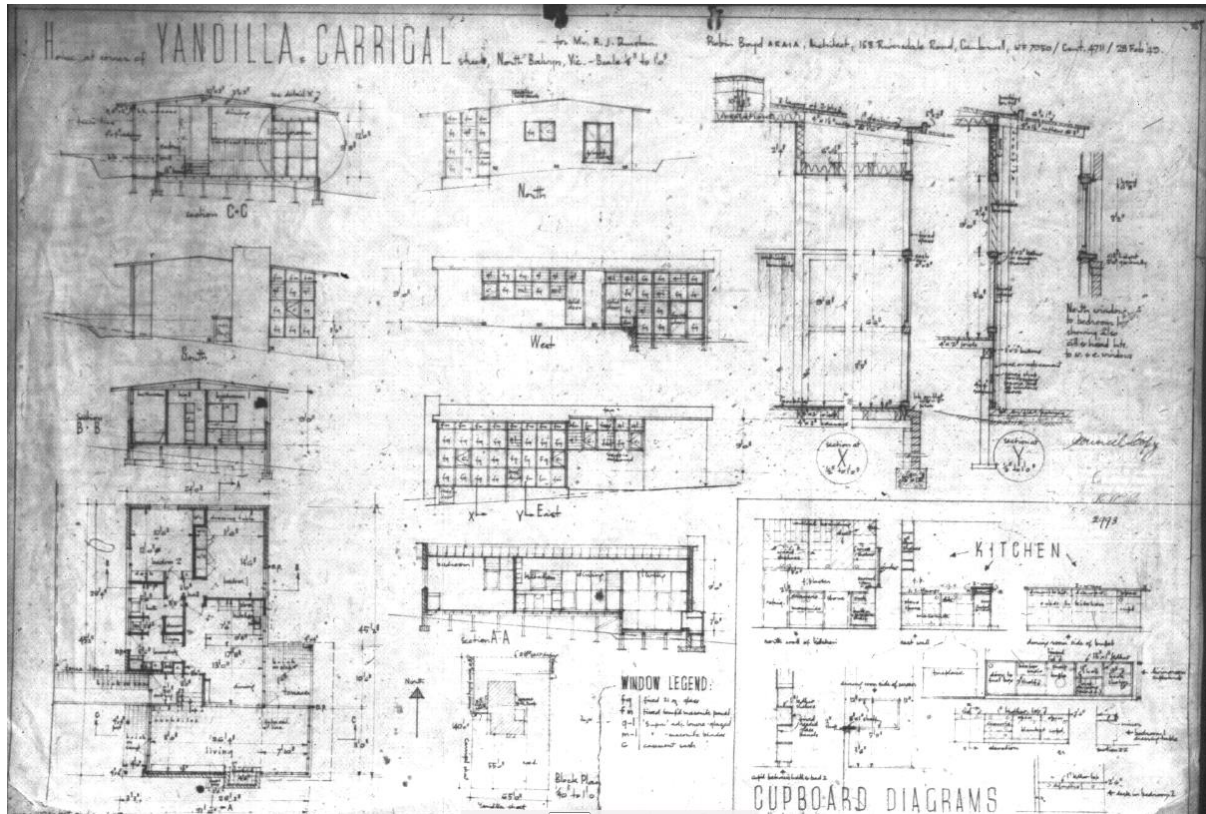


Figure 4 Working drawing sheet showing original house as designed and built in 1949. (Source: BP 2993)

In 1950 the first phase of Dunstan House was complete. At that time, it was virtually the only house in the immediate area, and the Dunstans recall that its minimalistic design provoked a certain amount of local comment: some referred to it as 'the chook shed' and others asked whether it was a house or a chemist's shop – a reference to a modern pharmacy recently built on Doncaster Road, also designed by Boyd (Lee 2008). In October 1951, the house was profiled in popular home magazine *Australian House & Garden*. It was described therein as 'a modern house - modern because it was designed for people with a contemporary outlook, people who are unafraid to live according to the pattern of today, preferring to overcome new problems rather than offer a futile and stubborn resistance' (Stahle 1951).





Figure 5 Dunstan House, showing the original colour scheme. Photograph not dated, c1950. (Source: Docomomo Newsletter August 20, 2020)

House building restrictions were relaxed in 1951 and, that year, the Dunstons engaged Boyd to design the second stage of construction: the addition of a small, attached garage at the south end of the existing house. Stepped down to accommodate the slope of the site, the addition was otherwise conceived to match the original, with a low gabled roof, painted brick walls and a grid-like window bay.

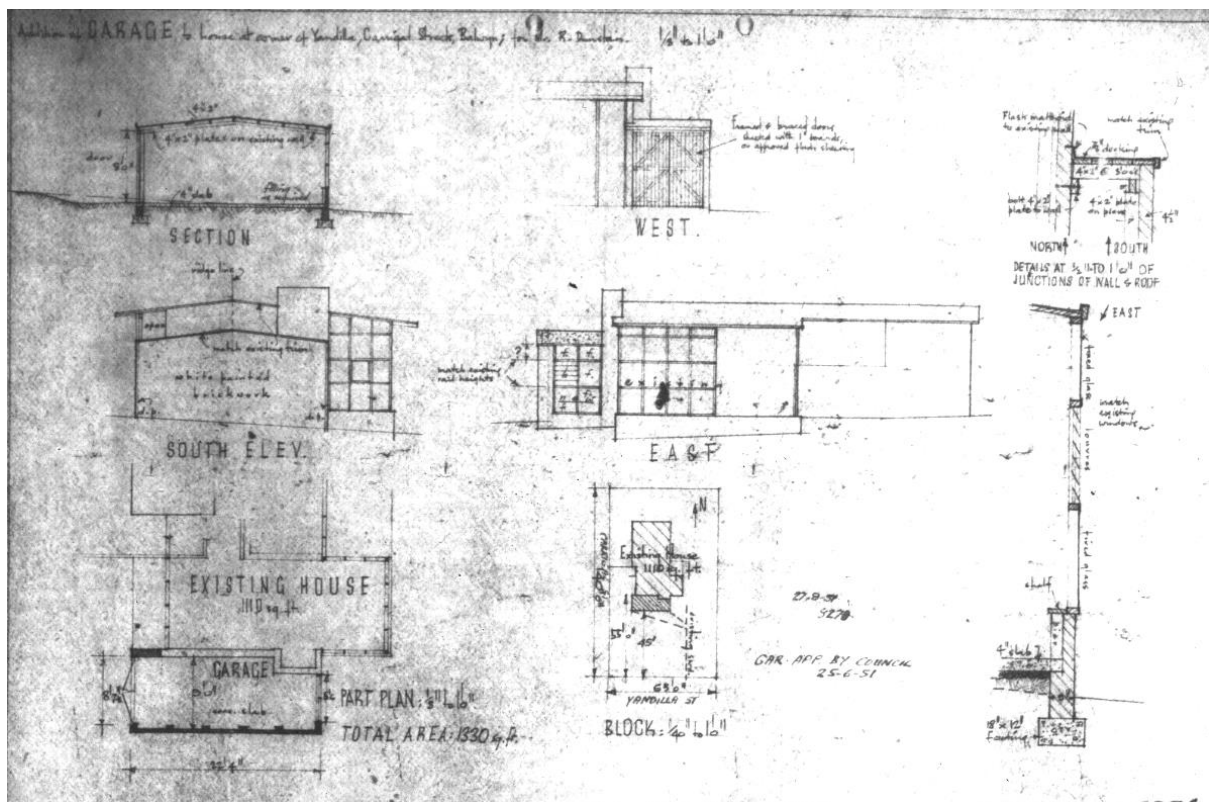


Figure 6 Building application plan showing the proposed garage addition. (Source: BP 1951)





Figure 7 Dunstan House, showing the attached garage on the right. Photographed by Peter Wille, 1951. (Source: State Library Victoria, Accession no: H91.244/705)

In 1963, the couple engaged Boyd once again to complete a third and final stage (Lee 2008). This involved the partial gutting of the garage and its extension and enclosure to create a new wing, with a study and master bedroom with *en suite* bathroom (BP 33307). A new three-car carport was to be provided at the opposite (north) end, incorporating a covered play area for the children, and a tool shed (BP 33307). As part of these building works, Boyd arranged for the original (and somewhat experimental) Malthoid roof—which had frequently leaked—to be replaced with more conventional metal tray decking (Lee 2008).

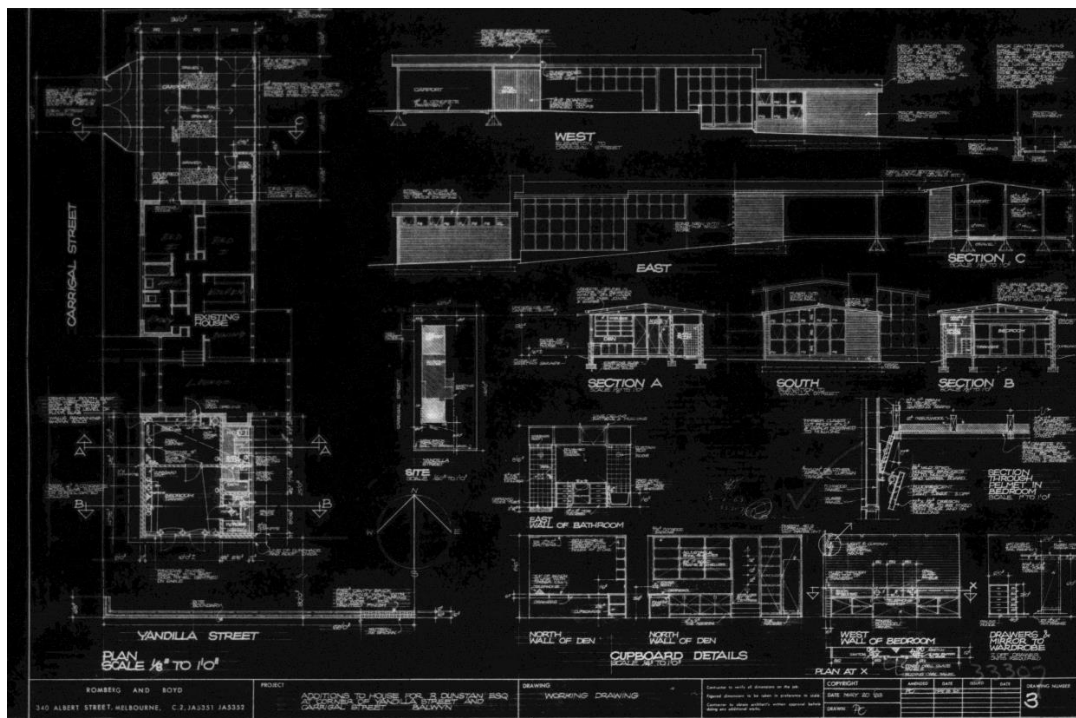


Figure 8 Working drawing showing phase three of the design realised in 1963 (Source: BP 33307)

An oval inground swimming pool was dug in 1972 in the north-east corner of the block (BP 50445). This pool was filled in in 2020.

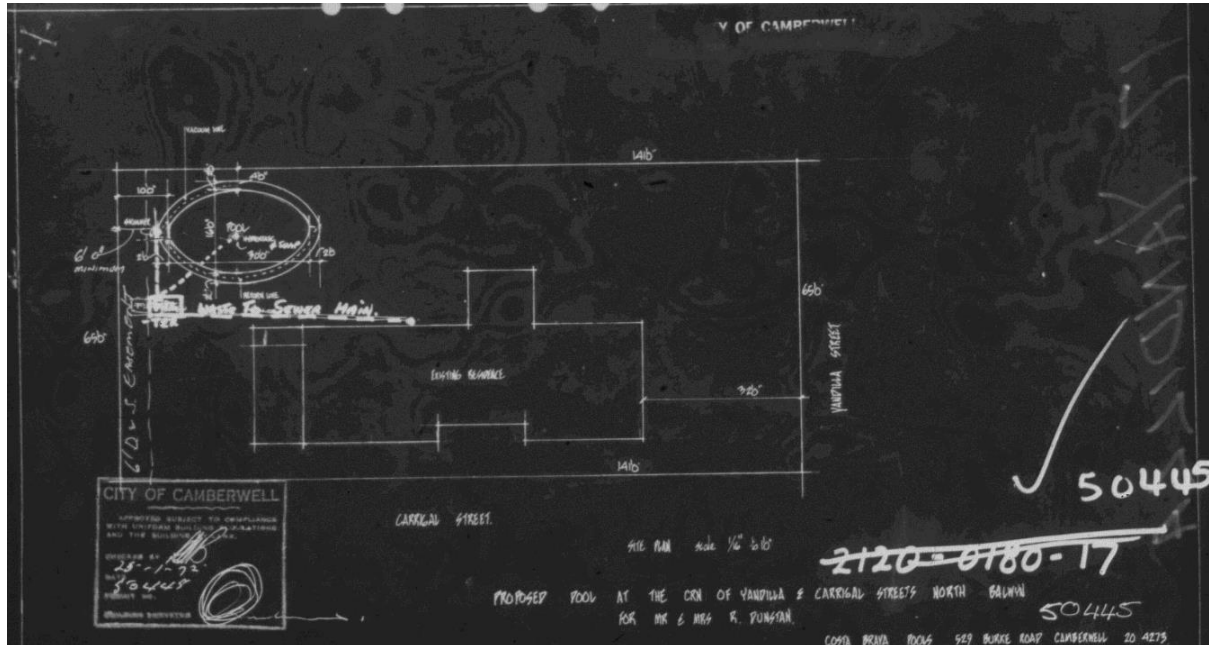


Figure 9 Drawing showing oval swimming pool added in 1972 and filled in in 2020 (Source: BP 50445)

No further alterations or additions appear to have been made to the property and it remains in the Dunstan family (CT V6838 F528).

### Robin Boyd

Robin Boyd was a highly influential architect, architectural historian, critic and educator. He trained at the University of Melbourne and was articled to A & K Henderson. He became active in architectural writing, editing the influential Royal Victorian Institute of Architects Students' Society journal, *Smudges*, in 1939 before publishing Victoria's first history of modern architecture, *Victoria Modern*, in 1947 (Goad 2009:290).

Boyd was a leader in Melbourne's Modern Architecture movement and a visionary in Australian urban design. His design promoted interaction between the built and natural environments, contemporary lifestyle and Australian identity (Serle 1995:i). Boyd was the Director of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects Small Homes Service after World War II and gained a public reputation through this work. Boyd, more than any other architect at the time, provided the drive for the Small Homes Service to succeed, by bringing the best of what architects had to offer to the average Australian family who needed to build a home in the economically austere times immediately after World War II when there were shortages of building materials and labour.

Boyd went on to design many early Australian project homes, and in 1953 formed a highly influential practice with Frederick Romberg and Roy Grounds. Grounds, Romberg and Boyd (Romberg and Boyd by 1962) went on to become an influential and leading practice in Melbourne, although each of the principals tended to operate independently within the office and there were clear differences between the work of the three (Goad 2009:291; Goad 2012:102).

For a period in the late 1950s, Boyd taught at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston, USA. In 1969, he was awarded the RAI A Gold Medal and in January 1971 he was made CBE (Commander, Order of the British Empire). He continued to practice until his sudden death on 16 October 1971 (Goad 2012:102).

## Description

Dunstan House occupies a narrow corner allotment that slopes downward to the north. The house is built to the street boundary on its Carrigal Road frontage and is substantially setback from Yandilla Street.

The house is a single-storey early Modernist house of brick construction (with a bagged and painted finish) and a low gabled roof, now clad in metal tray decking. As outlined in the history, it owes its current form to three discrete phases: the original house of 1949-50, a small addition to the south of 1951 and larger additions to the north and south of 1963 (which partly enveloped the 1951 addition). Occupying a gently sloping corner allotment, the house has an elongated and slightly irregular rectilinear plan, which is stepped to follow the topography of the site.

Viewed from its principal (Carrigal Road) frontage, the house has an elongated and asymmetrical facade with a continuous low gabled roof that extends from north to south that envelops the original house and the double carport at the north end (added in 1963). The corresponding 1963 addition at the opposite (south) end is set at a lower level, with a separate but matching low gabled roof. The original house has generous windows to Carrigal Road, expressed in half- or full-height bays of small rectangular panes; a similar expression, but on a more limited scale, is echoed in the adjacent 1963 addition. The south facade of this addition, facing Yandilla Street, has five bays of full-height glazing. The original timber window frames on the southern and western elevations have been retained. The short, wide chimney of the original house remains evident at the right (east) side of its former end wall, partly concealed by the 1963 addition.

On the Yandilla Street side, there is a substantial lawned yard with a tall gum tree and medium and sized shrubs. A low, stepped brick retaining wall lines the Yandilla Street boundary.



Figure 10 Detail from Yandilla Street showing full height glazing. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 11 Detail from Carrigal Street showing glazing. (Source: GML 2021)



## **Integrity**

17 Yandilla Street, Balwyn is highly intact with very few changes to its original and extended built form. The house was built in three successive phases spanning 13 years with architect Robin Boyd designing each stage of its development. Personal communications have revealed that Boyd designed the first phase of Dunstan House to allow for later additions once post Second World War building restrictions eased. The additions were partially realised in 1951 with the addition of the attached garage. This element was later integrated into the more substantial additions fronting Yandilla Street made in 1963.

The building retains its 1950 and 1963 built form, low gabled roof and elongated plan that partly steps down the sloping site. It retains original detailing, joinery and fenestration, including the generous windows expressed as various permutation of square timber-framed sashes. While the low brick retaining wall fronting Yandilla Street appears to be a later addition, it does not diminish the legibility of the design nor the setting. The integrity of the place is enhanced by its setting which includes a substantial garden to the west towards which much of the house is orientated.

Overall, the place has 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.

Despite various subdivisions in the late 1800s and in the early twentieth century, the vast majority of the housing stock in the section of Balwyn east of Narrak Road and Caravan Street was not built until the postwar period. Similarly 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. This part of Balwyn/Balwyn North 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.

Within this context, Robin Boyd was one of the key architects designing houses in Balwyn and Balwyn North. Resuming private architectural practice after the Second World War, Boyd designed a house for himself and his wife in Riversdale Road, Camberwell (1946) and subsequently undertook several commissions in the suburbs that now constitute the City of Boroondara. In an early partnership with Kevin Pethebridge and Frank Bell (1945-47), he designed two houses in Kew and a factory in Hawthorn.





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))

Opening his own office in 1948, Boyd designed several houses in the developing Balwyn/Balwyn North area.

The Dunstan Residence in Yandilla Avenue (1948-49) was the first of these, soon followed by a house for the architect's cousin, J P Boyd, at 46 Fortuna Avenue (1948-49), the Wood House in Tannock Street, HO928 (1949-50) and the Gillison House in Kireep Road, Balwyn, HO177 (1952). After entering into partnership with Roy Grounds and Frederick Romberg in 1953, Boyd maintained his connections with Balwyn North, designing the Richard Latchford House at 72 Longview Road and the Alan Brown House at 39 Woodville Street (both 1953-54) and, over a period of years, undertaking several phases of addition to all three of his earlier pre-partnership houses there. Of these houses three are included in the Heritage Overlay.



Figure 13. 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.

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Figure 14. Gillison House, 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn, designed by Robin Boyd in 1952 (HO177). (Source: *Docomomo Journal* 65, 2019 copyright)

'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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Figure 15. 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)

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.

---

Today, six Boyd houses in the Balwyn/Balwyn North area survive in varying degrees of intactness. The Brown House, 39 Woodville Street (1953-54), has been substantially altered to the effect that its original design legibility has been lost. Latchford House, 72 Longview Road (1953-54) has similarly been subject to unsympathetic alterations. The J P Boyd House, 46 Fortuna Avenue (1948-49), has been enlarged on three occasions: twice to Boyd's design (in 1955 and 1966) and, more recently, by others resulting in a loss of integrity.

By contrast, the Dunstan Residence and the Wood House (HO928) at 12-14 Tannock Street (1949-50), are highly intact: neither has any significant post-Boyd additions, and both stand out for the clarity in which the original buildings, and their subsequent phases of addition, can be clearly interpreted. Although of similar date, the two houses are markedly different in their composition: while the Dunstan Residence is a low-cost compact brick dwelling with broad gabled roof and large multi-paned window walls, the Wood House has an elongated spreading plan with skillion roof, continuous window bays and huge single-pane picture window.

The Dunstan Residence is one of few surviving examples of residential commissions from the early phase of Boyd's career, prior to his celebrated partnership with Roy Grounds and Frederick Romberg. Compared with the examples above, the subject building is distinguished by its high level of integrity and intactness. Along with the Gillison House, 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn (1951), and Wood House, 12-14 Tannock Street, the subject building 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.

### **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).*

17 Yandilla 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 by noted Melbourne based architect and critic, Robin Boyd in 1949-50 and built in three stages in 1950, 1951 and 1963, Boyd designed this house early in his career just after completing his own home in Riversdale Road. Boyd has incorporated many similar features within both houses including an open, site-responsive split-level plan and extensive walls of glazing, elements that would be much copied by other architects in the coming decades. Profiled in popular home magazine *Australian House & Garden*, in 1951, 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).*

17 Yandilla Street, Balwyn is of aesthetic significance as a notable achievement in modern homebuilding at a time when materials and labour were still scarce due to wartime restrictions. In the face of such limitations, Boyd introduced the idea of a regional interpretation of modern architecture that he first discussed in his influential 1947 publication *Victorian Modern*. Included in his basic ideas, as evidenced by this house, were such concepts as open-planning, split-levels and vast areas of glazing or window walls. These were extremely innovative concepts at the time 17 Yandilla Street was built and became design principles that would recur throughout Boyd's own career and be widely adopted by many architects working in the 1950s and 1960s.

*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)*

17 Yandilla Street, Balwyn has associative significance as an early and notably intact example of the work of the eminent designer and writer Robin Boyd. Documented in late 1948 and built in 1949-50, the house was one of the first projects undertaken by Boyd when he left the partnership of Kevin Pethebridge and Frank Bell to open his own sole practice. Today, it remains as one of relatively few surviving examples from this seminal phase of Boyd's career, prior to his celebrated partnership with Roy Grounds and Frederick Romberg. Along with the Gillison House in Kireep Road, Balwyn (1951) and the Wood House in Tannock Street, Balwyn North (1950), it is one of three outstanding early and substantially intact houses by Robin Boyd in the Balwyn/Balwyn North area, which, considered collectively, provide rare and valuable evidence of the innovation, boldness and fresh design approaches of a young architect on the cusp of an illustrious career.



## Statement of Significance

### What is significant?

The Dunstan Residence at 17 Yandilla Street, Balwyn North, designed by Robin Boyd in 1949-50 and built in three stage (1950, 1951 and 1963, is significant.

Elements that contribute to significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Its 1950, 1951 and 1963 built form and low gabled roof
- elongated and slightly irregular rectilinear plan, which is stepped to follow the topography of the site
- pattern of fenestrations and door openings including window walls expressed in half- or full-height bays of small rectangular panes
- the 1950 chimney.

Significance of the place is enhanced by its setting which includes a substantial garden to the west and the low stepped front fence.

### How is it significant?

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

### Why is it significant?

17 Yandilla 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 by noted Melbourne based architect, critic and educator, Robin Boyd in 1949-50 and built in three stages in 1950, 1951 and 1963, Boyd designed this house early in his career just after completing his own home in Riversdale Road. Boyd has incorporated many similar features within both houses including an open, site-responsive split-level plan and extensive walls of glazing, elements that would be much copied by other architects in the coming decades. Profiled in popular home magazine *Australian House & Garden*, in 1951, the house exemplifies the large concentration of architect-designed Modernist houses built in Balwyn and Balwyn North during the 1950s and 1960s. (Criterion A)

17 Yandilla Street, Balwyn is of aesthetic significance as a notable achievement in modern homebuilding at a time when materials and labour were still scarce due to wartime restrictions. In the face of such limitations, Boyd introduced the idea of a regional interpretation of modern architecture that he first discussed in his influential 1947 publication *Victorian Modern*. Included in his basic ideas, as evidenced by this house, were such concepts as open-planning, split-levels and vast areas of glazing or window walls. These were extremely innovative concepts at the time 17 Yandilla Street was built and became design principals that would recur throughout Boyd's own subsequent career and be widely adopted by many architects working in the 1950s and 1960s. (Criterion E)

17 Yandilla Street, Balwyn has associative significance as an early and notably intact example of the work of the eminent designer and writer Robin Boyd. Documented in late 1948 and built in 1949-50, the house was one of the first projects undertaken by Boyd when he left the partnership of Kevin Pethebridge and Frank Bell to open his own sole practice. Today, it remains as one of relatively few surviving examples from this seminal phase of Boyd's career, prior to his celebrated partnership with

Roy Grounds and Frederick Romberg. Along with the Gillison House in Kireep Road, Balwyn (1951) and the Wood House in Tannock Street, Balwyn North (1950), it is one of three outstanding early and substantially intact houses by Robin Boyd in the Balwyn/Balwyn North area, which, considered collectively, provide rare and valuable evidence of the innovation, boldness and fresh design approaches of a young architect on the cusp of an illustrious career. (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:

<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>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<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 2012.



## References

Apperly, R., Irving, R. & Reynolds, P. 1989. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*. Angus & Robertson, Sydney.

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Stahle, Lesley 1951. 'Outlook for Moderns'. *Australian House & Garden*, October 1951, p16ff.

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