WELSH HOUSE

Address	4 Eton Court, Heidelberg
Significance	Local
Construction Date	1965-1972
Period	Late 20th century
Date Inspected	January 2021

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

Welsh House at 4 Eton Court, Heidelberg is significant. It was designed around 1965 by the architect Charles Duncan and then built chiefly by its initial owners, Graham and Adele Welsh, over several years.

The significant elements are the three interlinked wings, bellcast hipped roofs, broad eaves, white sheeted-soffits, chimney, exposed recycled brick walls with raked joints, arrangement of the piers, double carport, and timber-framed fenestration (floor-to-ceiling windows, casements, hinged doors).

The central courtyard and terraced 'bush style' front garden complement the overall aesthetic of the place.

Some original elements to the interior are also significant, specifically the long passageway in the east wing, internal walls of exposed brick and shiplap timber boarding, slate paved floors, ceilings of white-painted plaster sheeting, redwood-lined pyramidal ceiling, the brick fireplace, and the channelled timber kitchen island.

Later addition elements are not significant.

How is it Significant?

Welsh House is of historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

Why is it Significant?

Welsh House is of historical significance as a notable example of the neo-Wrightian organic design mode by the architect Charles Duncan. This approach evolved as a striking variant of Melbourne's modern movement, reflecting an aspiration among a relatively small group of architects to develop a regionalised, more humanist version of international modernism. While Duncan was celebrated in his heyday, his role in advancing and popularising a convincing regional idiom in Melbourne is now less generally recognised. *Welsh House*, which was awarded *The Age*/RAIA Citation (no 9) at its completion in 1972, offers a fine opportunity to examine Duncan's distinctive and considered design approach, which reflected contemporary ideas of living and a new interest in local landscapes and conditions. As a largely owner-built residence, *Welsh House* is an impressive and later instance of the Do-It-Yourself phenomenon, a trend that was integral in shaping the municipality's built environment in the decades after the Second World War. (Criterion A)

Welsh House is of aesthetic significance as a substantial and largely intact example of 1960s organic/regional modernism. The residence has a distinct, robustly massed composition, with three interconnected wings arranged around a central courtyard and terraced garden. The hipped roofs with bellcast profile that cap each wing are elegant and distinguishing elements within the municipality. *Welsh House's* design evokes an intimate connection to place, an aspect uncommon within its well-established suburban context. This design attribute is reinforced by the limited, recycled palette of Hawthorn bricks, slate and timber, both externally and internally, which bestows a rugged and 'earthy' character upon *Welsh House*. Grounding the residence into the landscape are the carport's hefty columns and the slender piers that articulate the gallery of the east wing. Generous glazing allows for ready views of the encompassing 'bush style' garden from within the meticulously detailed and plush interior. (Criterion E)

Description

Welsh House is located at the southern end of Eton Court – a short cul de sac – on a large, irregularly shaped allotment. Relatively thick perimeter plantings partly obscure the residence and courtyard from the public domain.[1]

The residence is formed by three interlinked single-storey rectangular wings, each situated on a different level, arranged around a courtyard and terraced front garden. This siting responds to the allotment's moderate east-to-west slope, locating the house comfortably within the contours of the site and orientating the living spaces to take advantage of the solar cycle. It also reflects the desire of the architect and client to 'wrap' the house around a pre-existing and prominent red gum near the centre of the lot.[2] However, this tree has since been removed.

As depicted by the original floorplan, the arrangement of *Welsh House* lent itself to coherent internal zoning, namely a carport and storage rooms in the west wing (nearest the street), public living space in the central wing, and bedrooms branched off a long passageway in the east wing. Such site-specific siting facilitated climatic control and a strong visual/spatial relationship between the majority of rooms and the surrounding garden – a design more concerned with sensible planning than streetscape presence.

Each of the wings is capped by a prominent hip with a bellcast profile. The architect of *Welsh House*, Charles Duncan, frequently explored hipped roofs in his work. He viewed them as a regional element popularly associated with protective/homely qualities; however, Duncan's hipped roofs were readily interpreted as 'modern', an impression created at the subject place by their unusual bellcast shape (slight curve resulting in a lower pitch at the termination of the roof slope) and the manner in which the roofs appear to 'float' above the walls. The effect of the latter supported by the broad eaves and underlying piers. Soffits are clad in white-coloured sheeting (possibly the original 'hardiflex'[3]) with a timber fascia. The existing glazed terracotta tiles are replacements, the original (experimental) cedar shingle cladding (see Site-specific) having perished or proved vulnerable to water ingress. A short and broad brick chimney punctures the roof of the central wing. Solar panels are a later addition.

Welsh House is constructed from recycled Hawthorn bricks (presumably salvaged from historic buildings) laid in a stretcher bond with raked joints. The 'rough side' of the bricks purposefully face the exterior to endow a robust and 'earthy' quality, a key aspect of the design that helps the residence harmonise with the site.[4]

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1   This description is also informed by public realm photographs, see '4 Eton Court, Heidelberg', https://www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-heidelberg-116772603, May 2014, available online
2   John Barker, '"Do-it-yourself" house is a winner', *Age*, 11 December 1972, p14
3   Barker, '"Do-it-yourself" house is a winner', p14
4   Barker, '"Do-it-yourself" house is a winner', p14

Articulating the western elevation of the northern wing and its central counterpart's front and rear elevations are bays created by narrow brick piers, which ground the house within the terrain. The bays display well-recessed timber-framed openings, either floor-to-ceiling windows or square casements. The use of the former and the latter correspond with the need for internal privacy. The majority of the floor-to-ceiling windows are fixed or hinged doors and feature a broad timber band to their lower part, dividing each glass sheet into two unequal sections.
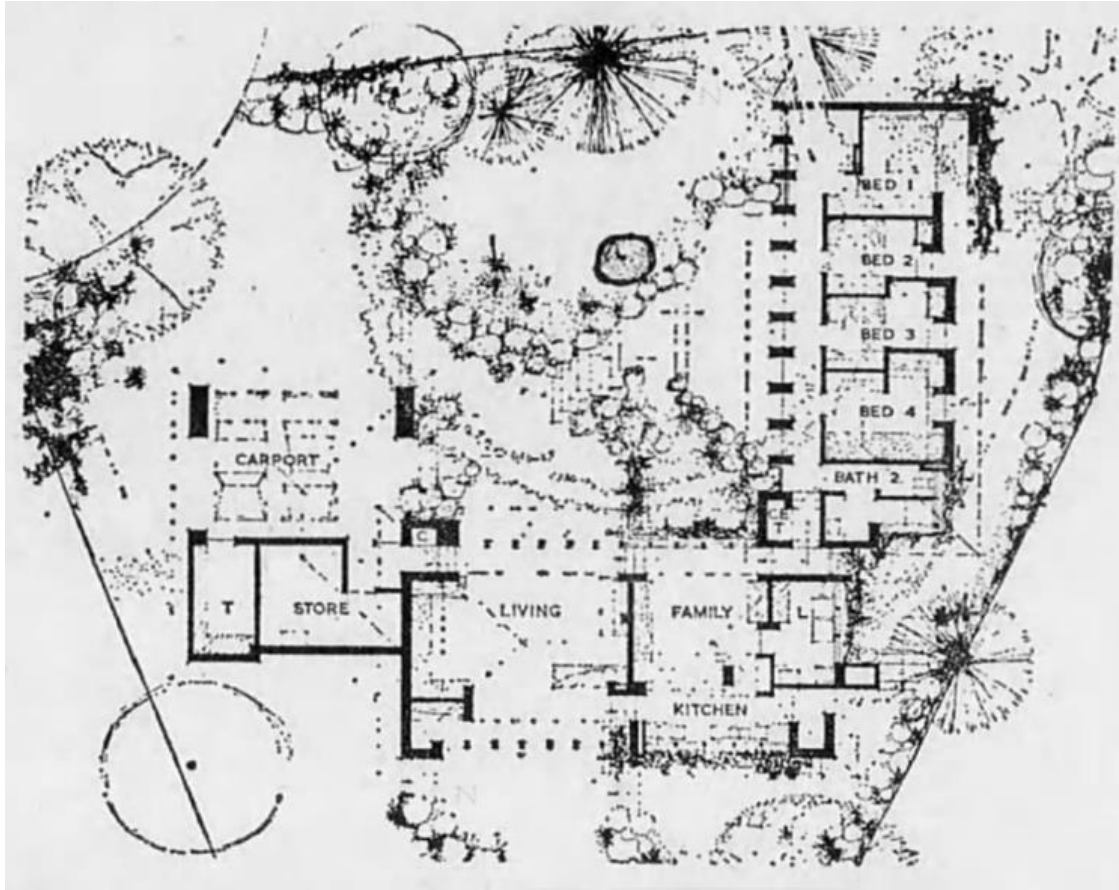
Published original floor plan for *Welsh House* – north is top of frame
(Source: John Barker, '"Do-it-yourself" house is a winner', *Age*, 11 December 1972, p14)

The double carport defines the public presentation of *Welsh House* and accommodates the main entry (obscured), providing a 'direction connection between the house and the car, a drive-in domesticity'.[5] The dominant roof and hefty rectangular columns (x3) suggest a cavernous space beneath. The floor and driveway are surfaced in variously sized square or rectangular concrete pavers. This finish possibly replaced the packed dirt of early site photographs or was always intended.

Contemporary real estate photographs depict *Welsh House's* interior as generally intact.[6] The free-flowing and logical overall layout appears to remain, although the rear half of the carport wing, initially a store and toilet, has been adapted into an additional bedroom and ensuite with new openings created in its rear elevation. Important internal elements are walls of exposed brick and shiplap timber boarding (clear finish); slate paved floors; ceilings of white-painted plaster sheeting with concealed fixtures/services and recessed lighting; geometric brick fireplace (living room); redwood-lined pyramidal ceiling (living room); and channelled timber kitchen island (the bench may be a later addition).

The existing whole-site naturalistic indigenous/native landscaping treatment is indicative of the 'bush garden' style that grew in acceptance from the postwar period. It also serves to screen the private world of the courtyard from the street. While the focal red gum has been removed, other formative elements appear to endure, such as the terrace sections of lawn and garden beds in the front part, volcanic rock retaining walls, brick planter boxes and basalt pavers. It is likely that mature trees are associated with

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5   Geoffrey London, Philip Goad and Conrad Hamann, *An Unfinished Experiment in Living: Australian Houses 1950-65*, UWAP Publishing, 2017, p17
6   Realesate.com.au, '4 Eton Court, Heidelberg', May 2014, <www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-heidelberg-116772603>

the formative phase of *Welsh House*. The front garden has never been fenced. Timber paling fences to the side and rear are non-original. Located in the southern extremity of the property is a brick and hipped-roof workshop, which is original.
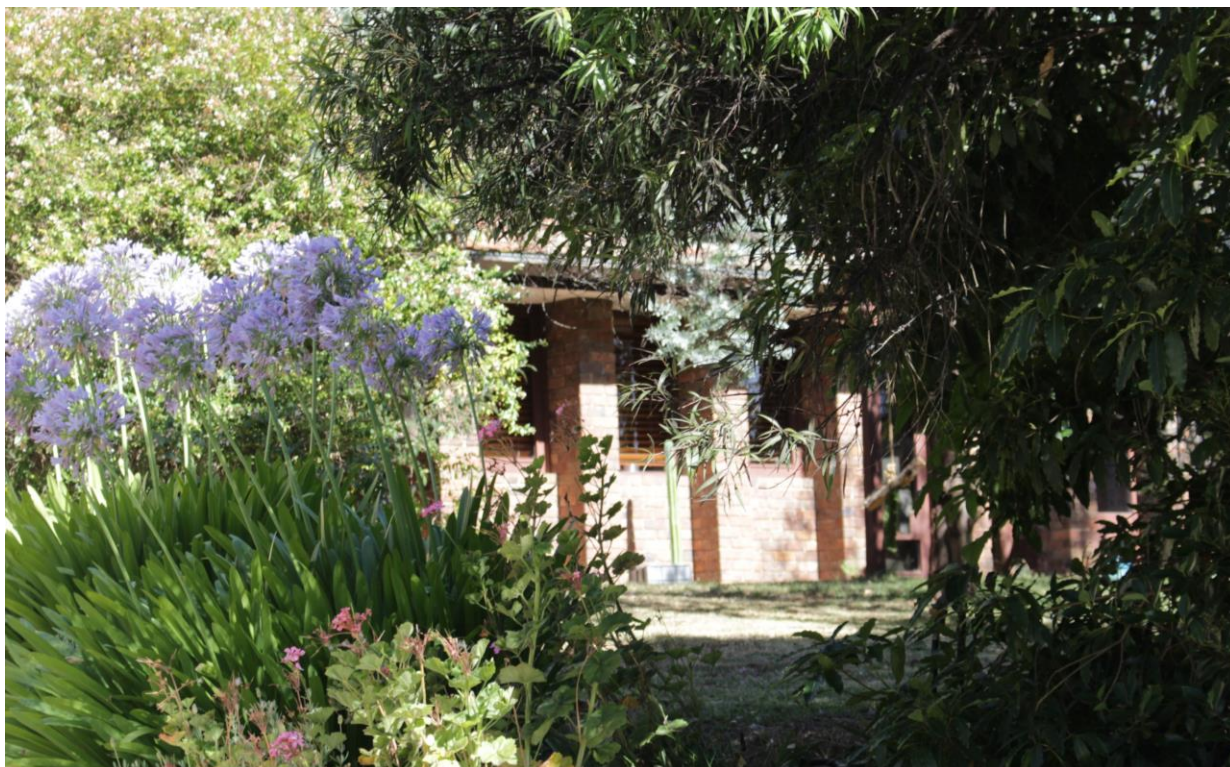
Landscaped filtered view to west wing from street, note different bay treatment with casement windows/ ow brick wall (left) and floor-to-ceiling windows (right)

Welsh House is classifiable as an example of what architectural historian Philip Goad describes as the 'Wrightian survival'.[7] A vein of postwar modernism that turned away from the perceived anonymity of the International Style to draw from the American master Frank Lloyd Wright's ideas of 'Organic Architecture'. These complex principles were typically translated as an intimate response to site, low-slung and vaguely biomorphic forms, humble materials, and an embrace of 'primitive' – albeit readily modern – notions of space and shelter (the cave). From the 1970s, many aspects of the neo-Wrightian approach pioneered by architects entered the vernacular of mainstream builders.[8]

Alongside some Melbourne architect's fascination with Wright and his body of work – generally reconceived to suit local conditions (reduced scale, detail and cost, and climate specifics) – were other important interests, such as a re-evaluation of Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin and the humanism of Alvar Aalto. Less articulated but deeply rooted were the influences of traditional eastern design and the Arts & Crafts movement. The organic design mode, gathering pace over the 1950s, illustrated a more profound engagement of modernist architects with the local landscape and search for an authentic regional built expression.[9] In contemporary circles, organic/regional versus rational/international modernism proved the central architectural dichotomy.

The organic/regional design mode, alongside the other variants of the modern movement, should also be recognised as indicative of major shifts in daily life for the wider population, particularly from the mid-1950s, driven by rising prosperity, technological advances and changing societal attitudes. The enthralment of many avant-garde architects with domestic design both reflected and reinforced such transformations, encouraging lifestyles revolving around intensifying consumerism, increased car ownership and more relaxed outdoor-orientated mindsets. 'Good-life Modernism' for those who could attain it.[10]

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[7]   Goad, *The modern house in Melbourne, 1945-1975,* Chapter 6, pp31-32

[8]   Philip Goad, 'The Australian House in the 1960s', in Paula Whitman, Tracey Avery and Peta Dennis, eds, *Cool: The 1960s Brisbane House*, School of Design and Built Environment, QUT, 2004, p8

[9]   Goad, 'Regionalism', in Goad and Julie Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p589

[10]   Mark Jarzombek, '"Good-Life Modernism" And Beyond: The American House in the 1950s and 1960s: A Commentary", *The Cornell Journal of Architecture*, vol 4, 1990, pp77-93

History

Context

The City of Banyule covers the unceded Country of the Wurundjeri-willam people, who have inhabited and managed its landscape for thousands of generations and maintain an ongoing cultural connection.[11] The lightly wooded grasslands of what became known as 'Ivanhoe' were quickly targeted for sheep runs and by timber-cutters from the 'illegal squatter camp' downstream the *Birrarung*/Yarra at Melbourne (est. 1835).[12] However, as part of the 'Heidelberg' district in the Parish of Keelbundora, this area passed rapidly into private hands via auction in Sydney Town in 1838.[13]

Over the following decade, a patchwork of 'prestige' estates emerged, along with a surveyed township – *Warringal* (possibly 'eagle's nest'), later 'Heidelberg' – on the river's west bank.[14] Productive river flats, and the demands of the gold diggings further afield, encouraged market gardening, orchards and (gradually, due to soil exhaustion and flooding) dairying. Activities all mostly undertaken by tenant farmers.[15] This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.[16]

Intensive residential development was curbed by poor communications with Melbourne until 1901, when an improved railway line was laid, initiating 'four decades of slow and relatively affluent suburban sprawl', predominantly in and around the Heidelberg township as well as Eaglemont and Ivanhoe train stations.[17] The broader locality of Heidelberg underwent a postwar development as tracts of pastoral land in its western reaches were transformed into mostly low-scale public housing estates. Heidelberg West, notably, also accommodated the Olympic Village (an Australian innovation) for the 1956 games (some 841 individual dwellings).[18] Throughout, the established environs of Heidelberg – undulating and river-orientated – consolidated as a middle-class area, characterised by single-family, detached housing.

Early 1900s view of Heidelberg township (Source: Picture Victoria, ID 14363)

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11   Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online
12   James Boyce, *1835: The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi
13   Keelbundora stems from a European rendering of Kulbundora – the name of the eldest son of the important Wurundjeri *ngurungaeta* (essentially 'head man') Billibellary. ('Suburban Native Names', Argus 28 April 1906, p5). One of the earliest manifestations of local governance in the Port Phillip District (1840), the fluctuating borders of municipal Heidelberg mirrored its growth, as it was reformatted into a Road District (1860), Shire (1871) and then City (1934). It was amalgamated as the City of Banyule in 1994.
14   Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13
15   Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237
16   Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, sections 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.5, and 2.3.10; and Janine Rizzetti, 'Heidelberg', in Richard Broome et al, eds., *Remembering Melbourne 1850-1960*, Royal Historical Society of Victoria, 2016, p282
17   Don Garden, 'Heidelberg', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008, available online
18   Geoffrey Ballard, 'Olympic Village', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, 2008, available online

Site-specific

The subject allotment derives from the Portion 6 (approximately 372 hectares) of the Parish of Keelbundora, procured by Richard Henry Browne, then a Yass-based pastoralist, at the 1838 Sydney auction of Crown land in the district. Browne is now considered a key promoter, if not the originator, of the name 'Heidelberg'. In 1843, Browne sold about a third of this purchase to his cousin, the lionised 'overlander' Joseph Hawdon (1813-71), who integrated it within his extensive 'Banyule Estate'. A prominent figure in Port Phillip/Melbourne society, Hawdon oversaw his myriad of interests from the estate, residing in 'Banyule Homestead', a commodious, white-rendered Elizabethan/Gothic-style mansion (1846) perched on the lip of ridge overlooking the river flats.[19]

Pencil drawing of *Banyule House* from the river banks, possibly 1850s
(Source: George Alexander Gilbert, SLV, H6638)

1945 aerial photograph of the subject place (approximately identified the red star), then part of the Banyule Estate
(Source: Department of Lands and Survey, *Aerial Survey of Victoria*, Adastra Airways, 849 AIB, Zone 7, University of Melbourne)

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[19]   Refer to *Plan of the Parish of Nillumbik*, Office of Lands and Survey, 1866, SLV, available online; and Victoria Heritage Database, 'Banyule: 60 Buckingham Drive, Heidelberg', available online

Despite several different owners and some truncation, the Banyule Estate remained a considerable tract of predominantly cleared rural land at its purchase by the Stanley Korman-headed company, Stanhill Estate Pty Ltd, in 1958. Korman, a self-made and controversial businessman, organised the purchase to subdivide the roughly 110-hectare property residentially.[20] This proposition attracted local pushback and various complications (zoning, green space, service provisions) arose between Heidelberg Council, the MMBW and Korman. Ultimately, Banyule Pty Ltd – a Stanhill subsidiary – received permissions for a staged subdivision, with sales beginning in 1963.[21]

Graham Gladstone Welsh (1927-2007) – a professional photographer for the *Herald* – and his wife, Adele Margaret Welsh, both of Northcote, acquired the subject allotment (lot 137) from Banyule Pty Ltd in 1965.[22] Eton Court developed rapidly, with nearly all of the existing properties listed as occupied in the 1970 edition of the *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria*.[23] This record included Graham and Adele, although, as discussed below, their residence had not been completed.[24]

In December 1972, *Welsh House* received The Age/RAIA Citation Award (no 9), then a recognised architectural prize with widespread reach. The article spelled their name as 'Walsh', resulting in some incorrect architectural/heritage references to the subject place. The accompanying article, written by the Architects' Housing Service director, John Barker, provides an array of insights into the development of place, including its unorthodox development.

In the wake of their land purchase, Graham and Adele engaged the architect Charles Duncan to design a family home. At the time, Duncan – then a few years into solo practice – was emerging as a confident practitioner of a Wrightian/organic-influenced modernism. The plans were finalised soon after; however, to reduce costs, the couple decided to undertake the build on their own. Seemingly, they lived at the site during this process, which the article specifies as taking seven years. With 'the exception of plumbing and electrical works', *Welsh House* was built by members of the Welsh family and their friends. Duncan remained 'in close contact' with the project throughout.[25]

The article further outlines how the Welsh family undertook the herculean task of selecting and transporting some 60,000 second-hand Hawthorn bricks from 'various demolition sites around Melbourne' to Eton Court, where they were cleaned by hand over the course of 'almost a year':

> The bricks were laid rough side out with deeply raked joints to add to the textured of the walls. In keeping with the rugged character, cedar random-width shingles were chosen for the roof and were nailed directly to an underlay of second-hand floor boards. Usually battens are used for this purpose but the flooring made the task easier for the volunteer family labour.[26]

> The technique is imported from America where cedar shingles are reputed to last a lifetime, but no long term tests have been carried out under Australian conditions. But the Walsh's are optimistic. "Anyway", said Mrs. Walsh, "they can always be renewed by nailing a new layer over the existing shingles. They have a greater resistance to falling branches than tiles, and each time it rains they give off the magnificent smell of cedar, even after several years". Floors throughout the house are concrete paved with Welsh roofing slates. The Walsh's were fortunate to find unused slates without the usual nail holes to detract from the appearance. An Acrylon finish on the slate stands up to the harsh conditions provided by their two young children.

> The dominant element in the design is a large river red gum in the centre of the site. Consequently the house wraps around the tree while adapting to the levels of the sloping ground. Three different floor levels with separate hip roofs allow a logical grouping of sleeping, living and car accommodation closely related to the site. Internal dropped ceiling panels incorporate electric elements in the plaster sheet to provide heating and conceal strip lighting. A long glazed gallery connecting the bedrooms utilises a repetition of brick piers to break the hot afternoon sun and give privacy from the street.

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[20]   In the midst of financial turmoil and accusations of financial malfeasance, Korman was charged with 'authorising the issue of false prospectus' in 1964 and convicted two years later. Beyond his multifield Melbourne property, hotel and commercial/industry interests, Korman also played a key role in developing Surfers Paradise on the Gold Coas(Peter Spearritt and John Young, 'Korman, Stanley (1904-1988)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 2007, available online)

[21]   Refer to 'The Shrinking Banyule Estate', *Banyule Homestead*, nd, available online; 'Banyule Estate Subdivision Affair of 1958', *Heidelberg Historical Society*, available online; 'Stanhill Housing Plan Finally Approved by Heidelberg Council', *Age*, 15 July 1958, p3; ''Banyule Estate Work to Begin Soon', *Age*, 7 September 1960, p6; and '1000 at Banyule For First Land Sale', *Age*, 4 March 1963, p10

[22]   Graham was registered as the proprietor in March 1965 with Adele becoming the joint owner in December that year. (Certificate of Title, vol. 8452, folio 459; and 'Bottles Hurled at Stadium', *Age*, 28 April 1958, p3)

[23]   Nos 1, 2, 4 and 5 were listed. (*Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria*, 1970, p160)

[24]   The Welsh family retained ownership of the site until 2014. (Certificate of Title, vol. 8462, folio 459)
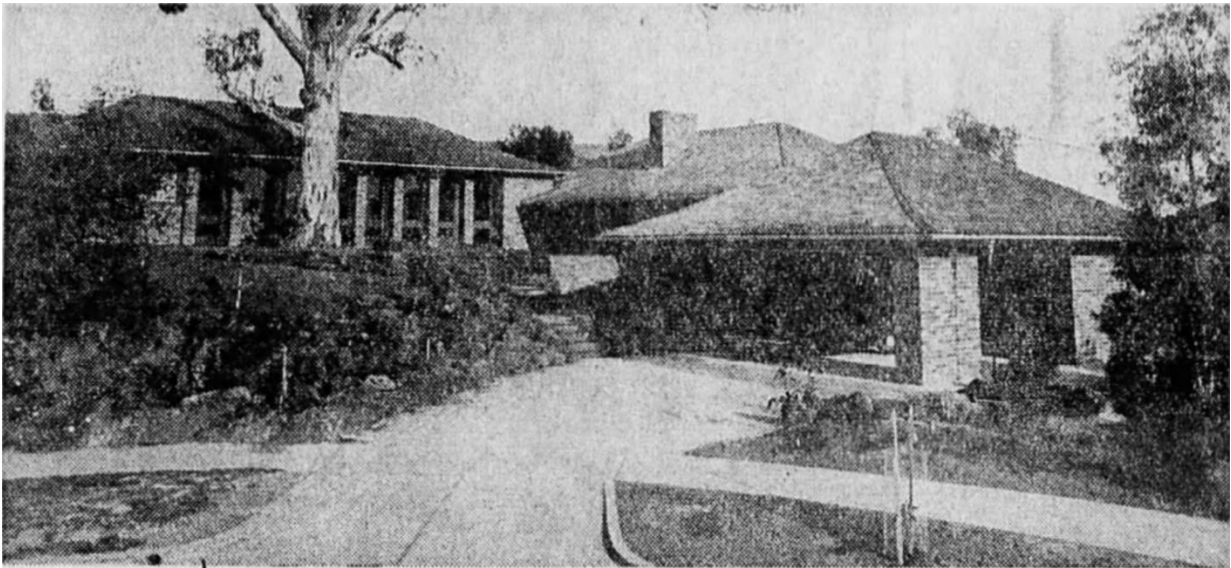
[25]   John Barker, ''Do-it-yourself' house is a winner', *Age*, 11 December 1972, p14

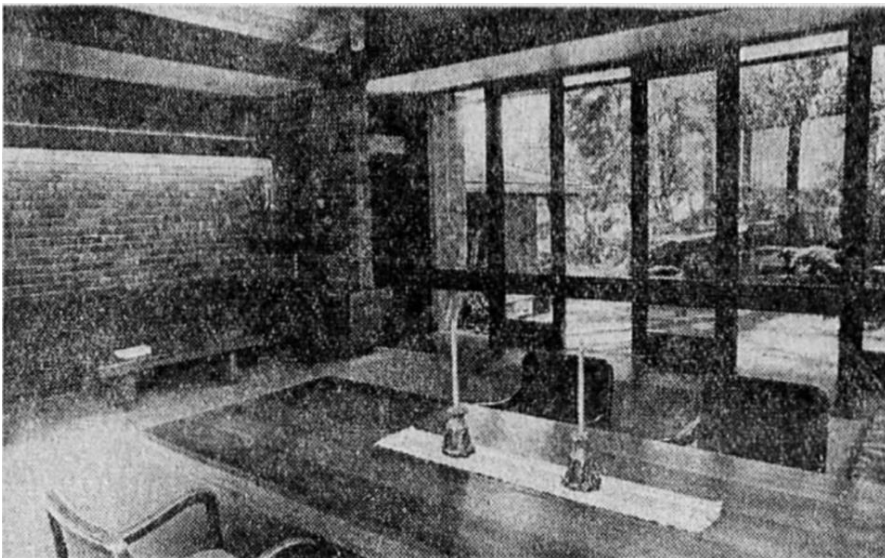[26]   Barker, ''Do-it-yourself' house is a winner', p14

Brick planting boxes outside windows are used to retain the ground where the house has been cut into the high side of the site. Walking around the house it is possible to reach out and touch the weathered shingle roof, which at times comes within four feet of the ground. Bluestone paving combined with volcanic rock has been sued to create a terraced native garden around the house. [27]

The DIY (Do-It-Yourself) phenomenon had peaked in Victoria between the late 1940s and mid-1960s, a response to postwar austerity measures, rising construction costs and the much-publicised 'housing crisis'. Nationally, about one-third of all new homes were owner-built during the 1950s, typically by young couples. Those constructed with the involvement of a professional designer or utilisation of architect-composed drawings, such as commercially supplied by the RVIA Small Homes Service, formed a significant minority.[28] The Welsh's building efforts, at the tail end of the principal DIY phase, highlights the longevity of such activity in suburban Melbourne. Simultaneously, the sheer scale and detail of *Welsh House* – a reflection of its more affluent context – is a far departure from the modest/austere houses that typified the owner-built movement of the postwar years.

Photographs of *Welsh House* in 1972 and their accompanying captions, extracted from the Baker article, follow.

'Three different floor levels with separate roofs allow a logical group of sleeping, living and car accommodation of this impressive Heidelberg home.' (Source: Baker, Barker, *Age*, 11 December 1972, p14)

'Hand – made bricks and natural timber are used in the living area.'
(Source: Baker, *Age*, 11 December 1972, p14)

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27   Barker, Barker, '"Do-it-yourself" house is a winner', p14
28   Nanette Carter, 'DIY (Do-It-Yourself)', in Philip Goad and Julie Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p208

Welsh House was also photographed by the modernist enthusiast Peter Wille (1931-71), seemingly during final landscaping.[29]

Welsh House from Eton Court – note central tree since removed
(Source: Peter Wille, SLV, H91.244/1681)

View across central garden towards *Welsh House*, facing south
(Source: Peter Wille, SLV, H91.244/1697)

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[29]   Wille was employed as a draftsman by the firm Smith, Tracey, Lyon & Block. In his own time, he compiled an extensive record of modernist designs in Melbourne, predominantly in its southeast (he resided in Mount Waverly).

Eastern wing from carport
(Source: Peter Wille, SLV, H91.244/1702)

Central wing left of frame
(Source: Peter Wille, SLV, H91.244/1689)

Central wing, mid frame
(Source: Peter Wille, SLV, H91.244/1696)

Rear elevation carport (note initially solid wall) and central wing
(Source: Peter Wille, SLV, H91.244/1686)

View across courtyard towards carport
(Source: Peter Wille, SLV, H91.244/1688)

Internal gallery – northeast wing
(Source: Peter Wille, SLV, H91.244/1692)

Charles Frederick Duncan (1933–)

Over the 1960s and 1970s, Duncan was responsible for a large, chiefly domestic body of work throughout Victoria that expressed a 'highly original' and personalised interpretation of the Wrightian tradition.[30] His organic design approach represented a different strain of the postwar modern movement in Australia. One more responsive of the landscape and decisive in eliciting a poetic/evocative effect. During the 1960s and 1970s, Duncan was widely recognised as one of the neo-Wrightian idiom's more talented and successful practitioners in the state. Yet despite multiple awards, a relatively prolific output for a small practice, and published acclaim – the *Age* referred to him as 'one of the best-known architects in Victoria' in 1970 – Duncan has yet to receive sustained scholarly attention.[31]

Between 1951 and 1959, Duncan was enrolled in the Diploma of Architecture course at the Royal Melbourne Technical College (now RMIT). He finished his architectural studies at the University of Melbourne, a member of a postwar generation of architects moulded by a rebooted curriculum, provocative tutors, the zeal of 'multiplying modernisms' and a dynamic broader context.[32] Both during and after his studies, Duncan worked for a range of leading architectural offices, namely Chancellor & Patrick, Peter Jorgensen, McGlashan Everist, and Hassell and McConnell.[33] Many of these firms and practitioners were themselves exploring Wrightian/organic/regionalist design modes, which resonated through much of Duncan's subsequent practice. In his own words:

> My feelings are strongly orientated to the organic approach where a house is closely linked to its surroundings and extends from them as part of it not on it.[34]

In 1962, the 29-year-old Duncan commenced his solo architectural career. His first commission – the *Williams House* in the Griffins-designed Glenard Estate (Eaglemont) – received the prestigious RAIA Victoria Architecture Medal (single house category) in 1965. The often-acerbic magazine, *Cross-Section*, described it as:

> One of the few houses by Melb. Archts, young or old, that seems to have deep-seated convictions about architecture as a lively and vigorous art — you can tell the year an architect graduated by his response to this house.[35]

The first two decades of Duncan's solo practice were particularly productive, with at least seven high-end designs constructed in Banyule, mostly across its peri-urban, bushland fringes – optimal settings for Duncan's characteristic organic/regional approach. Outside the municipality, *Tozer House* in Beaconsfield (1964), a 'pinwheel' plan 'recalling a de Stijl painting' constructed of recycled materials (brick, timber, slate), drew popular/critical attention.[36] The *Eltham South Kindergarten* (HO202/Nillumbik Shire), built in 1970, was rare departure from his mostly residential work. Duncan continued operations as an architect into the 1990s.

Thematic Context

Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018:

- Theme 5: Suburban development

See also Allom Lovell & Associates, *Banyule Heritage Place Study: An Urban History*, vol 1, July 1999:

- 6.4 Post-War Residential Development

Comparative Analysis

One Duncan-designed residence in Banyule is currently affected by a HO:

- *Williams House*, 4 Glenard Drive, Eaglemont (HO146) – an 'aggressive play of clinker brick walls and hefty roof planes edged by deep-facias of stained timber', built in 1963.[37] It was later the recipient of the RAIA Victoria Architecture Medal (1965) and consists of a series of overlapping volumes with stepped flat roofs and extensive window walls. While displaying

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30   Goad, *The modern house in Melbourne, 1945-1975*, Chapter 6, p30.
31   Ray Davie, 'It's a grand winner' *Age*, 7 February 1970, p25
32   Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd: A Life*, Melbourne University Press, 1996, p104
33   Built Heritage, *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria. Stage Two: Assessment of Community & Administrative* Facilities, Heritage Victoria, 31 May 2010, p133; and Winsome Callister, 'Duncan, Charles', in Philip Goad and Julie Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p216
34   *Merchant Builders; Towards a new archive*, Melbourne School of Design, 2015, p19
35   *Cross-Section*, The University of Melbourne Department of Architecture, issue no 142, 1 August 1964
36   *Tozer House/Kenilworth*, 6 Coach House Lane, Beaconsfield (part of HO53/Cardinia Shire Council) – see Geoffrey, Philip and Hamann, *An Unfinished Experiment in Living: Australian Houses 1950-65*, p358
37   *Cross-Section*, The University of Melbourne Department of Architecture, issue no 142, 1 August 1964, np

a similar robust external palette and courtyard plan as *Welsh House*, the latter's employment of a hipped bellcast profile roofs engenders it with a more pronounced regional character indicative of Duncan's maturing design approach.

There are also some instances of Duncan's residential work within the *Elliston Estate* (HO92) in Rosanna. This innovative Merchant Builder development precinct (1969-71), based on Radburn planning principles and integrated landscaping by Ellis Stones, featured progressive, individualised house designs by multiple prominent architects (Graeme Gunn, Daryl Jackson, McGlashan Everist). Most featured common characteristics, particularly solar-responsive orientation, generous glazing and 'earthy' palettes. Duncan was responsible for the 'D group', but individual addresses for these are not known.

Several Duncan-designed houses have also been identified in Banyule as part of this Study.[38] Of those known, all date from the 1960s or 1970s – his most architecturally productive period – and are representative of his particular approach. However, these vary in their intactness and/or level of distinctiveness. *Welsh House* stands apart from other instances of his work in the municipality for the continuing integrity of its design, size and bellcast profile of the primary hipped roofs. It is also likely one of the more substantial and ambitious examples of the DIY phenomenon in Banyule.

An array of architect-designed modernist houses are included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay for Banyule. Most originate in the 1950s and reflect the multiplying version of mid-century modernism. The dominant influence of the International Style is prevalent, particularly its preference for rectangular footprints, cuboid forms and stripped-down aesthetic; for instance, 10 Alexandra Street, Greensborough (HO136) by Moore and Hammond, 1957. Others reveal the period's growing interest in the modular derivation of the plan, with steel or timber framing and lightweight panelling and bands of glazing. A key example of specific geometry is the 1954 *Snelleman House* (HO36 + VHR H2282) in Ivanhoe East by architects Peter and Dione McIntyre, often referred to as the 'Coil House'. While the neo-Wrightian organic undertones of *Welsh House* are faintly detectable in some of these designs, only one is especially reflective:

- *V Walker House*, 209 Main Road, Lower Plenty (HO163) – a two-storey cream-brick residence with an unusual, some organic trapezoidal form created by slanted sidewalls and a 'folded' gabled roof, by Hipwell, Weight & Mason, 1958.

Collectively, these varied examples of modernism provide insight into the forces of modernity that shaped the district following the Second World War, particularly shifting sociocultural and economic factors and the willingness of some residents to interact with then unconventional design culture and novel lifestyle patterns.[39]

Intactness

Largely intact

Previous Assessment

- RBA Architects + Conservation Consultants, *Banyule Heritage Study 2020: Stage 1 report*, Banyule City Council, August 2020 – High priority, recommend for Stage 2

Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls

External Paint Controls	Yes (brick walls and timber elements)
Internal Alteration Controls	Yes (east wing passageway, walls of exposed brick/timber boarding, slate paved floors, plaster ceilings, redwood-lined pyramidal ceiling, brick fireplace, and timber kitchen island)
Tree Controls	Yes (front garden – mature native/indigenous species)
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

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[38]   Existing Duncan designs in the municipality include *Reade House*, 14 Lorraine Drive, Briar Hill (1966); *Woollogorang/Bucknell House*, 8 Woodfull Road, Lower Plenty (1967); 56 Buckingham Drive, Banyle; *Knott House*, 21 Castle Street, Eaglemont (1968-9); and *Wynkara*, 17 Stawell Road, Lower Plenty (undated). The Duncan-designed *Host House* at 27 Seymour Road, Viewbank, has recently been demolished/replaced.

[39]   Geoffrey London, Philip Goad and Conrad Hamann, *An Unfinished Experiment in Living: Australian Houses 1950-65*, UWA Publishing, 2017, passim

Extent of Heritage Overlay

The proposed extent of the heritage overlay is outlined approximately below.

Recommended extent of heritage overlay
(Source: Nearmap, April 2020)