

LINDSAY EDWARD HOUSE

Address	149 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty
Significance	Local
Construction Date	1950-52
Period	Postwar
Date Inspected	January 2021



(Source: Street-facing elevation, March 2016, realeaste.com.au)

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

Lindsay Edward House at 149 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty is significant. It was constructed between 1950 and 1952 as a family home and studio for the artist and educator Lindsay Maurice Edward. Alistair Knox was the designer and builder. During the long occupation by the Edward family (until 2016), the house was enlarged on multiple occasions and a series of external and internal modifications undertaken. The property was also subdivided. Knox may have been involved in implementing some of the early changes that his original plan has envisioned. Lindsay Edward is understood to have been responsible for most of the sympathetic modifications undertaken over the late 20th century.

The significant element is the original U-shaped/'butterfly' and split-level plan of *Lindsay Edward House*, including the cuboid form of the three connecting sections, flat and skillion roofs, moderate eaves overhang, exposed rafter to timber soffits, chimney or flue (south wing), walls of mud-brick, vertical timber cladding, timber-framed window walls, casement windows, fixed glazing, timber-framed/glazed entrance door, and rear patio of multicoloured cement blocks (random pattern).

The natural slope of the property and its general 'natural' landscaping enhances the setting of *Lindsay Edward House*.

Internally, the 'hanging' timber stair in the entrance hall and ground-floor ceilings of exposed timber beams are significant.

The late 20th-century additions and alterations are broadly sympathetic with the original plan and design philosophy of *Lindsay Edward House*. Their complementary elements are flat roofs, walls of mudbrick and window walls, and timber pergolas.

How is it Significant?

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

Why is it Significant?

Lindsay Edward House is of historical significance as an early and commodious example of a postwar mud-brick residence in the municipality. It has an association with Lindsay Edward – a well-regarded art teacher at Melbourne RMIT, whose output of semi-abstract paintings and murals achieved national attention over the second half of the 20th century – as his long-standing family home and, for a while, studio. The original house was designed and constructed, with Edward's assistance, by Alistair Knox, then in the formative stage of his career as an acclaimed practitioner of 'environmental building' and Victoria's foremost proponent of adobe. The design's employment of a vernacular earth construction technique, while likely a conscious aesthetic decision on the part of the client, is illustrative of the postwar scarcity of conventional materials that persisted into the early 1950s and the instinct to innovate brought about by the contemporary housing 'crisis'. More broadly, *Lindsay Edward House* is illustrative of the emergence of a postwar community in the Lower Plenty area, associated with Eltham at the time, distinguished by its creativity and embrace of 'alternative' environmental living. (Criterion A)

Lindsay Edward House is of aesthetic significance as the most substantial and architecturally ambitious mud-brick design completed by Alistair Knox in the municipality. It conveys his organic/Wrightian-influenced interest in the vernacular, although at a scale and level of architectural refinement that was then only beginning to define Knox's practice. The solar responsive split-level 'butterfly' plan – spreading naturally across the property's slope – combined with its volumetric expression encapsulates a distinctive local interpretation of postwar Melbourne regionalism. The evolving form of residence under the hands of the Edward family is also reflective of a common circumstance for postwar houses, which were often limited in their original manifestation by various factors (especially materials and size constraints). In this case, however, additions to the design undertaken by its long-term occupants have occurred in broad harmony with the original design and aesthetic. (Criterion E)

Description

Lindsay Edward House is situated at a deep set back from Old Eltham Road on a large, irregular allotment that slopes to the east. Due to repeated subdivision, the residence is now situated close to its east boundary. Initially, it occupied the central part of a larger property made up of nos 147 and 151. The site's frontage is unfenced and lined with a hedge, behind which are informally arrayed several tall trees, a mixture of exotics and indigenous/native species. A curved driveway paved in brick leads from the street to the house. The tall timber palisade side fences are non-original. The side and rear portions of the garden are similarly landscaped and feature several mature indigenous/native trees.

The distance of the dwelling from the street (approximately 25 metres), combined with its orientation and the screening of existing vegetation, conceals or obscures views of the place from the public realm. As such, this assessment depends in part on aerial photographs, contemporary real estate photographs and historical images/architectural plans.¹

Lindsay Edward House's footprint and form evolved over the lengthy occupation of the Edward family (early 1950s to 2016), reflecting their changing needs. In general, these alterations and additions were undertaken in a manner that adhered to the essence of Alistair Knox's original design and, in line with much early postwar development (hampered by size restrictions/material shortages/finance), are likely to have been contemplated or intended.

The core of the house is Knox's early 1950s east-facing, split-level, U-shaped footprint, sprawled lengthwise across the property, perpendicular to the street. Originally, this plan was single-room in width and comprised of three cuboid forms – the central single-storey living section with wings spreading either side (two-storey in the south and single-storey in the north). Its 'butterfly' plan responds to the natural landfall and gestures to Wright's interest in organic/biomorphic shapes. The orientation also responded to Melbourne's solar cycle, allowing morning light to penetrate the principal part of the building, while sheltering bedrooms from the harshness of the western sun. The majority of this plan, while modified in parts, remains interpretable.

The central section of the residence faces onto a patio – initially raised, the ground level has since increased – paved in multicoloured (greys, browns, reds, white) cement blocks in a random geometrical pattern, which largely remain. Natural stone blocks located at its south end are original, performing as ad hoc seating and marking a drop in ground level (the south wing is situated below that of the main living space).

¹ '149 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty', realestate.com.au, March 2016, <https://www.realestate.com.au/property/149-old-eltham-rd-lower-plenty-vic-3093>; Leslie H Runtig, 'Down to Earth in Housing, Section 1, *Australian Home Beautiful*, January 1953; and Keith Bennetts, 'Did The House Live Up To Expectations', *Australian Home Beautiful*, March 1969

Lindsay Edward House's three wings were capped with flat roofs. Initially, these were covered in a layer of Malthoid (bituminous felt) and creek gravel. This finish has perished – probably due to UV exposure – and roofs are now clad in corrugated metal sheeting. There is a eaves overhang with a dark-painted metal fascia. Rafters appear exposed to the soffit. A chimney or metal flue (obscured) is evident to the southern wing. Skylights to the north wing are likely contemporary.

Later additions utilised flat or skillion roofs. To the ground floor, these are generally situated below that of the original eaves, allowing the original 'butterfly' plan to remain distinct, particularly when viewed from the west, where the house's footprint has expanded.

The house is constructed of load-bearing walls of adobe, colloquially mud bricks, likely on a concrete-on-ground slab. The latter is assumed but was Knox's general approach, which was still novel for early 1950s Melbourne at the level of a private dwelling. Walls present as planar, textured surfaces built of large sun-dried bricks (dug and produced on-site). These were initially either bagged in oil paint or rendered in a mud mixture. The nature of the existing coating is not known; however, it allows for the character of the mud bricks to be discerned.

The varied forms of earth construction have ancient roots and were practised by settler communities across Australia, becoming a well-known vernacular building technique over the 19th century. During that period, in Victoria, adobe construction was especially common in the Central Goldfields and some of Melbourne's outer-suburban areas.² Knox's use of mud bricks at *English House* – inspired by his experience of *Montsalvat* (see Site-Specific) – came on the back of a minor revival of the tradition from the mid-1930s, concentrated in the Eltham area.³ Mud brick was integral to Knox's design philosophy, which he would later refer to as 'environmental building' and has been referred to as the 'Eltham style'. An interview with Knox soon after the original *Lindsay Edward House* was completed encapsulates his view on the material:

With earth building, beauty can be expressed simply: natural and honest treatment of the walls so that they retain some of the primeval quality of earth; a true sense of topography through the proper handling of the site; a strong sense of shelter by deft use of the thick walls so that they cast deep shadows at the reveals; the use of simple masses, moulded or curved walls to show the pliancy of the medium; proportions that are unpretentious and fundamental, not frivolous.

No material is more responsive to human expression than mud, provided the initial objectives are not lost sight of — retention of its primeval character, and absolute avoidance of nonsense.⁴

It appears that all of the ground-floor additions at *Lindsay Edward House* have incorporated walls of mud brick. These elements have mainly been concentrated to the west elevation of the central section and north wing.

The original plan included a small single-storey, flat-roofed mud-brick volume attached to the central section's west elevation. It was set back with a timber carport in front, facing the driveway. Between the mid-to-late 1950s and late 1960s, the carport was enclosed with adobe walls to create a new room. Whether the extant timber pergola attached to its south face was erected at this time is not known. Another timber carport was installed at the end wall of the south wing.

After 1969 (see Site-specific), a sizable 'sunroom' was built off part of the west wall of the north wing and connected to the original western volume, which was enlarged. Both new spaces appear to have employed a combination of mud-brick walls and window walls. This arrangement is notable in the 'sunroom' with a solid west wall of adobe and a north-facing window wall mounted on a brick plinth. This space faces a sunken courtyard paved with brick (herringbone pattern) and sheltered by walls of bagged brickwork. The north wall sits above a retaining wall of random cut stone.

Likely at the same time, an opening was created in the end wall of the north wing – by removing a tripartite timber-framed casement bank but retaining some of the former wall as mud-brick nibs – and a small 'sunroom' provided. Its northern return wall is constructed of adobe, with the remainder formed from window walls. Further, a new triangular volume (bathroom and laundry) was constructed behind the north wing, seemingly mud-brick.

In 1955, a vertical addition (master bedroom) with a skillion-roofed addition was erected above the central wing. Its addition was apparently anticipated as part of the original design and is the likely reason why the north wall of the upstairs bathroom was built of vertical timber boards (more readily removable) and not mud-brick. The master bedroom addition was also clad in vertical

² Julie Willis, 'Earth Construction', in Philip Goad and Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University, 2012, p220

³ Miles Lewis, 'Section Three: Earth and Stone – 3.2 Adobe or Clay Lump', *Australian Building: A Cultural Investigation*, p19, available online

⁴ 'Down to Earth in Housing: He Crusades For Mud', Section 3, *Australian Home Beautiful*, January 1953, p7

boards (internally as well). This modification appears to have terminated the use of the central and northern wing roof as a terrace with timber rail.

Another room was provided north of the 1955 addition after the late 1960s. It continued the roofline and timber board and was connected to it via a window-wall walkway, which extended the area of the master bedroom eastwards (requiring the deletion of most of the 1955 timber east wall). The footprint of this extension was matched on the ground floor by a new window wall projecting from the central wing's mud-brick wall. This modification (essentially a new section of external wall) required that the original window wall and double-leafed French doors be removed to enable free internal movement. However, it appears that the original French doors – with each leaf divided into three units by a pair of slender glazing bar – were reclaimed and reused as the entrance to the new window wall. The mud-brick external wall remains to the interior (without windows/doors).

Fenestration is largely unchanged from its various phase of construction, although some original openings have been removed. All openings are timber-framed (stained or painted) and chiefly window walls of varying extents. These are commonly divided into tall vertical dimensions comprised of casements or fixed glazing with toplight. The east face of the south wing has not been altered, retaining its original balanced arrangement of ground-floor double-leafed French doors with a pair of tripartite casements above (central pane may be fixed). Likewise, fenestration to its south elevation remains, including the grouping of a thin rectangular opening flanked by a pair of larger rectangular windows (fixed) to the upper wall. Set in the lower part of the wall is the primary entrance with an original door (glazed with a timber frame) and adjacent (east) window wall.

It is likely that, at least, all timber frames at the place – almost certainly of Oregon timber – were produced at a joinery workshop operated from the rear of Knox's second family home in York Street, Eltham.⁵

Lintels appear to be concrete (painted) with sills likely of mud brick. There are two rows of three small square windows in the upper floor of the west elevation towards the front of the house, which appear to be a late 20th-century alteration (solar control).

As discussed, the floor plan of *Lindsay Edward House* has evolved since construction. In general, the underlying philosophy of free-flowing space, the centrality of the living room and a strong indoor/outdoor relationship established in Knox's first iteration have remained prevalent.

The carefully controlled spatial experience of the entrance sequence, established by Knox in the initial plan, also endures. That is, admission to the residence via a narrow door (west elevation, timber-framed/glazed) straight into the compressed space of a small hall – dominated by a curved 'hanging', open riser timber stair (likely extant) – leading naturally into the open, light-filled central living area. Such a 'revelatory' entry sequence (dark to light) is a favourite Wrightian device, which Knox also viewed as evoking a 'cave-like' effect.

The fireplace core behind the stair, another key Wrightian/organic planning element – the ancient hearth at the heart of the home, anchoring the building to the land – also remains. However, the living room fireplace (originally random stone and adobe) has been removed. This concept of marrying the structure to the site is also conveyed by the robust mud-brick wall and the lack of a plinth, connecting the 'organic' walls directly to the landform. The south fireplace (bedroom) character, initially low, broad and mud brick, is not known.

The exposed structure of the ceiling to the ground floor – the visible arrangement of primary beams, secondary rafters and floorboards – is original.

Several months after Knox finished his first simplified mud-brick house (*English House*), the influential architect and commentator Robin Boyd (an acquaintance of Knox) discussed within his popular 'Small Homes' newspaper column the lack of design innovation exhibited by practitioners of the mud-brick movement:

Adobe can be built to any plan, and can have almost any finish. Therefore it can be given almost any appearance and any architectural treatment. Perhaps this is its greatest danger. With one or two notable exceptions, Victorian adobe builders have been either lamentably unimaginative little villas or have wallowed in confused romanticism ... If the material is treated with common sense and discretion, but naturally so that it is not forced to imitate normal brick structure, then it must look "different". There is no reason why this different look should not be as modern and as beautiful in its own way as anything ever made of brick, wood, stone or steel.⁶

Whether this specific message resonated with Knox or not, the subsequent mud-brick houses he constructed in its wake over the late 1940s and early 1950s – referable within his broader design/building career as his 'first phase' – were generally more substantial and ambitious in the visual effect sought. In this period, 'beauty' in mud brick was paramount for Knox:

⁵ 'Design and Building Career', *Biography*, Alistair Knox Foundation, available online, <https://alistairknox.org/>

⁶ Robin Boyd, 'Make it of mud!', *Age*, 17 March 1948, p3.

Beauty requires a sense of order, of fitness, of co-relation of the parts to the whole. It must express an idea that makes itself felt to the beholder, either consciously or otherwise.⁷

In the context of postwar Melbourne design, characterised by its crop of 'hero' architects boldly exploring the structural and aesthetic possibilities of universal, industrially produced materials, Knox's dogged return to the vernacular stood out.⁸ Latent within his concept of environmental building were the principles of organic architecture, as shaped by the work and writings of the American master, Frank Lloyd Wright. In particular, the latter's pared-down Usonian houses (oversailing eaves, robust wall to the street, large opening to the internal garden, focal fireplace/hearth) proved influential for Knox, who seems to have been aware of Wright by the immediate postwar years.⁹ However, *Lindsay Edward House's* 'butterfly' plan demonstrates a more explicit interaction by Knox with the organic excesses of the Wrightian approach (taken to extremes in his much publicised crescent-shaped *Periwinkle House* in Eltham, 1950).

Knox's also cites as influential the cohesive formwork, 'visual totality' and engagement with light/shadow seen in the work of the first government architect, the emancipist forger, Francis Greenway, and Walter Burley Griffin (although not appearing to recognise the important contribution made by Marion Mahony Griffin to her husband's practice).¹⁰ While never communicated in his writings, Knox's debt to the entrenched Arts & Crafts movement – particularly its political idealism and valorisation of craftsmanship – is also clear.

In line with the majority of Knox's work, *Lindsay Edward House* is decidedly modernist.¹¹ The core doctrines of the postwar modern movement (then far from mainstream), ranging from sensitive site and solar responsiveness to an emphasis on strong indoor/outdoor relationships, floor plans that prioritised spatial flow, and the eschewing of unnecessary detail, are all conveyed by its design. His ability to merge modern living with adobe and a bushland block (natural or contrived) underpins the development of an authentic regional idiom, colloquially the 'Eltham style', which became intimately tied to Knox and the wider district over the late 20th-century.

⁷ 'Down to Earth in Housing: He Crusades For Mud', p7

⁸ Goad, *The Modern House in Melbourne 1945 – 1975*, chapter 3, p58

⁹ Alistair Knox, *We are what we stand on: A Personal History of the Eltham Community*, Adobe Press, 1980, p11

¹⁰ Knox, *Living in the environment*, chapter 67, <https://alistairknox.org/chapters/67>; and Knox, *A Middle Class Man*, chapter 22

¹¹ Peterson and Kuzyk, 'Alistair Knox (1912-1986): modernism, environment and the spirit of place', p21

History

Context

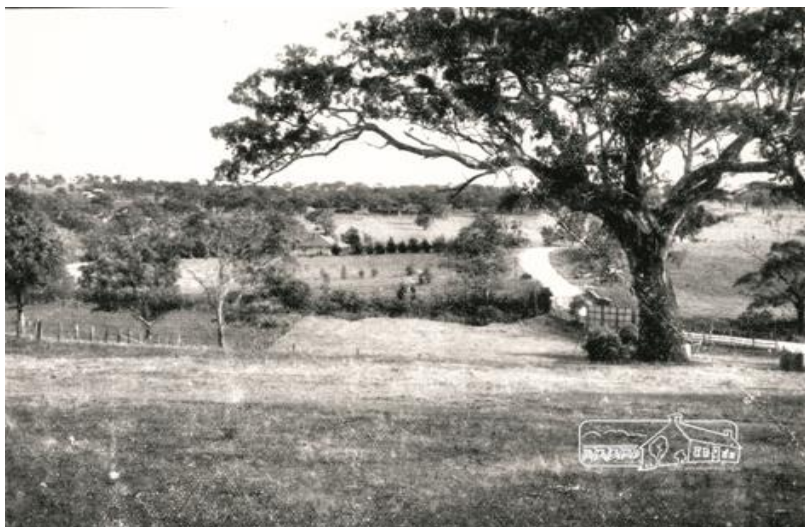
The City of Banyule covers the unceded Country of the Wurundjeri-William people, who inhabited and managed the landscape for millennia and remain culturally connected. The fertile confluence of the Plenty River and the Yarra River/*Birrarung* and adjoining stringy-bark forests hosted squatters from 1837 and was soon after referred to as the 'Lower Plenty'. Much of this area had been alienated by the close of the decade and considered to be of better quality than land elsewhere in the Parish of Nillumbik.¹²

Sizable land parcels and absentee owners predominated over the 19th century, with a small community of tenant farmers responsible for clearing the emergent locality. The rough track linking Heidelberg and the Village of Eltham, which passed through the Lower Plenty, was proclaimed a road in 1840 (now Old Eltham Road), and the Plenty River bridged two years later.¹³ The present-day Main Road (initially called Eltham Road) was laid in 1869.¹⁴

More intensive subdivision followed in the wake of the First World War, although the locale remained sparsely populated and a 'semi-suburban and rural area' into the 1950s.¹⁵ Reminiscing about the postwar years, Alistair Knox described cycling through the area, alongside the émigré architect Frederick Romberg, describing the Lower Plenty at that stage as a 'wide undulating ... savannah landscape' dotted with 'Primeval redgums of enormous size'.¹⁶ The suburb's geographic connection with and administration by the District (later Shire) of Eltham meant that the Lower Plenty was also shaped by the vibrant, vigorous, environmentally-conscious community that materialised in postwar Eltham.¹⁷ From the late 1940s, mud-brick dwellings (built or influenced by Knox) arose (alongside conventional houses) as well as other designs that displayed a clear organic/regional expression:

Twelve miles from Melbourne, the ... [Lower Plenty] is still largely covered with scrub gums and since the housing is nearly all contemporary, the natural appearance of the locality has not been obliterated. More often than not, the modern house has been built to blend, rather than stand apart from its surroundings.¹⁸

From the early 1960s, residential development was prominent, as was a fashion towards substantial, up-market houses situated on largescale allotments. Open spaces and a general natural/rustic setting remain prevalent throughout Lower Plenty, with a peri-rural feel remaining predominant in its southern reaches.



Photograph from a land sale brochure showing the rural landscape west from the old Lower Plenty Bridge, dated 1920s (Source: Eltham District Historical Society, *Victorian Collections*, 00180)

¹² 'Nillumbik' may stem from the Indigenous word *nyilumbik*, meaning 'bad, stupid or red earth'. (Jill Barnard, 'Nillumbik Shire', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008, available online; and Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online)

¹³ The Plenty River was named in 1835 by Joseph T Gellibrand. Its designation as a river was more warranted before the formation of the Yan Yean Reservoir in the mid-19th century, which reduced its flow. Hoddle referred to it as the 'Yarra Rivulet'.

¹⁴ The 1843 bridge was replaced in 1865 by the existing 'Old Lower Plenty Bridge' (HO106).

¹⁵ Alan Marshall, *Pioneers & Painters: One Hundred Years of Eltham and its Shire*, Thomas Nelson, 1971, p84

¹⁶ Alistair Knox, *We Are What We Stand On: a personal history of the Eltham Community*, Adobe Press, 1980

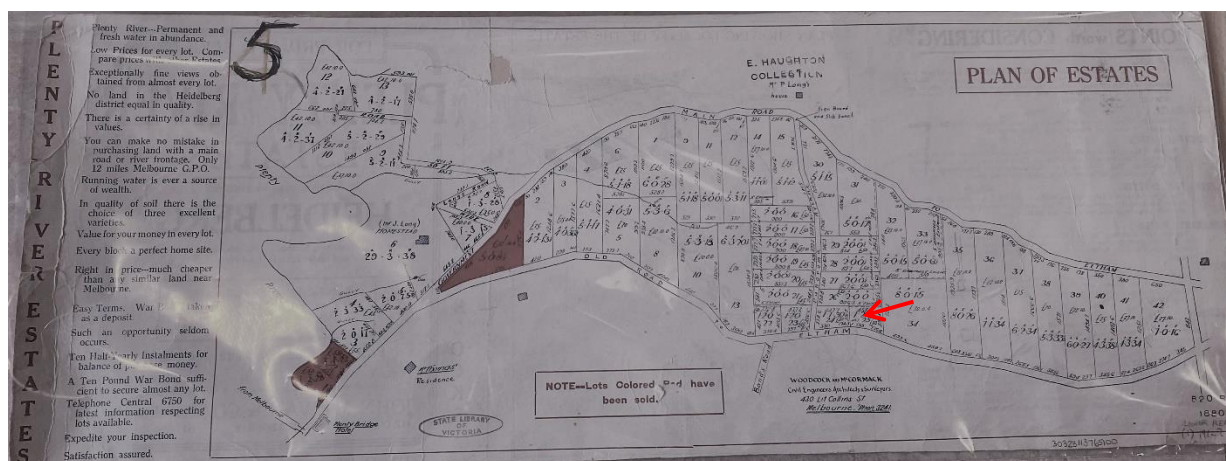
¹⁷ The Lower Plenty and Montmorency were transferred to the newly formed City of Banyule in 1994. ('Lower Plenty', *Victorian Places*, 2014, available online; and Andrew Lemon, 'Lower Plenty', *eMelbourne*, The University of Melbourne, July 2008, available online; and Context, BTEH, p37)

¹⁸ Rick Campbell, 'Suburban Living, but with hills and bush', *Age*, 9 November 1968, p23.

Site-specific

The subject land derives from the roughly 384-hectare purchase (Portion 2, Parish of Nillumbik) made in 1840 by the Corkonian, Benjamin Baxter.¹⁹ He had arrived in Sydney Town in 1837 as a Captain in the 50th (Queen's Own) Regiment of Foot, charged with escorting a convict transport. Sensing opportunities in the embryonic Port Phillip District, Baxter acquired a Depasturing Licence, ran cattle at Emerald Hill and St Kilda, and held various civil appointments. Around the time Baxter procured his estate in what became the Lower Plenty and Montmorency, he also established a 6,000-hectare pastoral run known as *Carrup Carrup* at Baxter's Flat (Baxter), which became his permanent residence.²⁰ In 1927, a large part of Portion 2 was acquired for use by the Heidelberg Golf Club.²¹

In 1869, the northern three-quarters of Portion 2, including the subject land, was acquired by the affluent Scot and pastoralist, Doctor Robert Martin (onetime occupant of *Viewbank Homestead* and owner of the *Banyule Estate*).²² Following Martin's death in 1874, the holding passed in toto through several hands. In 1919, the parcel – bound mainly by the Main Road (north), Old Eltham Road (south) and Bolton Street (east) – was brought by George Guthrie McColl, a wealthy Bendigo resident.²³ McColl's intentions appear speculative and his purchase, carved up into sizeable blocks, was promoted for sale that year as the Plenty River Estates – 'Lovely Week-End Blocks', 'suitable [for] cultivation (with irrigation), poultry, fruit growing or nursery'.²⁴ As part of this subdivision, Panorama Avenue was established, although it remained an 'unmade road ... in a bad state' into at least the 1930s.²⁵



Plenty River Estates, 1919

The approximate location of the subject land, part of lot 25, is indicated by the red arrow (Source: SLV)

The subject land was encompassed within Lot 25 (about half a hectare) of the Plenty River Estates subdivision, which was purchased along with the larger Lot 34 in 1924 by a local, Elsie Norma Graham. She sold off the latter in 1929 to the Heidelberg Golf Course Company limited.²⁶ In 1941, Marcus J Macartney, a 'woolclasser' from Leongatha, acquired Lot 25. An aerial photograph taken soon after depicts a largely cleared site with a compact structure (later removed) near the current location of *Lindsay Edward House*.²⁷ Macartney sold the entire property in 1950 to Lindsay M Edward, an artist and then teacher at RMIT.²⁸

Edward had seemingly purchased the land to establish a family home, engaging Alistair Knox to undertake the design and build. Knox, then a few years into his career as a builder/designer, was the uncle of Edward's wife, Janet (*née* Knox). Knox and

¹⁹ Refer to *Plan of the Parish of Nillumbik*, Office of Lands and Survey, 1866, SLV, available online

²⁰ 'Death of Captain Baxter: An Old Colonist and Pioneer', *Mornington Standard*, 19 May 1892, p3; and Marshall, *Pioneers & Painters*, pp82-4

²¹ *Heidelberg Golf Club*, 'History', available online

²² Certificate of Title, vol 289, folio 706

²³ 'Lieut.-Colonel G. G. McColl', *Argus*, 15 June 1938, p11; and Certificate of Title, vol 233, folio 523

²⁴ 'Advertising', *Herald*, 16 September 1912, p7; and 'Advertising', *Age*, 19 February 1919, p4

²⁵ 'Lower Plenty Progress Association', *Advertiser* [Hurstbridge], 7 March 1930, p4

²⁶ Certificate of Title, vol 4905, folio 996

²⁷ Melbourne 1945, Photo-map, 839-c3d, The University of Melbourne, <https://maps-collection.library.unimelb.edu.au/historical/1945melb/sheets/839c3d.jpg>

²⁸ Certificate of Title, vol 6474, folio 623 (28 April 19150)

Edward had known each other since at least the 1930s, as Knox and his first wife had occupied a boathouse owned by Edward's parents during the 1930s in Fairfield.²⁹

Lindsay Edward House was erected both by Knox and his crew (unknown) and Edward. The timing of the construction lay between the acquisition of the property in April 1950 and the completed house being photographed in 1952 for a feature article in the *Australian Home Beautiful* (see below).

Knox's first mud-brick project was a small house north of the subject place (*English House*, 52 Philip Street, Lower Plenty), completed over 1947. The publicity generated fuelled postwar interest in mud-brick construction, enabling Knox to resign from his day job at the State Bank of Victoria and take up design/building full-time. A series of mud-brick Knox projects followed over the late 1940s, many noteworthy.³⁰ Between 1950 and 1952, however, Knox returned briefly to chiefly building in timber, driven by the 'scarcity of labour and the high premiums above awards' required to hire workers for his 'mud brick programme'.³¹ In line with Knox's view, Robin Boyd declared at the time, 'The mud bubble has burst' lamenting that 'Earth has grown out of the reach of the ordinary man. Pise and adobe have moved into the luxury class'.³² *Lindsay Edward House* was likely one of the first mud-brick developments Knox returned to or, as it was for a familiar family, a project for which he was prepared to wear higher costs.

The broader socioeconomic backdrop of postwar Melbourne was instrumental in encouraging the interest of Knox and Edward in the vernacular earth tradition. During the Second World War, many aspects of life had become regulated to an unprecedented degree by the state, a situation that continued across the postwar years. As civil and private construction had practically ceased during the conflict, the nation faced an acute housing shortage during reconstruction. A 'crisis' magnified by a general shortage in materials, high labour costs, stringent finance and continuing government restrictions. Until the early 1950s, such austerity conditions required major concessions on the part of most aspiring homeowners, with thousands of low-cost, self-built 'mean' timber or brick veneer dwellings the outcome.³³

Between 1940 and August 1952, Victorian houses were subject to fluctuating size regulations. The original *Lindsay Edward House* was likely affected by the 1,400 square foot (130 square meters) maximum extent allowed since July 1948 for a dwelling of any construction method.³⁴

A further complication in the immediate postwar period, which lingered into the early 1950s, was severe material shortages. The expense and time required to access conventional construction materials – timber and brick – was prohibitive. Some prospective homeowners and builders turned to alternatives. In Victoria, interest and knowledge in earth construction, once a common 19th-century mode of construction, had renewed in the late Interwar period. The 1934 founding of *Monsalvat*, an artist colony in Eltham, by the patrician artist Justus Jorgensen, with its adobe/pisé 'Great Hall' proved influential in this regard. Knox himself gained his introduction to mud-brick from regular interactions with this utopian commune during the late 1940s.

Consequently, from the late Interwar period, a handful of earth buildings arose in the Eltham area, including a pisé (rammed earth) house by the journalist/writer John M Harcourt.³⁵ Notwithstanding this nascent pre-war revival, it appears the spartan conditions of the late 1940s proved critical in popularising earth construction. As Knox notes, 'Had there been no war, there would have been no shortages, and if there had been no shortages there would have been no mud brick building'.³⁶

The 'alternative' and creative milieu that developed in the Eltham area – a 'sleepy outer suburb surrounded by remnant bush' including the Lower Plenty – over the postwar period also proved important in allowing for experimentation and engagement with earth structures.³⁷ Affordable land and semi-rural surroundings drew those interested in living 'simpler' lifestyles (many apparently influenced by Thoreau's *Walden*). Writers, artists, filmmakers, designer, academics and teachers flocked to Eltham:

²⁹ Alistair Knox, *A Middle Class Man: An Autobiography*, unpublished, undated, chapter 1, <https://alistairknox.org/chapters/15>

³⁰ Notably, the William Macmahon Ball Studio, 1948; the curved *Periwinkle House*, 1948; the first phase of the *Busst House*, 1948-49; the *Downing/Le Gallienne House* complex (1948-58); and *Murphy's Creek Homestead*, 1949

³¹ 'Down to Earth in Housing: He Crusades For Mud', Section 3, *Australian Home Beautiful*, January 1953, p7

³² "One man who did much to develop the idea of adobe as a modern building material, and who infected hundreds with his own enthusiasm, was Mr. Alistair Knox, designer and builder. He now says: "I never want to build in it again. It is still practical if you have plenty of space and the right equipment ... And if people are strong enough and healthy enough to do it themselves." Costs finally turned Mr. Knox from adobe. Four years ago the big problem was the shortage of material, rather than labor." (Robin Boyd, 'The "Free" Material That Costs Too Much', *Age*, 13 November 1951, p4)

³³ Goad, *The Modern House in Melbourne 1945 – 1975*, chapter 1, p1

³⁴ Goad, *The Modern House in Melbourne 1945 – 1975*, chapter 3, p3

³⁵ John M Harcourt, 'Natural earth as a Building Material: Pise-de-terre, Cob and Mud Brick Methods Explained', *Australian Home Beautiful*, January 1946, pp8-10. The same journal ran an article on a mud-brick house near Wandin in Victoria a few years later (Charles Simms, 'Hand-made in mud-brick', *Australian Home Beautiful*, January 1949, pp24-5, 75)

³⁶ Knox, *We are what we stand on*, chapter 45

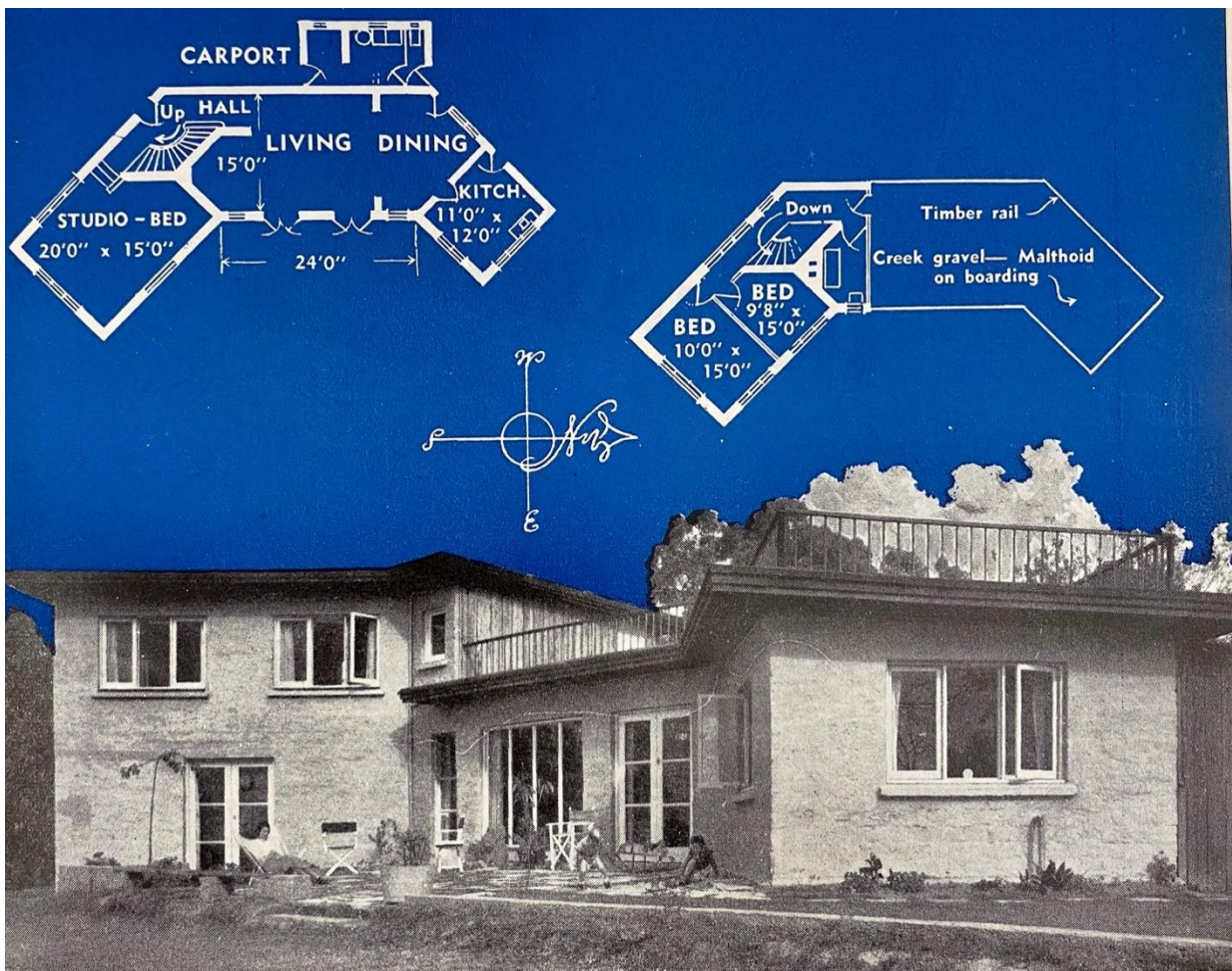
³⁷ Gordon Ford in Ford with Gwen Ford, *Gordon Ford: the natural Australian garden*, Blooming Books, 1999, p9

'We were young, enthusiastic idealists, keen to avoid becoming Thoreau's "men who lead lives of quiet desperation".'³⁸ Some became interested in unconventional construction techniques or turned to them by necessity; as noted by Boyd, many of the mud-brick builders 'had little money for building and they liked rustic simplicity. They looked to the earth for materials.'³⁹ Edward appears particularly indicative of this postwar trend. Knox often lionised the postwar dynamics of the Eltham locale:

The Shire of Eltham has achieved a remarkable reputation as a district of artists, writers, environmentalists and other eccentric inhabitants during the past forty years. It has gradually become recognised as the most creative local community in Australia. At the end of the Second World War, polite Melbourne still regarded it as a place of non-confirming fringe dwellers who lived in dubious artists' colonies, drank large quantities of dry red wine, built mud-brick houses and opposed all forms of civic progress and suburban development. It fought running battles with the State Electricity Commission and other authorities over the retention of indigenous, roadside tree growth and formed societies to promote the unrestrained and promiscuous planting of native trees at a time when they were still persona non grata in other localities.⁴⁰

Lindsay Edward House was selected to headline a lengthy article on the mud-brick movement for the widely distributed *Australian Home Beautiful* (AHB) in early 1953, entitled 'Down to Earth in Housing':

Looking east to a Dandenong's view on a gentle slope of Lower Plenty, Victoria is the adobe house of artist Lindsay Edward and his wife. The designer, Alistair Knox, formed earth from the site into mud-brick to make the walls. The patio is welded into the plan so that it became an integral part of it. The building cost about £150 a square. The soil was mixed into a well-balanced proportion of 60 per cent. sharp sandy soil and 40 per cent. clay. The artistry of the owner went into the finishing work, and this was done with vitality, colour and discretion.⁴¹



Original *Lindsay Edward House*, photographed 1952, showing east elevation – note members of the Edward family, Janet reclining in the chair and young children playing on the patio

(Source: Leslie H Runting, 'Down to Earth in Housing', AHB, January 1953, p7)

³⁸ Ford, Gordon Ford: *the natural Australian garden*, p9

³⁹ Robin Boyd, *Australia's Home: Its Origins, Builders and Occupies*, Melbourne University Press, 1961, p201

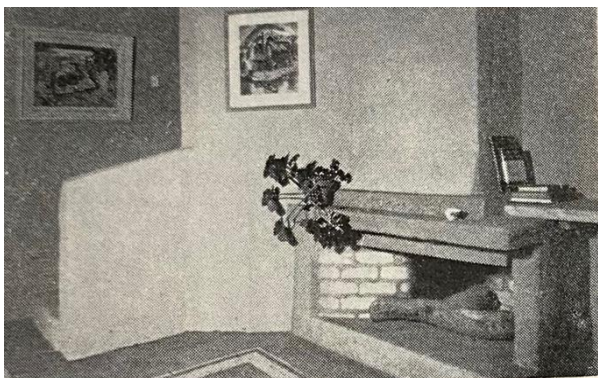
⁴⁰ Alistair Knox, *Alternative Housing: Building with the head, the heart and the hand*, Albatross Book, 1980, chapter 'The Mount Pleasant Road Story', available at <https://alistairknox.org/chapters/90>

⁴¹ Leslie H Runting, 'Down to Earth in Housing', Section 1, *Australian Home Beautiful*, January 1953, p7

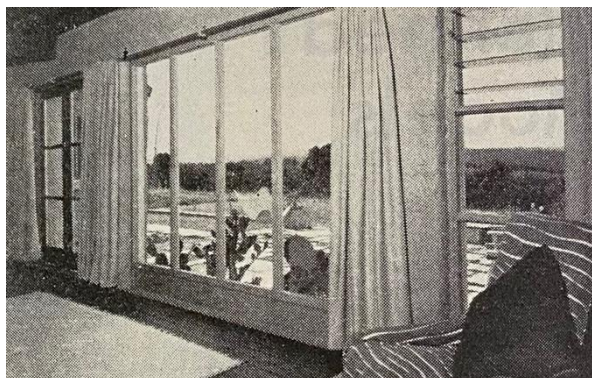
The caption for the photograph of the house's east elevation read:

All the rooms look out on to the patio which is paved with cement blocks colored sandstone reds, grey, blue-grey and off-white. They are bounded by a low sitting wall which extends beyond the kitchen wing and returns to the terrace behind the house. A triangular sand pit is situated immediately outside the kitchen window, enabling children to be supervised.⁴²

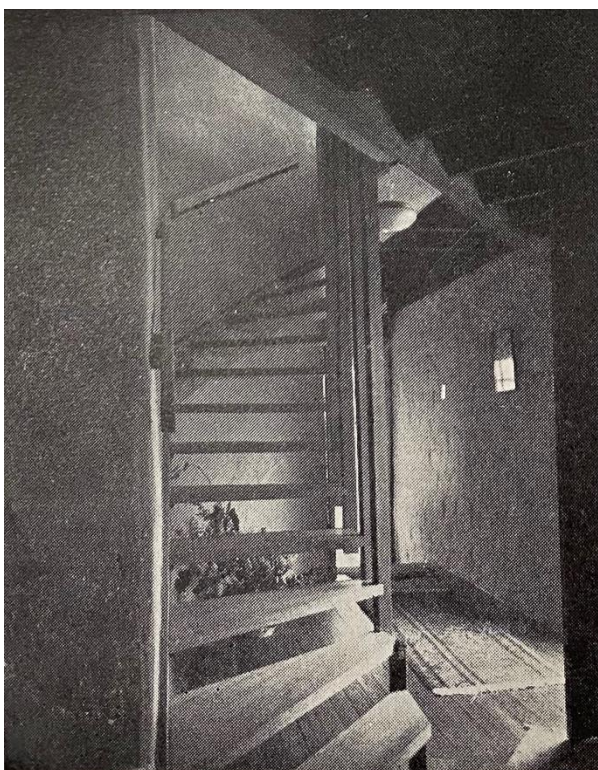
Based on the number of internal photographs (six – not all are reproduced below), the *AHB* was keen to highlight the 'tasteful' and considered interior, perhaps to stress the sophistication that mud brick could achieve. Other mud-brick projects previously published by the magazine, including Knox's *English House*, had all depicted relatively basic internal spaces.



'Lindsay Edward's studio is his workroom, but still provides comfort around a broad fire-place', 1952 – north wall of the (now) ground-floor bedroom (south wing) (Source: *AHB*, January 1953, p6)



'Entering the living room, one is immediately aware how the house merges with patio and view' – original east elevation, central wing, windows since removed, French doors reused (*AHB*, January 1953)



'At the front entry, the three levels are catered for with a hanging stairway of sweeping design', 1952 – stairs are believed extant, main entrance pictured left of frame (*AHB*, January 1953, p6)



Living room and random stone fireplace (built by Edward, 1952 – fireplace since changed, replaced with brick (Source: Source: *AHB*, January 1953, p15)

Until likely the mid-1960s, the ground-floor wing in the south wing functioned as Edward's art studio. The Edward family was probably responsible for the replanting and landscaping of the subject property in the wake of construction.

⁴²

Leslie H Runting, 'Down to Earth in Housing, Section 1, *Australian Home Beautiful*, January 1953, p7

Knox composed a detailed explainer about earth construction as part of the *AHB*'s 'Down to Earth in Housing' article. His writing yields insight into what was, in the early 1950s, still a distinct and progressive design approach in Melbourne and an early signpost of an evolving philosophy of what Knox would later term 'environmental building':

It is basically important to regard a mud wall as a mud wall and as nothing else. This is no slur on the material. Good architecture gives it an individual beauty and history confirms its capacity to survive. To this day more than half of the world's dwellings are built of mud. Only Western society has turned away from mud, because of new methods and machinery. But the house-hungry post-war world saw a renewed interest in the medium ...

The objective of the designer of a mud brick building is to co-relate his plan to the possibilities of the site, soil, etc., as economically as he can while giving due regard to the aesthetics of his problem. Earth is required for the walls. If the site slopes, the plan should exploit the levels so that what is removed for levelling purposes will suffice to build the walls. It is cheaper to cut into the ground to a reasonable distance than to build it up. Because of this, it is better to use concrete slab floors over which timber, tiles, or any other flooring may be laid.

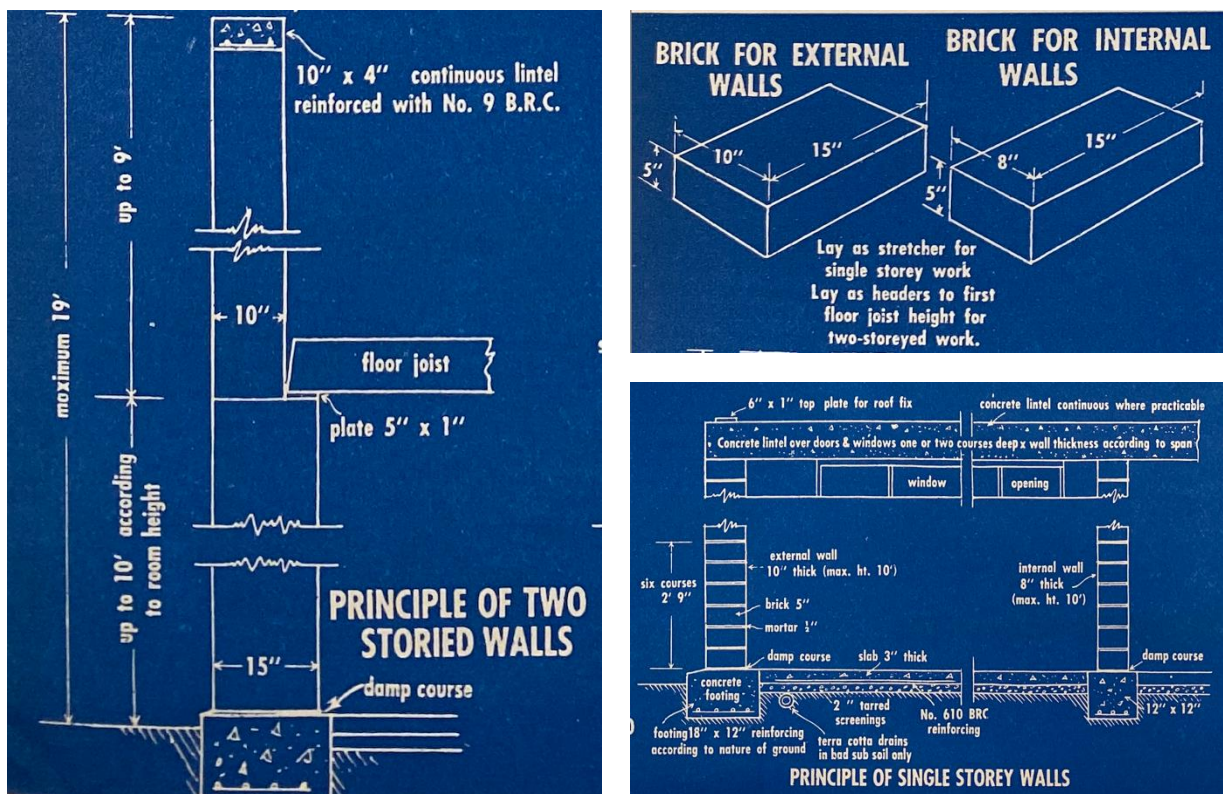
The cost of the excavation and concrete is more than compensated for by the saving in wall heights, the flexibility of the building, its relationship to its environment, temperature control, durability and beauty. Preconceived notions of what the house should be must be held in reserve until one determines what the site will allow. A plan that defers prejudice to topography is half way to success ...

Tradesmen do not relish completing work that has not a straight beginning. They generally regard mud somewhat balefully, for it does not show off the quality of their craft as well as many other surfaces. For this reason it is an ideal medium for the enthusiastic amateur to complete ...

I never use cement for rendering mud brick walls. Internal walls are rendered with mud or merely bagged down on paint. External walls are pointed up where necessary with mud and bagged down so that all gaps are filled. They are then painted with oil paint, Cementone, or any similar water-proofing material which will not destroy the homely character of the mud bricks ...

[It is] hard work in plenty—for there is no easy method of building—but there is a lot of satisfaction in co-operating with Mother Earth in making a building grow.⁴³

Some details of 'typical footing and wall sections', presumably prepared by Knox's small office, accompanied his article, and some extracts are reproduced below. These likely depict the construction method utilised for the single and two-storey components of *Lindsay Edward House*.



Extracts from Knox prepared footing drawings and wall sections, likely indicative of the approach he adopted for the original *English House* (Source: Knox, 'Down to Earth in Housing: Builder's "How To" Story', section 2, *AHB*, January 1953, p9)

⁴³

Alistair Knox, 'Down to Earth in Housing: Builder's "How To" Story', Section 2, *Australian Home Beautiful*, January 1953, pp9-10, 13

In 1954, Edward subdivided his sizable property, selling the western quarter to Rennie Beale Edward, his brother (now 147 Old Eltham Road).⁴⁴ Soon after, Rennie, a builder, is believed to have commissioned Knox to design a mud-brick house and studio on this allotment.⁴⁵ The 1956 aerial photograph, taken a few years after construction, depict both the 'butterfly' plan of *Lindsay Edward House* and Rennie's new dwelling.



1956 aerial photograph of *Lindsay Edward House* (circled in dashed red) and its immediate environs

The house immediately west of the subject place is Rennie's circa 1954 dwelling, also mud-brick and constructed on land excised from the original extent of the subject place

(Source: Landata, Project no 2, Run 16A, Frame 53)

Lindsay Edward House was awarded further attention from the *AHB* in 1969 as part of a series re-examining previously discussed designs to see how plans had 'worked out in practice' and grown over time. The article introduced the house as 'designed by Alistair Knox, "high priest" of the mud-brick movement'. It also noted that 'hundreds' of mud-brick homes had appeared in the Lower Plenty and Eltham since its construction, 'giving the district a character all its own'. The main built changes highlighted by the article was the provision of a vertical timber-clad addition at the centre of the 'butterfly' plan (above the ground-floor living space) – noted as envisioned for in Knox's original plan – and the enclosure of a carport to form a new bedroom (west elevation, near main entrance). A new carport was also attached to the end of the southern wing.

Built of earth dug from the site, the house had right from the start the look and feel of a mellow, established home — in spite of the comparative bareness of its immediate surroundings. Today, sheltered and shaded by a heavy growth of trees and shrubs, it exhibits that "timeless" quality to an even more marked degree ...

Like most houses we've revisited, it has changed and expanded to meet the demands put upon it by a growing family. But the changes were pretty painless — and because of the form of construction, fairly inexpensive. Mr Edward says its growth has been dictated by three principal requirements: the size of the family ... the need for a larger painting studio; and "aesthetic" needs — met in part by the development of terraces and outdoor living facilities.

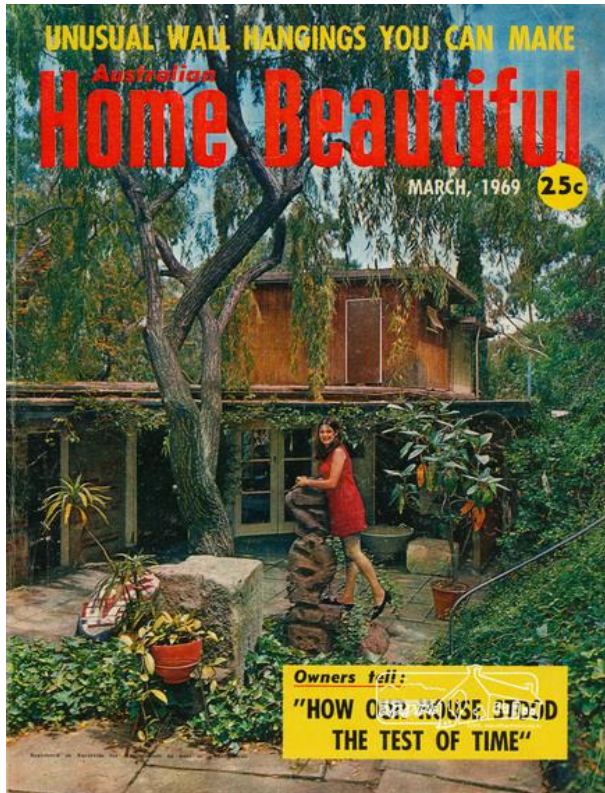
First major alteration came in 1955 ... It consisted of a new timber-clad master bedroom, built in the space allowed for it on the flat roof over the living room ...

⁴⁴ Certificate of Title, vol 8069, folio 724

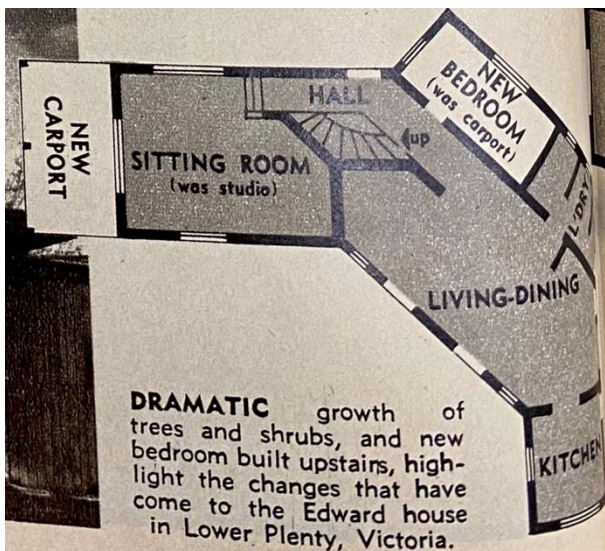
⁴⁵ Frequent Knox collaborators John Pizzey and Clifton Pugh may have been involved in the construction. The house has undergone successive changes, including a conventional two-storey addition by Knox's office in 1980, which have compromised its mud-brick character (*Cullen Extension*, SLV, Job no 1100, YLTAD28 605).

[Later, unspecified date] the original carport on the western side was walled in to make a fourth bedroom. A new carport was added on the south-east wall. Meanwhile, Mr Edward's original studio on the lower level of the ground-floor became a secondary living area. With its brick floor and thick earth walls, it's a delightfully cool retreat in hot weather. A new mud-brick studio was built a little away from the house on high ground to the north.⁴⁶

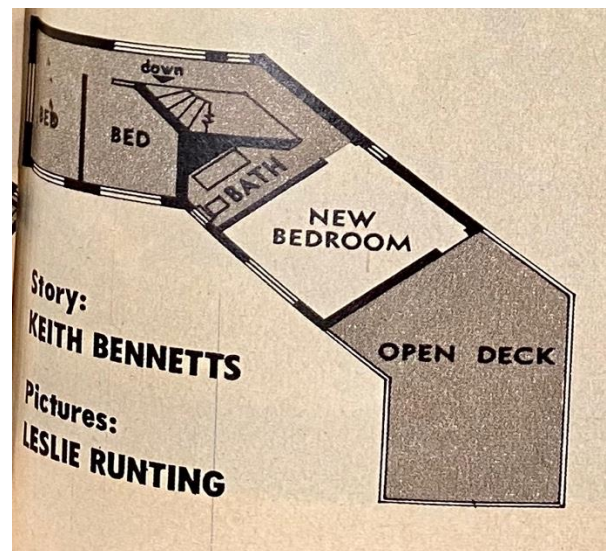
The 1960s small mud-brick studio discussed above survives on a battle-axe property excised from the subject place in 2015. It is now utilised as a private dwelling (151 Old Eltham Road).⁴⁷



March 1969 cover of the *AHB* with the Edwards' daughter posing in the patio with the east elevation in the background
Note vertical timber-clad addition (1955), since extended
(Source: Eltham District Historical Society, Victorian Collections, 06149)



Ground-floor plans showing modifications – north is right of frame
(Source: Bennetts, 'Did The House Live Up To Expectations', *AHB*, March 1969, p6)



Ground-floor plans showing modifications – north is right of frame
(Source: Bennetts, 'Did The House Live Up To Expectations', *AHB*, March 1969, p7)

⁴⁶ Keith Bennetts, 'Did The House Live Up To Expectations', *Australian Home Beautiful*, March 1969, pp6-8

⁴⁷ Landata, Plan of Subdivision, PS 649779J



Photograph of the east elevation, note that the page crease obscures the extent of the south wing
The north wing (left of frame) was later extended (Source: Bennetts, 'Did The House Live Up To Expectations', *AHB*, March 1969, pp6-7)

The 1969 *AHB* article does not identify who was responsible for the alterations and additions up to that point. However, it is understood that Edward was responsible for undertaking much of the works, particularly those sections that involved mud brick. It is likely that Knox guided or assisted in this early phase of modifications, as he remained on close terms with the Edward family until the late 1960s. Edward is also believed to be behind the late 20th-century ground-floor northeast additions (sunroom and bedroom) to the northern extension/addition of the first-floor master bedroom.⁴⁸

The Edward family retained ownership of the place until 2016. Note that, until relatively recently, *Lindsay Edward House* was referred to as 151 Old Eltham Road, Plenty.

Lindsay Maurice Edward (1919-2007)

Born in Melbourne, Edward studied at the National Gallery Art School (1938-41). In 1942, he enlisted with the Australian Military Force at age 22, serving overseas in New Guinea and New Britain.⁴⁹ After demobilisation as a Lance Sergeant in 1945, Edward married Janet Beatrix (*née* Knox) (1925-2015), the daughter of William Dunn Knox (also an artist), in 1946 and toured postwar Europe and the United Kingdom (1947-48). Afterwards Edward began a long association with RMIT where he taught and led the painting school and Department of Fine Arts until 1979, emerging as a prominent art educator.

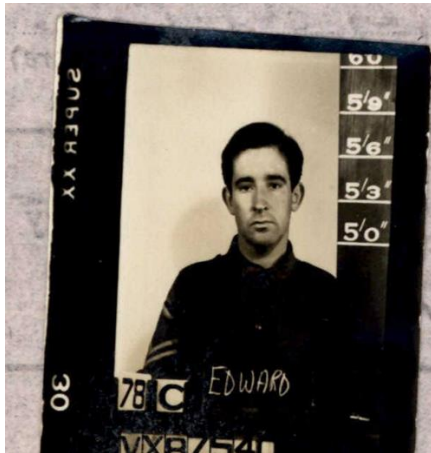
Concurrently, Edward developed a national profile for his perceptive semi-abstract/cubist paintings and held a score of solo exhibitions in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth. Much of his work explored various Australian landscapes, employing dynamic organic form and a robust 'earthy' palette. Edward characterised his approach as a desire 'to place sequences of shapes, colours and tones on a surface in an abstract manner, like the notes of a Bach fugue'.⁵⁰ His painting style was well-suited for larger mural designs and Edward's best-known artwork was a giant glass mosaic at the (former) State Library of Queensland (1958). He also undertook mural commissions for the Victorian Housing Commission and various churches.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Personal correspondence with Edward family, November 2020

⁴⁹ Service Record, B883, VX87540, National Archives of Australia

⁵⁰ Jenny Zimmer, 'Teacher's fine art traverse life of his city and times', *Age*, 2 June 2007, p10

⁵¹ Alan McCulloch, *Encyclopedia of Australian art*, revised by Susan McCulloch, Allen & Unwin, 3 ed, 1994 p316



Photograph of Edward at enlistment, aged 22
(Source: Service Record, B883, VX87540,
National Archives of Australia)



Edward's 1958 glass mosaic mural at the (former) State Library of Queensland (159
William Street, Brisbane) (foreground)
(Source: Queensland Heritage Register, no 600177)

Alistair Samuel Knox (1912-86)

... it is difficult to establish whether Eltham made Knox or whether he was the making of it – of mud bricks and sturdy timbers ...⁵²

A charismatic figure, Alistair Knox was the leading proponent of Victoria's postwar mud-brick 'revival', an ardent movement that became entwined with a specific Eltham-based identity and a broader rise of eco-consciousness. Through his postwar building and landscape work and his writing and activism, Knox was instrumental in popularising the concept of 'environmental building' over the late 20th century.⁵³

Knox, born and raised in Melbourne by an evangelical family, started a clerkship with the State Savings Bank of Victoria in his late teens and a family soon after. At the outbreak of the Second World War, he joined the Volunteer Defence Corps, ultimately serving on the waters around Papua New Guinea. Discharged in 1945, Knox took advantage of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme to begin, but not complete, a Diploma of Architecture and Building Construction at Melbourne Technical College. Weary of the bank, his postwar ambitions turned to building and design.

Over the late 1940s, Knox – his first marriage having broken down – began circulating within Melbourne's avant-garde/bohemian circles. He made regular forays out to Eltham to visit *Montsalvat*, experiencing the complex's array of adobe/pisé buildings. The 'primitive' aesthetic and harmonising qualities of earth construction drew Knox, although his first two commissioned houses, both in the Glenard Estate (Eaglemont) in 1946, were of weatherboard. The public interest in the completion of the mud-brick *English House* (1947) encouraged Knox to quit the bank and embark on a string of adobe projects. He relocated permanently to Eltham in 1949, marrying Margot (née) Edwards, a well-known painter, in 1954. Knox became a fixture of postwar Eltham, a place and community he considered unparalleled within Australia.⁵⁴

Knox's four-decade career in building and landscape design/construction was prolific despite commercial ebbs and flows. It is loosely dividable into four phases. The first, a pared-back, heavily organic, mud-brick phase, was characteristic between the late 1940s to the mid-1950s. The second phase witnessed the adoption of a modular design approach, with low-key modern houses utilising more conventional materials and new products, such as 'Stramit'. The 'credit squeeze' of 1960/61, instigated a return to mud-brick and reclaimed materials, albeit the designs remained generally modular (third phase). From the early 1970s (fourth phase), a sequence of mature and dramatic adobe and landscape projects was initiated, which coincided with the peak of Knox's public profile and the wider resurgence of earth construction in Eltham.⁵⁵ Underlying the various phases was a deep appreciation of the subtlety of the Australian landscape – the embrace of a site's sense of place and exigencies – and consistent engagement with the principles of the modern movement.

⁵² Anne Latreille, 'Awards for know-how and a flair for original', *Age*, 14 September 1982, p23

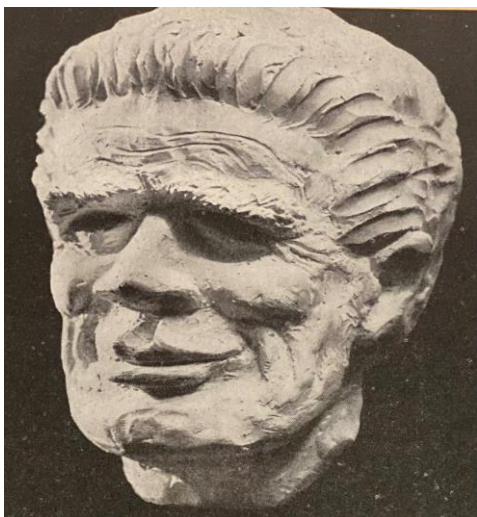
⁵³ Peterson and Kuzyk, 'Alistair Knox (1912-1986): modernism, environment and the spirit of place', p5; Fay Woodhouse, 'Knox, Alistair Samuel (1912-1986)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 2007, available online; and Philip Goad, 'Knox, Alistair', in Goad and Julie Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* Cambridge University, 2012, pp387-8

⁵⁴ Knox, *We are what we stand on*, xiii and p47

⁵⁵ Peterson and Kuzyk, 'Alistair Knox (1912-1986): modernism, environment and the spirit of place', passim; and 'Design and Building Career', *Biography*, Alistair Knox Foundation, available online, <https://alistairknox.org/>

Knox's interests in environmental design and social concerns both mirrored and drove a broader escalation of conservation politics, particularly in Victoria, where he became a household name over the 20th century. Between 1973 and 1975, Knox served on Eltham Shire Council, including as president in his last year. He was also a founding member (1967) and later fellow (1983) of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects. In 1984, Knox received an honorary Doctor of Architecture from the University of Melbourne for his unique contributions to the field of design.

The breadth of Knox's influence was notable: 'His work was key to the next generation of builders and designers, including John Pizzey, artist Clifton Pugh, architects Morrice Shaw and Robert Marshall and countless owner builders [particularly in the Eltham area].'⁵⁶ The Alistair Knox Park in Eltham, which he assisted in converting from a rubbish tip in the mid-1970s, is dedicated to him.



Clay caricature of Alistair Knox, 1953, by John Frith
(Source: *AHB*, January 1953, p14)



Clay bricks in production, undated, unspecified site
(Source: Alistair Knox, *Living in the environment*, 1978)

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

Knox's practice was responsible for approximately 1,260 buildings, principally houses. The majority of his mud-brick projects are now situated in Nillumbik Shire, predominantly in Eltham, Kangaroo Ground, and Diamond Creek. The presence of a small cluster of his first phase projects in the Lower Plenty and Montmorency – now part of Banyule – reflects these areas' associations with the former Shire of Eltham, the 'cradle' of mud brick and environmental design in Melbourne during the second half of the 20th century. Another score or so of Knox's houses, chiefly dating from the 1960s and 1970s, survive elsewhere in Banyule; however, while often distinct within their immediate settings, these places generally present as more typical, even conventional, examples of his second and later phases of work.⁵⁷

The only known example of Knox's work in the municipality affected by a HO is:

⁵⁶ Goad, 'Knox, Alistair', p338

⁵⁷ For instance: 43 Alexander Street, Montmorency (mud brick construction, façade of random stone cladding); 30 Gilbert Road, Ivanhoe (courtyard house, mud-brick, carport modified); Sunday School Hall for St Andrews Church at 1-3 Mountain View Road, Montmorency (1955); 8 Rowell Street, Rosanna (1960s brick house with an International Style expression); and *Fowler House*, 60 Adam Crescent, Montmorency (late 1970s mud brick). See Alistair Knox website, section 'Buildings', <http://alistairknox.org/directories/2>

- *Brynnig House*, 37 Glenard Drive, Eaglemont (part of the Walter Burley Griffin Glenard Estate, HO1) – a restrained gable-roofed, U-shaped, timber house, Knox's first commercial project, built in 1946.⁵⁸ Since modified.

Two other earlier instances of Knox's work in Banyule have been recommended for a HO by this Study:

- *English House*, 50 Philip Street, Lower Plenty – Knox's first mud-brick project, an austere and small skillion-roofed residence, constructed in 1947. It was subsequently extended and altered, although its principal elements remain intact and interpretable. Indicative of Knox's first phase, albeit in a compact manner.
- *Vera Knox House*, 46 Panorama Street, Lower Plenty – a single-storey house, constructed between 1958 and 1960, likely from salvaged Mount Gambier limestone, as a retirement home for a relative of Knox by marriage. Illustrative of Knox's second phase of work (modernist modular design based around window-walls), although this instance is set apart by its use of stone.

There are also a limited number of other mud-brick buildings in the municipality:

- *Woodburn House*, 1/11 Hughes Street, Montmorency (HO159) – a modest mud-brick house on a reinforced concrete slab with front 'window wall' (northern outlook, originally louvred) and skillion roof designed/built by an architectural student, William J Woodburn, in 1949. An austerity induced instance of the International Style in adobe recognised as innovative at the time, along with the neighbouring house at no 9 by Sydney Smith (no HO), which attracted attention for its utilisation of hollow concrete block walls.⁵⁹
- *Adobe Houses and Dam (Peck's Dam)*, Napier Crescent and Grand Boulevard, Montmorency (HO101) – a serial listing of single and two-storey mud-brick houses in a naturalised setting, most houses are heavily screened from the streets by native/indigenous vegetation. Skillion or gable roofs, timber-framed windows and salvaged/recycled elements appear to abound. Built over the postwar period on low-cost land in the Panorama Heights Estate, many by their owners (characterised as an eclectic array of creatives), some of whom were evidently influenced or advised by Knox.⁶⁰

In Banyule, a small group of architect-designed houses included in the Schedule of the Heritage Overlay or recommended for a HO by this Study reflect the organic/Wrightian and regionalist strain of modernism in which Knox practised.⁶¹ These places, however, date from the late 1950s or 1960s, at least several years after *Lindsay Edward House*. They also seek to evoke a regional/organic character with more 'earthy' variants of conventional materials (timber and brick) as opposed to Knox's design, which celebrate their organic nature with heavy-set mud-brick walls and reclaimed 'bush' timber.

Intactness

Generally intact

Previous Assessment

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

Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls

External Paint Controls	Yes
Internal Alteration Controls	Yes ('hanging' timber stair, exposed timber ceiling beams)
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

⁵⁸ Knox was also behind the *Moore House* on Glenard Drive (since demolished) – a flat roofed, timber building with a U-shaped footprint which enabled the retention of pre-existing trees, with extensive glazing and a stone paved patio.

⁵⁹ Robin Boyd, 'Small Homes Section: A Lesson From Montmorency', *Age*, 28 December 1949, p4; and *Australian Home Beautiful*, January 1950, pp23-5

⁶⁰ 12-16, 59, 68, 67-71, 72, 73-75 Napier Crescent and 134 Grand Boulevard. Refer to Peterson and Kuzyk, 'Alistair Knox (1912-1986): modernism, environment and the spirit of place', p11

⁶¹ *V Walker House*, 209 Main Road, Lower Plenty (HO163), 1958; and *Williams House*, 4 Glenard Drive, Eaglemont (HO146), 1963; and *Elliston Estate*, Rosanna (HO92), late 1960s. Recommended by this Study – *Okalyi House*, 66 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty, 1968-70; *Yann House*, 21 Keam Street, Ivanhoe East, 1960-63; and *Welsh House*, 4 Eton Court, Heidelberg, 1965-72

Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



Recommended extent of heritage overlay
(Source: Nearmap, January 2021)