



## Banyule Heritage Study 2020

Banyule City Council

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## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the First Nation people whose ancestral lands we live and work upon and respect their continued connection to the land, sea, and culture.

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## Cover images:

St George Peace Memorial Church, Ivanhoe East (left) and *Graceburn*, Heidelberg (right)

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Brief and Overview

This report forms part of the *Banyule Heritage Study 2020*, undertaken by RBA Architects + Conservation Consultants for the City of Banyule. The purpose of the document is to set out the background to Stage 2 of the Study, including the approach and methodology adopted and recommendations.

The *Banyule Heritage Study 2020* has been undertaken in two stages.

### Stage 1

A preliminary heritage assessment of a wide array of properties dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century across the municipality was undertaken to determine whether or not they were likely to meet the threshold for local significance. The reviewed sites were either nominated by members of the public, provided by the council, or identified by RBA during the course of Stage 1.

Stage 1 commenced during February 2020, with the majority of work undertaken by early July.

A priority scale was employed (high, medium, low) and recommendations made accordingly as to whether further study/review during Stage 2 was warranted as a basis for seeking the application of a heritage overlay. The assessments for individual sites were provided in a schedule format and for potential precincts in a datasheet.

Subsequently, a Master List of 22 places was developed in conjunction with the council's strategic planning team, all being individual places.

### Stage 2

Detailed assessments of these 22 places were undertaken during Stage 2, namely the preparation of a citation, including a Statement of Significance. The group of sites chosen have hitherto been underrepresented in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay, either in terms of typology and location, and/or may have been under explicit threat of adverse change.

Further research for one place – *Petty House* in Ivanhoe East – resulted in it not proceeding to a full citation.

## 1.2 Study Area

The City of Banyule constitutes the study area (Figure 1). Situated north-east of the Melbourne CBD, the municipality (approximately 63 km<sup>2</sup> in area) has an estimated population of 131,940 residents (2020). The Yarra River (*Birrarung*) runs along Banyule's south border while the west is defined by Darebin Creek. The topography is relatively level along the river flats extending westwards, with the remainder of the municipality characterised by an undulating terrain.

The built fabric of Banyule's twenty suburbs is predominantly residential (61 per cent), though the municipality is also characterised by an extensive network of reserves or parklands (27 per cent). Other built forms and uses, namely commercial (with large-scale retail hubs at Ivanhoe Shopping Centre, Heidelberg Central, and Greensborough Shopping Centre), industrial (concentrated in Heidelberg West, Greensborough/Briar Hill, and Bundoora), health (Austin Hospital and Simpson Barracks), and a wide range of educational and leisure facilities, are also evident.



**Figure 1.** Map of Banyule suburbs and precincts.  
(Source: Banyule City Council)

## 1.3 Overview of Existing Heritage Overlays

### 1.3.1 Existing Listings

Presently, there are 190 places included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in the *Banyule Planning Scheme*. Twenty-one of which are also included on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). The breakdown according to the three main types of places is as follows:

- 160 individual buildings,
- 12 landscape items (parks, street plantings, reserves),
- 18 precincts (residential, commercial, or mixed-use).

The places range in date from the mid-Victorian period through to the postwar period – although those constructed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are most prevalent. The majority are residential with other typologies represented, including commercial/retail and civic/public buildings (churches, schools, recreational facilities, train stations, halls, and cemeteries).

A high percentage of these places are located in the southern part of the municipality, namely, the suburbs of Ivanhoe, East Ivanhoe, Eaglemont, and Heidelberg. Such a concentration reflects the earlier built consolidation of these locales and the tendency for their associated historical layers to be more readily recognised as embodying heritage values. To date, the middle and northern reaches of Banyule have not been subject to comprehensive heritage assessment.

### 1.3.2 Previous Heritage Studies

Several heritage studies have been undertaken in the area, although as noted above, chiefly with a focus on the southern parts of the municipality. As part of Stage 2, the following documents were reviewed:

- Graeme Butler, *Heidelberg Conservation Study: Part 1 – Heidelberg Historic Buildings & Areas Assessment*, Heidelberg City Council, 1985
- Allom Lovell & Associates (ALA) in association with John Patrick Pty Ltd, *Banyule Heritage Places Study*, vol. 1: An Urban History, vol. 2: Building Citations, vol. 4: Heritage Areas; and vol. 5: Summary of Recommendations and Heritage Overlay Schedule, Banyule City Council, July 1999. NB volume 3 (Landscape Citations) was not reviewed (see comment regarding landscape below)
- Context, *Banyule Heritage Review*, March 2012:
  - Draft Citation: 6 Eaglemont Crescent, Eaglemont, 2009
  - Draft Citation: 38 Quinn Street, Heidelberg, 2009
  - Draft Citation: 61-63 Mount Street, Eaglemont, 2009
- Context, *Ivanhoe Activity Centre Heritage Items and Precincts*, 2012
- Context, *Heritage Assessment: 321 Lower Heidelberg Road, East Ivanhoe*, March 2017
- Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History (BTEH)*, October 2018

The *Shire of Eltham Heritage Study* (David Bick and Carlotta Kellaway, 1992) was reviewed during Stage 2; however, it did not yield additional information to places in Banyule that were previously located in the former Shire of Eltham.

Assessments pertaining to Banyule within the *Survey of Post-war Built Heritage in Victoria: Stage One* (Heritage Alliance, vols 1 and 2, October 2008) were also reviewed.

## 1.4 Acknowledgements

RBA gratefully acknowledges the assistance rendered to the project by Council officers and members of the public. In addition, the specific contribution made by the following is also recognised:

- Robin Boyd Foundation
- Heidelberg Historical Society
- Greensborough Historical Society
- Eltham District Society
- Alicia Holgar
- Richard Peterson
- Steven Barlow
- Rohan Storey
- Dr Stuart King
- Dr Miles Lewis
- Michael Rynia and Susan Edwards

## 2 METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 Introduction

The methodology adopted in undertaking Stage 2 of *Banyule Heritage Study 2020* was in accordance with the following two guiding documents:

- 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' – Planning Practice Note 1 (August 2018), and
- *Burra Charter or Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance* (Australia ICOMOS, rev. 2013).

The key tasks included:

- Site inspections.
- Historical research and analysis of the extant fabric in relation to documentary evidence.
- Analysing the intactness of the extant fabric as part of preparing a physical description.
- Assessment of the significance of each site based on the research and the extant fabric, as well as a comparative analysis.
- Preparation of citations (statement of significance, history and description) for those places warranting heritage protection, with reference to the relevant HERCON criteria.
- Recommendations for any specific controls and extent of the proposed heritage overlay.

### 2.2 Guiding Documents

#### **Burra Charter**

For heritage professionals generally in Australia dealing with post-contact cultural heritage, the process outlined in the *Burra Charter* (Australia ICOMOS, rev 2013) underpins the approach to heritage assessment and conservation adopted by the authors of this study.

*Burra Charter* definitions commonly employed in this study are:

- Place means a geographically defined area. It may include elements, objects, spaces and views. Place may have tangible and intangible dimensions.
- Cultural Significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.
- Fabric means all the physical material of the place including elements, fixtures, contents and objects.

#### **Applying the Heritage Overlay**

*Applying the Heritage Overlay: Planning Practice Note 1* (August 2018) – a Victorian Environment, Land, Water and Planning Department publication – provides guidance about the use of the Heritage Overlay, including the following:

- What places should be included in the Heritage Overlay?
- What are recognised heritage criteria?
- Writing statements of significance.

The practice note indicates that the recognised criteria, being the HERCON criteria, are to be employed when assessing heritage significance.

## 2.3 Site Inspections

For the most part, site inspections were limited to an assessment from the street/boundary. Some places were inspected during Stage 1 (June 2020), with nearly all Stage 2 places again investigated in January 2021.

On-site inspections were made possible for two places – *Green Mount Court* and *St George Peace Memorial Church*.

Another four places, including the other three public or religious sites – *Mother of God Church*, *Lobbs' Tearooms (former)/DVLC*, and the *2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe Scout Hall* – were able to be easily inspected externally (in the round). Similarly, the commercial premises in Greensborough shopping centre were widely visible from the public realm.

The remaining 15 sites were private houses with varying degrees of visibility from the public realm. For most of this group, a good to fair degree of visibility was possible; however, in a few instances, the discernibility of the fabric was limited because of fences, dense planting, steep topography and/or deep setbacks. Fortunately, real estate photographs (dating to the last decade) were available online for some of these places, allowing for the description and analysis to be supplemented.

## 2.4 Research

A wide array of primary and secondary sources were consulted as follows.

Primary sources have included:

- Aerial photographs, held by Landata and The University of Melbourne,
- Other photographs – mainly held by SLV (such as the collections of Peter Wille and Wolfgang Sievers),
- Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Plans held by the SLV,
- Various newspapers from Trove, especially the major metropolitan newspapers such as the *Argus*, the *Age* and the *Herald*,
- *The Australian Home Beautiful*,
- *Cross-Sections*,
- *Architecture in Australia*,
- Sands & McDougall's street directories,
- Parish plans,
- Certificates of Title,
- Subdivision plans,
- Auction Notices,
- Property files, held by the Banyule Council,
- Building files – Public Record Office Victoria (PROV),
- Alistair Knox Foundation, *Alistair Knox: Designer, Environmentalist, Builder, Landscape Architect*, <https://alistairknox.org/>
- Grounds, Romberg and Boyd archive, held at the SLV, and
- Australian Architectural Index (Miles Lewis, available online).

In regard to secondary sources, several district histories and general architectural resources were also employed, in particular:

- Edwards, Dianne H, *The Diamond Valley Story*, Shire of Diamond Valley, 1979
- Heidelberg Historical Society, *A pictorial history of Heidelberg since 1836*, Heidelberg Historical Society, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1982
- Heritage Council Victoria, *Victorian Heritage Database*, available online

- Garden, Donald S., *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972
- Goad, Philip J, *The modern house in Melbourne, 1945-75*, PhD, The University of Melbourne, 1992
- Jones, Maureen *Montmorency: the farm on the Plenty*, 2015
- Plant, Simon, *Heidelberg Rambles: 12 Walks in the City of Heidelberg*, City of Heidelberg, 1985.
- Various articles/authors, *eMelbourne: the city past & present*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008, available online

The *Banyule Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, October 2018) was employed to understand the thematic context. Relevant citations from the various aforementioned heritage studies were employed to understand the range and type of similar places included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay and the degree of rarity of the place.

## 2.5 Analysing the Extant Fabric

A prerequisite for understanding a place's potential significance is the analysis of extant fabric. Such an investigation requires an understanding of a place's development, the intactness and/or integrity of the remaining fabric, and a comparison with other similar sites (if they exist).

### Intactness and Integrity

A key aspect of the assessment is to determine the level of intactness of the remaining building fabric. Typically, places of individual significance are largely intact, including their form, original material palette, and detailing (such as windows and doors, chimneys, verandah or porch, decorative elements, etc). In some instances, a greater degree of alteration may be acceptable if the item is rare or considered to embody a high level of historical or another type of significance.

In regard to the issue of intactness and integrity, the definitions provided by *The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines* were followed:

- Intactness: refers to the degree to which a place or object retains its significant fabric. Intactness should not be confused with condition – a place may be highly intact but the fabric may be in a fragile condition.
- Integrity: refers to the degree to which the heritage values of the place or object are still evident and can be understood and appreciated (for example, the degree to which the original design or use of a place or object can still be discerned). If considerable change to a place or object has occurred (through encroaching development, changes to the fabric, physical deterioration of the fabric etc.) the values may not be readily identifiable and the place or object may have low-level integrity.

Typically, the issue of intactness and integrity – the ability to 'read' a place as to how it appeared or functioned originally or has evolved over time (if such developments contribute to its heritage value) – is considered critical in determining heritage significance.

The key consideration is whether later intervention/s or cumulative change has critically compromised the presentation and/or the significance of a place. This question is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Generally, non-visible alterations and/or additions to original fabric (predominantly at the rear of a building), including partial demolition, have been considered to not unduly impact the heritage significance of a place in a local context.

### Comparative Analysis

A key aspect of any heritage assessment is comparing a place with others of its typology, usually within the municipality, though maybe further afield - especially if under consideration for State-level significance or if there are no local comparisons. This action is necessary to determine how the site in question differs from other similar examples. An understanding of the thresholds for local significance was based on reviewing the statements of significance for existing heritage overlays within the City of Banyule and the authors' experience of similar examples more broadly across Victoria.



## 2.6 Assessment of Significance

### HERCON Criteria

These widely used criteria were adopted at the 1998 Conference on Heritage (HERCON) and are based on the earlier, and much used, Australian Heritage Commission (now Australian Heritage Council, AHC) criteria for the Register of the National Estate (RNE).

The HERCON criteria are essentially a rationalised (more user-friendly) version of the AHC Criteria (which included different sub-criteria for cultural or natural heritage). It is also noted in the aforementioned practice note that 'The adoption of the above criteria does not diminish heritage assessment work undertaken before 2012 using older versions of criteria.'

Reference to the relevant HERCON criteria is included in brackets within the statements of significance. The criteria are outlined in the following table.

Criterion	Definition
A	Importance to the course, or pattern, of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).
B	Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).
C	Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential)
D	Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness)
E	Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).
F	Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).
G	Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance)
H	Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

Another publication, *The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines* (Heritage Council of Victoria, April 2019), was considered; however, it is mainly concerned with the assessment of State-level significance.

## 2.7 Citation Format

A citation was prepared for each place recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in the Banyule Planning Scheme. Each citation includes:

- Name and address,
- Level of significance (local/state),
- Construction date/s,
- Period/s,
- Date inspected,
- Images,
- Statement of Significance,



- Description,
- History,
- Thematic context and comparative analysis,
- Assessment of intactness,
- References to any previous assessment,
- Proposed heritage overlay schedule controls,
- Recommended extent of the heritage overlay.

### 3 STAGE ONE

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The 'Banyule Heritage Study 2020 Stage 1 Report' was issued in August 2020. An overview of Stage 1 is provided below.

#### 3.1 Places Reviewed by RBA

A preliminary assessment for over 200 individual places and nine precincts was undertaken during Stage 1, much of it by desktop review. This group of places was a combination of public nominations, those identified by the Council, and several others identified by RBA during the undertaking of the Study.

##### Public Nominations

During Stage 1, there were opportunities for the public to nominate potential heritage sites through an online portal (February and March 2020).

One public information session was held at the Livingstone Community Centre in Ivanhoe in March 2020. A second session planned at Greensborough was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. At this Council-led session, RBA staff provided an overview of what types of places might qualify for heritage assessment and examples of places with varying levels of intactness as a means of understanding thresholds.

Initially, 190 places, including four suggested precincts, resulted from this process. Council officers conducted an initial review of the nominated places (to remove duplicates, those already affected by a heritage overlay, etc) and instructed to assess 133 places.

##### Council Identified Places

67 places, including nine potential precincts, were provided by the Council. These places derived either from in-house observation or from the recommendations/findings of previous heritage studies mainly:

- *Banyule Heritage Review* (March 2012), and
- *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*.

##### Other Sources

18 further places were added to the schedules by the authors after also reviewing earlier heritage studies, mainly the *Heidelberg Conservation Study* and *Banyule Heritage Places Study*.

A few more potential places were added from a broad examination of other architectural and history publications. For instance, some distinctive houses designed by Melbourne-based architect Charles Duncan, especially in the Lower Plenty area and dating to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

##### Fieldwork

Targeted fieldwork during Stage 1 was undertaken during July 2020. This survey was restricted mainly to those nominated/identified sites that could not be readily observed via a desktop work. The prioritisation of several sites was reassessed because of the inspections. The fieldwork also yielded a small number of previously unnominated sites, which were also added to the Stage 1 Schedules.

#### 3.2 Establishing Thresholds

Establishing significance thresholds is critical in assessing potential heritage places, that is, determining whether a site has sufficient significance for the application of a heritage overlay. The *Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines* define a 'significance threshold' as:

the minimum level of cultural heritage significance that a place or object must possess to justify its inclusion on the relevant local, state, national or world heritage list.

In the context of a municipal heritage study, a nominated/identified place is required to satisfy one or more criteria at the local level. As might be expected, not every site reviewed had sufficient value to justify a recommendation for further heritage assessment.

In conducting Stage 1, the 'basic' test was applied as articulated in *The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines*, albeit in a form modified for application at the local level. Consideration was also given to the thematic framework and findings of the recently completed *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*. For instance, in ascertaining the likelihood of whether a site would satisfy the threshold for Criteria A, D or E (the criteria most commonly applicable to the nominated/identified places) at the municipal level, the ability of the extant/visible fabric to demonstrate:

- clear physical evidence of the place's associations with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life recognised (or recognisable) as historical importance to Banyule's cultural history (Criterion A),
- the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places (related to an event, phase, period, process, function, movement or way of life) and its representative importance to Banyule's cultural history (Criterion D), and/or
- that the attributes/qualities of a place were manifestly distinctive or exceptional, of landmark status, or widely recognised/appreciated (N.B. from a heritage assessment perspective, aesthetic is not synonymous with beauty) (Criterion E).

Other considerations that factored into the assessments were the comparative analysis, intactness/integrity, rarity/representativeness, and the capacity of a place to illustrate hitherto overlooked or under-represented themes, typologies, or historical layers.

The recommendation of Heritage Victoria – that following the 'creation' of a place, a generation (approximately 25-30 years) should be allowed to pass before a heritage listing is considered – has been followed. The underlying logic is that the passage of such a period will generally enable the cultural significance of a place to be more objectively and rigorously assessed.

### 3.3 Assessing Priority

A priority classification was utilised in the Schedules, which represented a preliminary assessment.

The meaning of these categories – high, medium, low, and no – is outlined below. In some cases, an 'intermediate' classification is provided in the Schedules, such as a medium-to-high or low-to-medium prioritisation.

- **High** – the place has a high likelihood for satisfying the heritage threshold at the local level and is recommended for detailed assessment during Stage 2. It may also have been considered to be at high risk of redevelopment or loss.
- **Medium** – the place may be found to satisfy the heritage threshold at the local level and may conceivably be under the threat of redevelopment or loss. A further assessment would be necessary before a more definitive recommendation could be made in regard to their potential heritage value. In most cases, this assessment would rely upon closer evaluation of intactness/integrity and broader comparative analysis.
- **Low** – the place is unlikely to satisfy the local heritage threshold (at this point in time); due likely to a low level of intactness/integrity, limited historical value, minimal aesthetic distinction or representative value, or probable lack of social value. These places are typically ordinary and/or much-altered examples of their type. Other reasons could include the site illustrates a layer/typology well-represented in the Schedule, or have been constructed too recently. It is recommended that these sites are not prioritised for assessment during Stage 2.
- **No** – the place would not satisfy any heritage thresholds and should not be subject to further assessment in Stage 2.

### 3.4 Assessed Places

The assessment of individual sites was provided in Schedules, whereas that for the precincts was provided in datasheets.

#### 3.4.1 Schedules

Following the nomination/identification phase, a Schedule was prepared, ultimately consisting of 200 entries – mostly individual sites with a few pairs (two similar sites) or small groups. The record for each entry included:

- Address,
- (Likely) Period of origin,
- Preliminary assessment of intactness (High, Medium, Low, Unknown),
- Overview details (summary of known/readily available history, key elements, previous heritage reference),
- Photograph, including historical if available, and
- Priority for further review (High, Medium, Low, No) and general comment.

Given the number of sites assessed, the Schedules were organised according to building typology as follows:

- Section A – Residences and Commercial. Arranged according to period of construction (Victorian, Federation, Interwar, Post-WWII, late 20th century onwards).
- Section B – Churches,
- Section C – Civic,
- Section D – Health,
- Section E – Education,
- Section F – Halls,
- Section G – Recreation,
- Section H – Infrastructure,
- Section I – Bridges & Roads,
- Section J – Landscape, Parks, Trees,
- Section K – Subdivisions & Lanes,
- Section L – Rejected Precincts.

#### 3.4.2 Precincts

Thirteen potential precincts were assessed in Stage 1. Of these, nine derived from previous heritage studies, three from public nominations, and one was identified by the authors.

Findings for the potential precincts were summarised in the form of a data sheet which included:

- a succinct history of the land development, physical description,
- a concise comparative survey,
- preliminary application of the HERCON criteria,
- a proposed overlay extent,
- recommendations for further assessment.

Datasheets were prepared for ten precincts, nine of which were assessed as having strong potential to meet local significance thresholds.

It was apparent that nearly all the previously identified precincts were undergoing redevelopment, including demolition and the recent construction of often substantial contemporary infill buildings, often at odds with the character of the historic buildings.

### 3.5 Main Recommendations

During mid-2020, RBA and council officers processed the findings outlined in the Schedules and datasheets and engaged in multiple discussions for the purpose of establishing the Master List, which ultimately was comprised of 22 individual properties.

In regard to the other sites reviewed during Stage 1 but which have not proceeded as yet to detailed assessment (stage 2), the following was noted:

- All properties in the Schedules that are not included in the Master List and classified as either a Medium, Medium/High, or High priority should be further reviewed for their heritage potential. In many cases, these sites would require further research and inspection (typically to determine their level of intactness/integrity better) and/or a closer comparative study. A Medium and High designation is a strong indication that they would likely meet the threshold for local heritage significance.
- Likewise, the nine precincts that would also likely meet the threshold for local heritage significance in Stage 1 should be further investigated. It is noted that these heritage places are currently vulnerable to incremental negative change and redevelopment. In particular, the heritage potential of 'The Mall' Precinct' is considered to be very high. This proposed conservation area is a remarkably intact postwar concentration of commercial modernist design and planning that is rare at the state level. A wider acknowledgment of its likely heritage significance may support its revitalisation.

Recommendations were also made regarding other heritage review work.

## 4 STAGE TWO

### 4.1 Findings

Further research and analysis undertaken during Stage 2 have confirmed that 21 of the 22 proposed heritage overlays warranted recommendation for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in the Banyule Planning Scheme. The proposed citations for these places are included in the Appendix.

Upon further review during Stage 2, a full citation was not prepared for one place included in the Master List from Stage 1. This place was the house at 318 The Boulevard, Ivanhoe East constructed during 1940-42 to a design by the architect Arthur E Petty. While reference to changes at the site had come to light during Stage 1, the full extent of these changes to this cream-brick Functionalist-style house had not been initially realised. More detailed inspection and analysis during Stage 2 revealed that additions to the front had been undertaken in two phases (1952 and 2009) and had compromised the original design to a considerable degree such that its intactness was reduced.

Of the 21 places, St George's Anglican Church is the one most likely to be worthy of State level recognition.

### 4.2 Individual Places

The following table summarises the recommended 21 individual heritage overlays with some summary details of each.

No.	Name	Address	Date	Details
1	<i>Green Mount Court</i>	110 Maltravers Road, Eaglemont	1960-61	Modernist block of flats Designed by Holgar & Holgar
2	<i>Royd</i>	61-63 Mount Street, Eaglemont	1901	Substantial Queen Anne-style timber house, Federation period Designed by Henry Vines and Alfred Champion
3	<i>Lobbs' Tearooms (former) and Diamond Valley Learning Centre</i>	1 Diamond Creek Road, Greensborough	1925	Timber tea rooms Rare example Likely designed by the City of Heidelberg engineer
4	<i>Stubley's Hay and Grain Store (former)</i>	96-104 Main Street, Greensborough	1935	Substantial Moderne-style commercial premise Designed by Albert K Lines
5	<i>Collins House</i>	45 Bronte Street, Heidelberg	1954	Modernist, timber house Designed (likely) by Robin Boyd
6	<i>Welsh House</i>	4 Eton Court, Heidelberg	1965-72	Modernist brick house Designed by Charles Duncan
7	<i>Graceburn</i>	38 Quinn Street, Heidelberg	1905-06	Commodious timber house Federation Bungalow style
8	<i>Beddison/Swift House</i>	5 Crown Road, Ivanhoe	1963	Modernist house, brick Designed by Bell & Clerehan, chiefly Neil Clerehan
9	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe Scout Hall</i>	8A Wallace Street, Ivanhoe	1939-40	Large, purpose-built 'modern' scout hall, designed by Kingston Sedgfield

No.	Name	Address	Date	Details
10	<i>Willis House</i>	10 Gruyere Crescent, Ivanhoe East	1950	Early Modernist house, brick, designed by Robin Boyd
11	<i>Purcell House</i>	17 Hartlands Road, Ivanhoe East	1963	Small modernist house, masonry Designed and later added to by Guilford Bell
12	<i>Yann House</i>	21 Keam Street, Ivanhoe East	1960-63	Modernist brick house Designed by Geoffrey Woodfall + Garside and Genser Architects
13	<i>Crittenden House</i>	30 Longstaff Street, Ivanhoe East	1961	Modernist house, brick Designed by Chancellor & Patrick
14	<i>Hilliard House</i>	6 Quandolan Close, Ivanhoe East	1968-69	Modernist brick house with Japanese influence Designed by Smith & Tracey
15	<i>St George Peace Memorial Church</i>	47 Warncliffe Road, Ivanhoe East	1936/1953 and 1963-64	Modernist Anglican church Designed by Frederick Romberg, including much of earlier church hall
16	<i>Mother of God Church</i>	56 Wilfred Road, Ivanhoe East	1957	Modernist Catholic church Designed by Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell
17	<i>Okalyi House</i>	66 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty	1968-70	Modernist house, brick Designed by Charles Duncan
18	<i>Lindsay Edward House</i>	149 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty	1950-52	Mud-brick house Designed by Alistair Knox
19	<i>Vera Knox House</i>	46 Panorama Street, Lower Plenty	1958-60	Limestone house Designed by Alistair Knox
20	<i>English House</i>	50-52 Philip Street, Lower Plenty	1947	Mud-brick house, Alistair Knox's first mud-brick design
21	<i>Uglow House</i>	79 Buena Vista Drive, Montmorency	1955-56	Modernist house Designed by Robin Boyd

### 4.3 Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls

Specific controls have been recommended for the following places.

External paint controls have been recommended for all places, except No 3 *Lobbs' Tearooms and Diamond Valley Learning Centre*.

Tree controls have been recommended for eight places as outlined in the following table.

No.	Name	Address	Details
2	<i>Royd</i>	61-63 Mount Street, Eaglemont	Front garden – Lebanon cedar, Algerian oak, Pencil Pines

No.	Name	Address	Details
3	<i>Lobbs' Tearooms and Diamond Valley Learning Centre</i>	1 Diamond Creek Road, Greensborough	Pair of English elms – frontage
6	<i>Welsh House</i>	4 Eton Court, Heidelberg	Mature native/indigenous species – front garden
8	<i>Beddison/Swift House</i>	5 Crown Road, Ivanhoe	Lemon-scented gum in courtyard and front garden + likely Prickly-leaved Paperbark – front garden
11	<i>Purcell House</i>	17 Hartlands Road, Ivanhoe East	Lemon-scented and spotted gums – front garden
13	<i>Crittenden House</i>	30 Longstaff House, Ivanhoe East	Lemon-scented gums on Street Crescent
15	<i>St George Peace Memorial Church</i>	47 Warncliffe Road, Ivanhoe East	Four eucalypts to northwest corner, two exotics to courtyard
16	<i>Mother of God Catholic Church</i>	56 Wilfred Road, Ivanhoe East	Atlas Cedar – front garden
17	<i>Okalyi House</i>	66 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty	Mature native/indigenous species – front garden

Fence or outbuilding controls have been recommended for two places as follows:

- No. 12 – *Yann House*, 21 Keam Street, Ivanhoe East (front retaining wall)
- No. 14 – *Hilliard House*, 6 Quandolan Close, Ivanhoe East (front fence)

Limited internal alteration controls have been recommended for nine places as outlined in the following table.

No.	Name	Address	Details
6	<i>Welsh House</i>	4 Eton Court, Heidelberg	East wing passageway, walls of exposed brick/timber boarding, slate paved floors, plaster ceilings, redwood-lined pyramidal ceiling, brick fireplace, and timber kitchen island
8	<i>Beddison/Swift House</i>	5 Crown Road, Ivanhoe	Timber floorboards, internal walls with timber battens or plastered, and open timber stair
11	<i>Purcell House</i>	17 Hartlands Road, Ivanhoe East	General floorplan, mountain ash ceilings, walls of exposed concrete blocks or vertically laid boarding, and the coverable fireplace (living room)
14	<i>Hilliard House</i>	6 Quandolan Close, Ivanhoe East	Timber ceiling to living room
15	<i>St George Peace Memorial Church</i>	47 Warncliffe Road, Ivanhoe East	Church interior
16	<i>Mother of God Catholic Church</i>	56 Wilfred Road, Ivanhoe East	Exposed matt-black steel roof beams and timber-lined ceiling



No.	Name	Address	Details
17	<i>Okalyi House</i>	66 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty	Pine ceilings, brick fireplace, exposed brick walls, and slate floors
18	<i>Lindsay Edward House</i>	149 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty	'Hanging' timber stair and exposed timber ceiling beams
20	<i>English House</i>	50-52 Philip Street, Lower Plenty	Mud-brick/corbelled fireplace and inglenook
21	<i>Uglow House</i>	79 Buena Vista Drive, Montmorency	Timber linings and joinery in living area

While it is relatively uncommon to recommend internal controls to places of local significance, the relatively large percentage of such recommendations in this instance reflects the high number of architect-designed houses in the study group with bespoke detailing to the interior, including natural floor and wall finishes, as well as many specifically stained timber elements. These elements are integral to the overall design ethos employed in these houses.

In most instances, with those sites not inspected internally (the majority), there has been a reliance upon recent real estate images and/or original documentation. It has, however, not been possible to confirm whether these elements or areas have remained intact subsequently.

#### 4.4 Maps

The following maps locate the proposed heritage overlays according to suburb.

## Eaglemont



No 1 – *Green Mount Court*, 110 Maltravers Road, Eaglemont  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)



No 2 – *Royd*, 61-63 Mount Street, Eaglemont  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)



## Greensborough



No 3 – *Lobbs' Tearooms (former) and Diamond Valley Learning Centre*, 1 Diamond Creek Road, Greensborough  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)



No 4 – *Stubley's Hay and Grain Store (former)*, 96-104 Main Street, Greensborough  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)



## Heidelberg



No 5 – *Collins House*, 45 Bronte Street, Heidelberg  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)

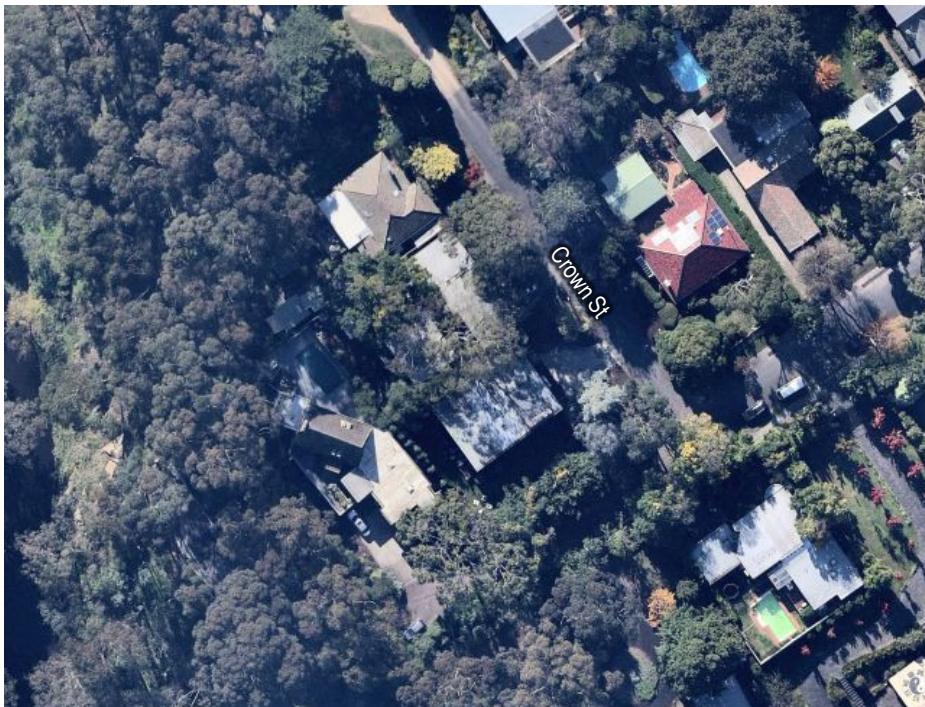


No 6 – *Welsh House*, 4 Eton Court, Heidelberg  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)



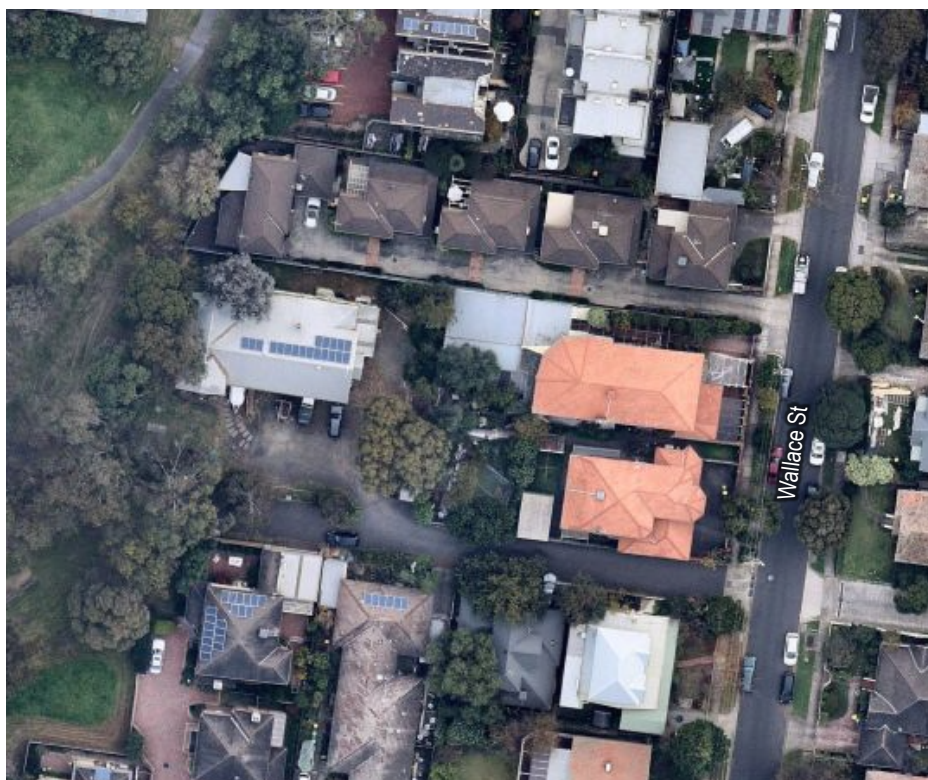
No 7 – *Graceburn*, 38 Quinn Street, Heidelberg  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)

## Ivanhoe



No 8 – *Beddison/Swift House*, 5 Crown Road, Ivanhoe  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)





No 9 – 2nd Ivanhoe Scout Hall, 8A Wallace Street, Ivanhoe  
(Source: Nearthmap, May 2021)

## Ivanhoe East



No 10 – Willis House, 10 Gruyere Crescent, Ivanhoe East  
(Source: Nearthmap, May 2021)





No 11 – *Purcell House*, 17 Hartlands Road, Ivanhoe East  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)

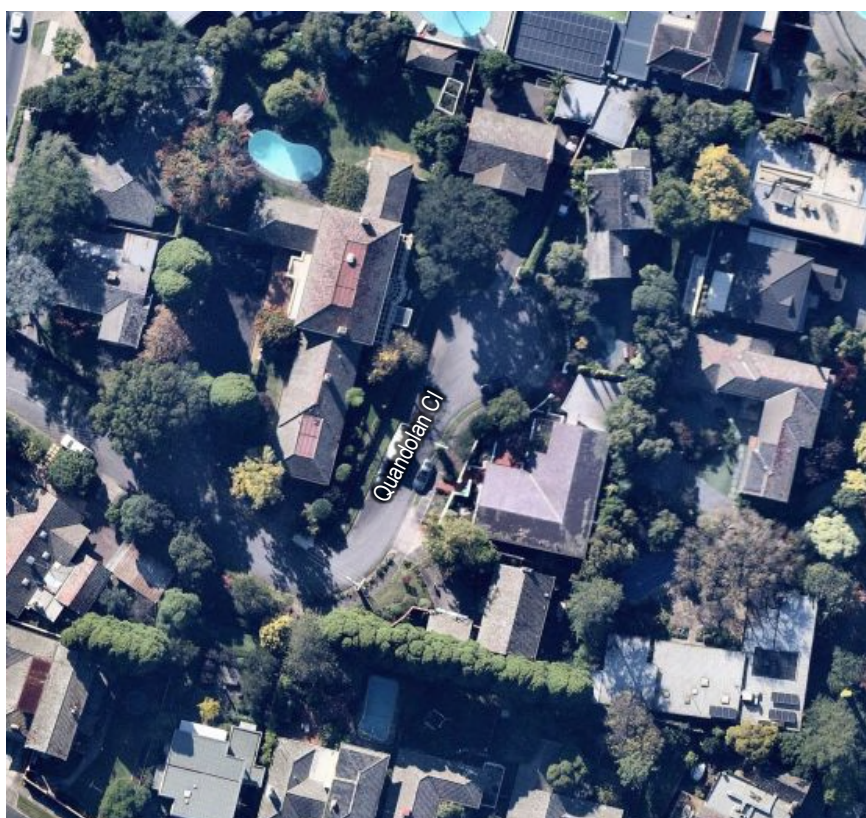


No 12 – *Yann House*, 21 Kearn Street, Ivanhoe East  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)





No 13 – *Crittenden House*, 30 Longstaff Street, Ivanhoe East  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)



No 14 – *Hilliard House*, 6 Quandlan Close, Ivanhoe East  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)





No 15 – *St George Peace Memorial Church*, 47 Warncliffe Road, Ivanhoe East  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)



No 16 – *Mother of God Catholic Church*, 56 Wilfred Road, Ivanhoe East  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)



## Lower Plenty



No 17 – *Okalyi House*, 66 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)



No 18 – *Lindsay Edward House*, 149 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)





No 19 - *Vera Knox House*, 46 Panorama Street, Lower Plenty  
(Source: Nearthmap, May 2021)



No 20 – *English House*, 50-52 Philip Street, Lower Plenty  
(Source: Nearthmap, May 2021)



## Montmorency



No 21 – *Uglove House*, 79 Buena Vista Drive, Montmorency  
(Source: Nearmap, May 2021)

### 4.5 Further Recommendations

Stage 2 of the *Banyule Heritage Study 2020* has undertaken detailed assessments, including preparing a citation and Statement of Significance, for 21 places across the municipality.

These places derive from sites identified as a High priority during Stage 1 of the Study. There remain 19 sites from Stage 1 that were designated as a High or Medium-High priority. Many of these places are likely to meet the threshold for local significance. Detailed assessment of these sites should occur when resources become available.

There were also 62 individual sites that were assessed as being of Medium priority during Stage 1. These should be further reviewed in the short-to-medium term to determine whether they might meet the threshold for local significance. It is likely that not all of these places would be recommended for heritage protection subsequent to further research and analysis.

Nine precincts – eight residential, one commercial – were assessed during Stage 1 as likely to meet the threshold for local significance. None of these was advanced to detailed assessment during this current stage. It was evident during the inspections of these precincts that they are generally at risk from incremental change (demolition, unsympathetic alterations and additions, etc). The heritage potential of 'The Mall' Precinct (Data Sheet 9) is considered particularly high as a remarkably intact concentration of postwar commercial modernist design and planning. It is recommended that Council prioritise the further review of these precincts when resources become available.

It was also noted that the middle belt and northern section of Banyule have not been subject to a comprehensive heritage survey, as compared to the more established suburbs in the southern part of the municipality. These localities – chiefly the product of postwar and late 20<sup>th</sup>-century development – illustrate important strands of the area's history and identity that is often less readily appreciated or apparent. As such, there may be places worthy of heritage recognition which did not come to light during the processes employed during Stage 1 of this review (nominations, etc.).



## APPENDIX – Citations

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No.	Name	Address
1	<i>Green Mount Court</i>	110 Maltravers Road, Eaglemont
2	<i>Royd</i>	61-63 Mount Street, Eaglemont
3	<i>Lobbs' Tearooms (former) and Diamond Valley Learning Centre</i>	1 Diamond Creek Road, Greensborough
4	<i>Stubley's Hay and Grain Store (former)</i>	96-104 Main Street, Greensborough
5	<i>Collins House</i>	45 Bronte Street, Heidelberg
6	<i>Welsh House</i>	4 Eton Court, Heidelberg
7	<i>Graceburn</i>	38 Quinn Street, Heidelberg
8	<i>Beddison/Swift House</i>	5 Crown Road, Ivanhoe
9	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe Scout Hall</i>	8A Wallace Street, Ivanhoe
10	<i>Willis House</i>	10 Gruyere Crescent, Ivanhoe East
11	<i>Purcell House</i>	17 Hartlands Road, Ivanhoe East
12	<i>Yann House</i>	21 Kearn Street, Ivanhoe East
13	<i>Crittenden House</i>	30 Longstaff Street, Ivanhoe East
14	<i>Hilliard House</i>	6 Quandolan Close, Ivanhoe East
15	<i>St George Peace Memorial Church</i>	47 Warcliffe Road, Ivanhoe East
16	<i>Mother of God Catholic Church</i>	56 Wilfred Road, Ivanhoe East
17	<i>Okalyi House</i>	66 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty
18	<i>Lindsay Edward House</i>	149 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty
19	<i>Vera Knox House</i>	46 Panorama Street, Lower Plenty
20	<i>English House</i>	50-52 Philip Street, Lower Plenty
21	<i>Uglow House</i>	79 Buena Vista Drive, Montmorency



## GREEN MOUNT COURT

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<b>Address</b>	110 Maltravers Road, Eaglemont
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1960-61
<b>Period</b>	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Green Mount Court* at 110 Maltravers Road, Eaglemont is significant. It was constructed between 1960 and 1961 to a design by the architectural partnership of husband-and-wife John and Helen Holgar.

The significant elements are its stepped and cuboid form, flat roof, boxed eaves, undercroft, *pilotis*, two 'atriums', internal gangways, buff/cream brick walls in stretcher bond with raked joints, 'cut out' balconies and their metal railings, remaining timber-framed casement windows, glazed spandrel panels, concrete breezeblocks to the front and rear screens, and red/white colour scheme.

Later additions are not significant.

#### How is it Significant?

*Green Mount Court* is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

#### Why is it Significant?

*Green Mount Court* is of historical significance as an early example of the private work of the later noteworthy Polish émigré modernist architects John and Helen Holgar. They completed it before adopting the moniker, 'Holgar & Holgar', and relative to



their later luxurious and elaborate residential work, *Green Mount Court* presents as more restrained. Yet viewed within its early 1960s context, *Green Mount Court* is distinguished from the mainstream of walk-up flats, many of which were constructed speculatively. The well-resolved nature of its design signal the growing sophistication and desirability of flat-living at the time and the Holgars' recognition of widespread interest in buildings that communicated a degree of glamour and visual novelty. It is one of only two places known to have been designed by the Holgars in the municipality. (Criterion A)

*Green Mount Court* is of aesthetic significance as a large-scale flat block expressive of the International Style. Its modular, cuboid and stepped form compose a striking built image, underset by a geometric rigour that imparts a horizontal emphasis while breaking from the then entrenched box-like character of rationalist modernism. Further modulating the distinctive form is the deep *pilotis*-supported undercroft and 'cut out' balconies, each situated to the corners of the four quadrants that make up the two units. 'Featurist' concrete breezeblock screens at the ground level and a bright colour scheme (originally green, but changed at an early date to red), set against the light but robust brickwork, add a liveliness into *Green Mount Court*, indicative of the Holgars' design proclivities and popular tastes. The overall effect, uncommon at the scale of flats in Banyule, is that of embellished modernism. (Criterion E)

## Description

*Green Mount Court* is a freestanding block of 'walk-up' flats located at the centre of its rectangular allotment, providing for a similarly sized front and rear garden. A concrete driveway runs the property's western boundary. It is mirrored by a narrow right of way (separating the subject place from no 114). The front garden incorporates lawn, small garden beds, three trees (including a mature Ash) and a concrete path with a metal handrail. The rear yard is terraced and lightly landscaped with some established trees and three Hills Rotary Hoists (rotating clotheslines).

The building is sizeable and characterised by a cuboid volume and modular composition. The latter is comprised of two broad units (eight flats each) containing four interlinked quadrants. At the centre of each unit is a central elongated open-air 'atrium'. The apartment's eastern wing is two storeys, while the western is three storeys with undercroft parking comprising the ground floor. Such an arrangement produces a stepped form, which is evident to all elevations. This design aspect not only responds to the site's gentle north-south slope but also modulates the box-like massing that had become a relatively codified aspect of postwar modernism. A ground-floor walkway divides the building in the manner of a central circulation axis and also separates the car parking spaces from the internal courtyards. There is a small communal laundry room at the rear of the block.



*Green Mount Court* from Maltravers Road

The flats have a flat roof, which retains its original steel decking cladding to the front half. The front part was replaced with similar in the recent past due to storm damage.<sup>1</sup> Boxed eaves are evident to the exterior of the building. Above the 'atriums', the eaves step out over the gangways, providing cover.

<sup>1</sup> Steven Barlow, per correspondence, January 2021

*Green Mount Court* is of reinforced concrete frame construction with walls clad in buff/cream brick in stretcher bond with raked joints. The eastern wing's plinth, at least to the Maltravers Road, features a 'stepped' pattern of projecting individual stretcher bricks. The employment of warm coloured brick in modernist projects at the time was common as it satisfied the popular preference for masonry construction and allowed for better contextual integration, particularly in residential settings.



(Above) Internal central walkway from street

(Left) 'Stepped' projecting brick pattern, eastern plinth

The concrete slab floor and fascia are picked out with red paint (see below), which emphasises the design's horizontal character and the planar shifts of the quadrants as they 'step up' the site.

Two parallel rows of *pilotis* (34 in total) raise the western wing above the ground, creating the undercroft. Its ceiling is cross ribbed and painted white. The undercroft's floor is surfaced in variously sized precast concrete panels. Some of the strips are painted red – a lively embellishment that also delineate car parking spaces. These intervening red-painted strips carry across the driveway and walkway (including an additional interceding band). They also appear to the front garden path. In some cases, the paint has faded or vanished.



Western elevation  
from the right of way



The place's original colouration is not known. However, the existing combination of red paint to chiefly concrete elements – *pilotis*, exposed face of floors and strips, balcony decks, treads/risers to internal stairs – and white paint to other components (ceiling, the underside of internal gangways/staircase, metal railings, timber framing) is likely at least an early scheme and is now well-established. Such bright hues are in general sympathy with the contemporary colour palette (strong primary colours, allowed by the popularisation of plastic paint at the time).

Unpainted concrete breezeblocks are utilised throughout *Green Mount Court* as decorative devices. Notably, in a geometric and contorted pattern set within a tall and curved concrete-brick frame set above a smooth rendered plinth at the front of the undercroft. This element is repeated nearby against the walkway's internal face (eastern side), where metal letterboxes are incorporated (original). Two other breezeblock screens are evident to the rear of the undercroft (the rearmost has been partly rebuilt). Playfully, service clusters for each of the units – located on the west side of the walkway – have been 'hidden' within cylindrical units formed of breezeblocks.



Front entry, from street

Such elements can be described as examples of 'featurism'; a term used derisively by noted architect and commentator Robin Boyd in his famous publication, *The Australian Ugliness* (1960). A precocious modernist, Boyd lamented the application of detail/kitsch for no reason other than to draw attention. Yet, in this case, the employment of breezeblocks is purposeful, acting as a screening device for parked cars and elaborate accommodation for the mail. Their use also reveals an emergent trend for integrating a more pronounced degree of decoration within modern architecture from the late 1950s, generally, on the grounds of providing a feature element that could catch the eye of a passing motorist and to furnish a point of difference within a design. This popular interest in ornament was a growing mood that John and Helen Holgar, the architects of *Green Mount Court*, recognised throughout their career.



Close-up of breezeblock screen with letterboxes.



Cylinders of breezeblocks, disguising services

There are raised metal letters fixed to the front face of the first-storey concrete floor, above the walkway, spelling 'Green Mount Court' and giving the property's number ('110').



Each car parking space includes a built-in foldable timber 'toolbox' attached to a nearby *piloti* or breezeblock cylinder, which is supported by a metal rod

Each flat has access to a personal 'cut out' balcony (cantilevered to the upper floor) that punctures the corner of each quadrant, articulating the elevations, particularly to the front and rear. The balconies include straight metal railings and either single or double timber-framed glass doors as well as configurations of casement windows and fixed glazing. Decks were initially concrete, but some have been tiled. Balconies for the front and rear flats are situated at the corners. For the remainder, they are grouped at the mid-section of the building.



Rear elevation and western elevation, viewed from right of way



The front and rear flats each have timber-framed casement 'window walls'. These also include a transom window and coloured glazed spandrel panels to the lowest band. Based on physical evidence (lower spandrel, south elevation/eastern wing), it appears that initially, the spandrel glazing was a light emerald green colour; however, at some early point and for reasons unknown, all panels were overpainted in the red shade used elsewhere at the place.



'Window walls', rear elevation



Southern atrium

The rest of the elevations display a regimented fenestration with slightly recessed openings with square dimensions in corresponding rows. Initially, these accommodated double timber-framed casements. Awning windows have replaced several. All have battered brick sills, which also appear to the lower windows walls of the eastern wing.

The two skylit 'atriums' encompass suspended concrete stairs that link to cantilevered gangways, both with metal railings. Glazing to these circulatory routes and semi-private spaces is more limited.

*Green Mount Court* reflects the assured European-derived familiarity of John and Helen Holgar with the tenets of a cohesive international modernism and likely greater familiarity with flat living and design. Through its clarity of form and volumetric expression, flat roofline and lifestyle-enhancing functionalism, the flat block demonstrates some of the hallmarks of the International Style. As noted, though, the place avoids a formulaic rendition of this design mode, which had become relatively well-established in Melbourne from the late 1950s, through subtle modulation and the integration of some ornamental flourishes.

Such a willingness to depart from the strict reductive logic of the International Style is illustrative of the spirited and splintering nature of the modern movement in the period ('multiple modernisms').<sup>2</sup> Such a 'new spirit of abundance in architecture' – a new interest in engaging with 'modern' adornment – is well exemplified by *Green Mount Court*, a testament to the cognisance of its designers of wider architectural discourse and maturing personal interest in creating memorable, even glamorous, built images.<sup>3</sup> Over the ensuing decades, such an approach became the Holgars' calling card as they mined contemporary fashion and commerce for references and inspiration.

<sup>2</sup> Harry Margalit, *Australia: modern architectures in history*, Rektion Books, 2019, chapter 5

<sup>3</sup> Robin Boyd, *The Puzzle of Architecture*, Melbourne University Press, 1965, p69

## History

### Context

(NB – for much of its post-contact history, *Green Mount Court* was associated with the suburb of Ivanhoe.)

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.<sup>4</sup> 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 of the *Birrarung/Yarra* at Melbourne (est. 1835).<sup>5</sup> However, as part of the 'Heidelberg' district in the Parish of Keelbundora, this area passed rapidly into private hands via an auction in Sydney Town in 1838.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup> 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 mostly undertaken by tenant farmers.<sup>8</sup> This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.<sup>9</sup>

Ivanhoe – its name stemming from Archibald Thom's 'Ivanhoe Estate' – remained a sparsely populated agricultural area until Melbourne's 'Land Boom' in the late 1880s.<sup>10</sup> 'Picturesque' terrain, varied outlooks and the high repute of the broader district drew affluent newcomers. By the turn of the century, 'Beautiful Ivanhoe' was routinely portrayed as a 'fashionable', 'exclusive locality' of 'model homes'.<sup>11</sup> An improved railway connection to Melbourne in 1901 supported further middle-class growth, instigating 'four decades of slow and relatively affluent suburban sprawl' in the vicinity of Ivanhoe, Eaglemont, and Heidelberg train stations.<sup>12</sup>

During the interwar years, suburban Ivanhoe solidified, although its southern and eastern reaches remained primarily locked up by the expansive 'Hartlands', 'Charterisville', and 'Chelsworth' estates.<sup>13</sup> To navigate the complexities that accompanied the subdivision of these areas (sloping land, curving streets, views) in the postwar period and galvanised by the swelling influence of modernism, many of the new, generally affluent proprietors sought the services of an architect.<sup>14</sup> By the early 1960s, distinct enclaves of upmarket, modernist design culture were apparent in the southern reaches of Ivanhoe and Ivanhoe East, with the aesthetic and lifestyle reverberations of the modern movement also shaping infill development in the more established environs of the locale.



View near Heidelberg in Victoria, pen and ink drawing, circa 1858

(Source: Eugene von Guérard, National Gallery of Victoria)

<sup>4</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

<sup>5</sup> James Boyce, 1835: *The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13

<sup>8</sup> Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

<sup>9</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, sections 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.5, and 2.3.10

<sup>10</sup> Thom's estate designation was inspired by a novel of the same name by Sir Walter Scott (1819).

<sup>11</sup> Ivanhoe & Alphington Progress Society, *Beautiful Ivanhoe: the suburb of model homes and scenic charm*, Model Studio, 1900, SLV

<sup>12</sup> Ivanhoe Station opened in 1888; however, inefficiencies in the Heidelberg-Melbourne railway line initially bedevilled growth.

<sup>13</sup> Ivanhoe grew from roughly 2,000 residents in 1913 to nearly 8,000 by 1933 (*Victorian Year Books*, Australian Bureau of Statistics).

<sup>14</sup> Don Garden, 'Ivanhoe', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008

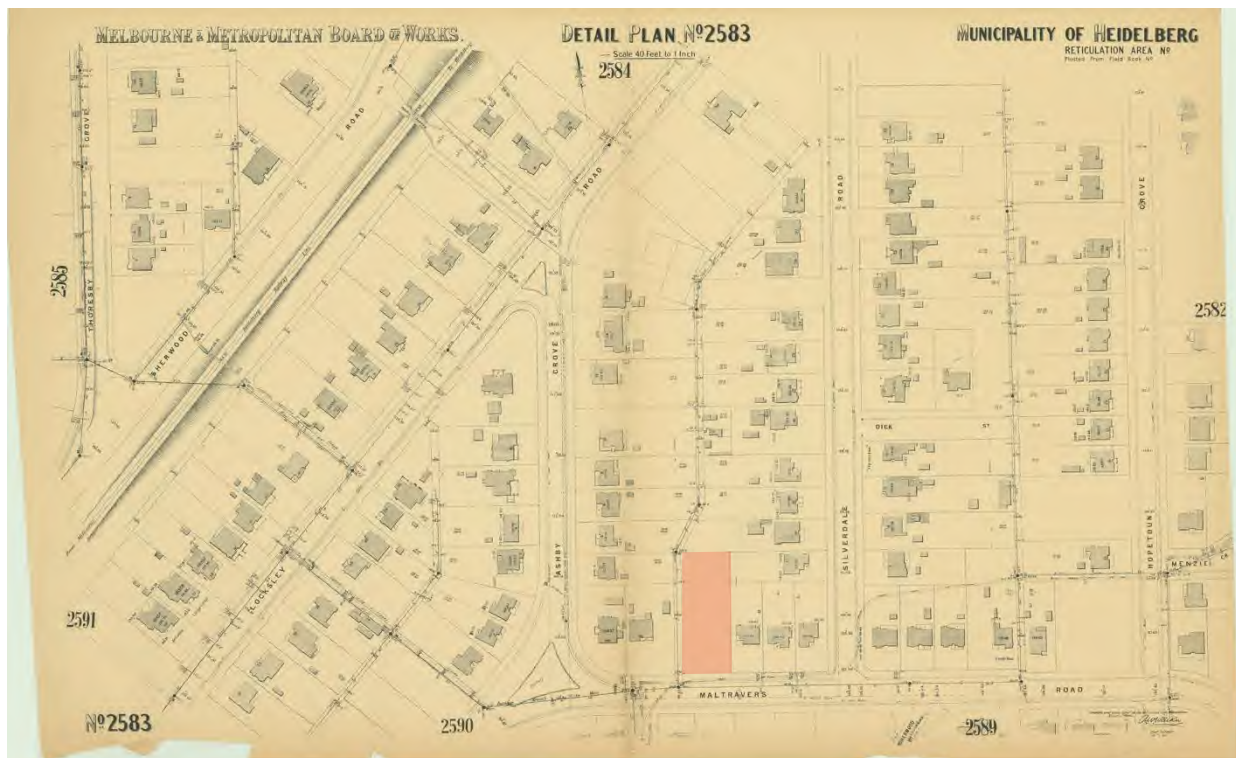


### Site-specific

The subject land derives from Portion 1 (510 hectares) of the Parish of Keelbundora, purchased (along with portions 2 and 3) by Thomas Walker in 1838. A Sydney-based Scottish banker and 'philanthrope' with an eye for marketable land across the colony, Walker's intention in the Port Philip District was speculative from the start. He commenced subdividing his acquisitions as early as mid-1839, amassing enormous profit.<sup>15</sup>

Soon after, the well-heeled Captain George Brunswick Smyth acquired a roughly 215-hectares holding – a combination of portions 1 and 2 – from Walker, which he christened the 'Chelsworth Estate'. His respectable 1860s homestead, overlooking Birrarung/Yarra, is now utilised as the Ivanhoe Golf course clubhouse (HO185). In 1840, Smyth sold on his holding north of Lower Heidelberg Road, including the subject land, to Horatio N Carrington, a Manxman, who developed it as a farm. Carrington's mounting debts saw the property revert back to Smyth in 1843. By the late 1870s, it appears that tenant farmers were at work across most of the Chelsworth Estate.<sup>16</sup>

In 1901, a large tract of Portion 1 was subdivided and put on the market as the 'Chelsworth Estate: Heights of Ivanhoe'.<sup>17</sup> Advertisements, transactions and development continued well into the Interwar period, by which time freestanding, single-family dwellings characterised most lots. The subject allotment (Lot 3, Section 7) diverged from this general trend. It was purchased in 1922 by Michael Brophy, a North Carlton-based clerk, and transferred by Veronica E M Taylor (*née* Donovan) several years later. She held onto the vacant property until her death. After which it was brought by 'H.G.R. Development Co Proprietary Limited' in October 1960.<sup>18</sup>



MMBW 2583, Heidelberg, dated 1935  
Subject site, shaded red, is depicted as vacant  
(Source: SLV)

H G R Development Co was likely behind the decision to construct a block of flats at the site, for which they engaged the relatively new architectural practice of John and Helen Holgar. At the time, the Holgars, were residents at a nearby weatherboard bungalow (22 Ormond Road) and were not yet practising under their later well-known moniker 'Holgar & Holgar'.<sup>19</sup> It appears

<sup>15</sup> W Joy, 'Walker, Thomas (1804-1886)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1967, available online

<sup>16</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, pp27-28, 41, 92

<sup>17</sup> 'Subdivisional Land Sale at Ivanhoe', *Mercury and Weekly Courier*, 27 September 1901, p3; and Landata, *Plan of Subdivision of Part of Crown Portion 1 Keelbundora*, LP4284, lodged 7 March 1902

<sup>18</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4620, folio 729

<sup>19</sup> Sands & McDougall's *Directory of Victoria*, 1960, p493

that, for at least this project, they may have operated under the designation 'H & H Developments'. While no other details of this entity have come to light, it was not unusual for architects to form or belong to companies or consortiums that planned for and oversaw construction or the like in the 1960s.<sup>20</sup>

The construction of the subject flats – advertised initially as 'Greenmount Court' and listed as 96 Maltravers Road – occurred between late 1960 and 1961.<sup>21</sup> As the advertisements reproduced below show, the either two or three-bedroom flats were marketed as 'Own-Your-Own' and the building's inclusion of labour-saving mod cons and fashionable built-in components were highlighted.<sup>22</sup> Greenmount Court was upmarket 'modern' flat living. The weight attached to low deposits and long terms (interest free, first three years) may reflect the realities of the 'credit squeeze' (minor recession) of the early 1960s.<sup>23</sup> Only six of the sixteen flats were listed as occupied in the 1965 edition of the *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria*, another indication of their slow uptake.<sup>24</sup>

(Above left and right) Extract from an early promotion for *Green Mount Court* – the accompanying map (not included here) situates the subject land incorrectly further west  
(Source: *Age*, 1 July 1961, p37)

Flats were a minority typology in Ivanhoe and surrounding areas during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Pragmatism and economics played a role in this, with flat investors preferring suburbs with more advanced public transport systems, proximity to the CBD or bay and favourable building by-laws, such as St Kilda, Elwood, South Yarra, and East Melbourne. It is also likely that the opinion of Ivanhoe residents stigmatised flat living, associating it with 'floating' rental populations and figures outside the bounds of the traditional nuclear family, in line with the attitudes of much of the middle-class Melbourne. Conversely, from at least the late

<sup>20</sup> Two main sources confirm the Holgars' design role at the subject place. Mr Steven Barlow, a resident of *Green Mount Court*, viewed the original drawings for the place in circa 2007 as part of his personal research and confirmed 'H & H Developments' (likely Holgar & Holgar) as the project architects (per correspondence, 27 January 2021). Unfortunately, the City of Banyule were unable to source these plans for this review. Mr Barlow also communicated via letter with Helen Holgar about their architectural work, including *Green Mount Court*. Helen did not contradict the Holgars design involvement at the subject building (per correspondence, 24 July 2007). RBA also contacted relatives of John and Helen Holgar, and one of their sons confirmed he remembered *Green Mount Court* as one of his parents' early private projects (per correspondence, 15 October 2020)

<sup>21</sup> An advertisement for bricklayers and 'good tradesmen' was listed on 28 October 1960 in the *Age* (p26) with the first known promotion of the site recorded on 9 September 1961 in the same paper (p36).

<sup>22</sup> 'Advertisements', *Age*, 7 October 1961, p42

<sup>23</sup> 'Life in Lovely Ivanhoe, 96 Maltravers Rd', *Age*, 4 November 1961, p43

<sup>24</sup> *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria*, 1965, p519. This rose to 9 in the 1970 *Sands* (p175) and 11 in 1974 (p17).

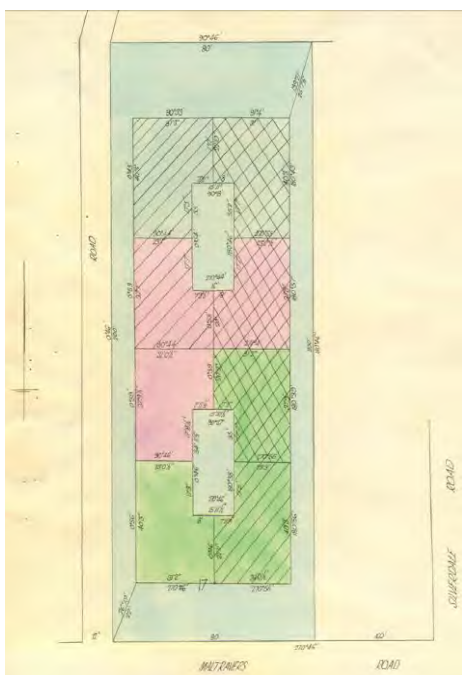


1930s, some architect-composed flat 'mansions' and walk-up blocks attracted positive attention for their modernity and ready associations with more urban, cosmopolitan modes of living.<sup>25</sup>

In postwar Melbourne, the flat development accelerated, peaking in the late 1960s.<sup>26</sup> In the suburbs, the majority were low-rise (two or three storeys) walk-up blocks and built speculatively for renters 'with little or no involvement with professional designers'.<sup>27</sup> The metropolitan trend was mirrored in the City of Heidelberg, with Commonwealth census records capturing a steady rise in postwar flat numbers; 151 in 1947, 292 in 1954, 1060 in 1961 and 1561 in 1966.<sup>28</sup> While these numbers pale compared to the veritable flat booms experienced in prewar flat centres and new centres like Caulfield and Camberwell, it does chart the arrival of higher-density living in Banyule.

Nonetheless, the design of *Green Mount Court* stands it apart from much of the period's relatively low-cost, barracks-like apartments (derisively labelled 'six packs'). Such quality and consideration for the daily lifestyle experiences of occupants likely stems from the skill and architectural training of the Holgars and their presumed familiarity with the culture of European flat living.

*Green Mount Court* also appear to have been intended for owners, as opposed to tenants, an outcome strengthened by the then-recent passage of the *Transfer of Land (Stratum Estates) Act* (1960). Diligently lobbied for by developers and real estate agents, this legislation enabled people to buy the section of air space occupied by an individual flat. Marking this change was a change in terminology, with flats increasingly advertised as 'home units', as seen in the initial wave of promotion for the subject place from late 1961. The later introduction of the *Strata Titles Act* (1967) reinforced the attraction of apartments for owner-occupiers.



Map of *Green Mount Court*, dated January 1962  
(Source: Certificate of Title, vol 8452, folio 683)



1968 aerial photograph, *Green Mount Court* is identified by the red arrow  
(Source: Landata, Project no 656, Run 18, Frame 196)

<sup>25</sup> Seamus O'Hanlon, *Home together, home apart: boarding house, hostel and flat life in Melbourne, c1900-1940*, PhD, Department of History, Monash University, Chapter 7; and O'Hanlon, 'Flats', eMelbourne, Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008

<sup>26</sup> O'Hanlon, *Home together, home apart*, p267

<sup>27</sup> Neil Clerehan in Philip Goad, *Melbourne Architecture*, The Watermark Press, 1999, p175

<sup>28</sup> Historical data, Australian Bureau of Statistics, available online

## Holgar & Holgar (1957–1990s)

Holgar & Holgar were a husband-and-wife architectural partnership that became publicly prominent – if not always critically acknowledged – members of Melbourne's design scene. In recent years, their work has been subject to academic reassessment, with the Holgars increasingly recognised as practitioners of a distinct and glamorous vein of postwar modernism, reflecting various international influences and a mounting affluence.<sup>29</sup>

John Holgar (*ne* Władysław Aleksander Janusz Holgar-Ptaszyński) (1922–2006) and wife Helen/Helena (1923–2012) were born in Poland and studied architecture at the Warsaw Polytechnic. Both lived through the German occupation of the Second World War. Helen was involved with the Polish underground resistance and participated in the Warsaw Uprising (1944), which led to her internment in a German POW camp. The pair met after the war at the University of Rome while undertaking further architectural studies. Upon relocating to London, John and Helen married and graduated. In their early thirties, they immigrated to Melbourne, arriving in 1952 as part of a small but influential stream of displaced émigré architects arriving in Australia from the late interwar years to practice and propagate a well-resolved understanding of European modernism.<sup>30</sup>

In Melbourne, work in an array of noted architectural offices followed. The naturalised Holgars submitted a spartan box-like house design into the highly competitive and well-publicised 1957 'Herald Ideal Home' contest, taking first place.<sup>31</sup> The resulting attention allowed John to set up a private practice that year. Helen joined some eighteen months later. Around 1963, they rebranded their small office as Holgar & Holgar.<sup>32</sup>

Their early projects are generally described as rigorous examples of the International Style, although as demonstrated by *Green Mount Court*, such an appraisal may be overstated. From the mid-1960s, as signalled by their striking personal residence in Eaglemont (see Comparative Analysis), the Holgars' approach shifted decisively. A string of luxurious and eclectic house followed, predominantly for an affluent immigrant clientele. These high-budget modernist projects continued into the 1970s and 1980s. Across Toorak, Templestowe, Brighton, Caulfield and Beaumaris arose grand – even palatial – Holgar & Holgar-designed residences, most of which were highly decorative and exuberant for the period, characterised by white-painted concrete screens, parabolic arches, sweeping curves and opulent interiors.<sup>33</sup>

Despite their business success and general acceptance, the work of Holgar & Holgar was sometimes overlooked by the architectural fraternity, dismissed as too lavish (amongst their peers, the nickname 'Vulgar & Vulgar' circulated).<sup>34</sup> Yet viewed retrospectively, the bilingual and well-travelled Holgars are more accurately framed as local agents of alternative variants of international modernism. They adopted a design mode which drew from popular culture and imagery (the allure of Hollywood and Beverly Hills) and a diversity of architectural sources uncommon to Australia ('Tel Aviv, Mexico City or Niemeyer's Brasilia'<sup>35</sup>) to produce singular, memorable visuals and provide scope for high-end living.<sup>36</sup>

## 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:

<sup>29</sup> Catriona Anderson, 'Holgar & Holgar', in Philip Goad and Julie Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p336; and Simon Reeves, 'Gold-Plated Doors If You Want Them: Holgar & Holgar and the Architecture of Opulence', in AnnMarie Brennan and Philip Goad, *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand: 33, Gold*, SAHANZ, 2016, pp568-677

<sup>30</sup> Helen Holgar, *One Lady, Many Lives: A Memoir*, Temple House, 2005; and Anderson, 'Holgar & Holgar', p336

<sup>31</sup> Their winning entry, built as a full-scale prototype at the Exhibition Building, was dismantled and re-built at 780 Centre Road, Bentleigh East (still extant, recommended for a HO). ('House: Herald Ideal Home', in Built Heritage, *City of Glen Eira Post-War & Hidden Gems Heritage Review 2020, Stage Two: Citations*, draft, 11 February 2020, citation no. PW11)

<sup>32</sup> Built Heritage Pty Ltd, *City of Glen Eira Post-War & Hidden Gems Heritage Review 2020. Stage Two: Citations*, City of Glen Eira, 11 August 2020, p123

<sup>33</sup> Distinguished Hoglar & Hoglar designs include *Naliandrah* at 3 Glendye Court, Toorak (1967); *Gelbart House*, 5 Heyington Place, Toorak (1971); 23 Linlithgow Road, Toorak; *Kurtz House*, 82 Lumeah Road, Caulfield (1972-74) (recommended for a HO); and *Saade House*, 344 Beach Road, Black Rock (1975).

<sup>34</sup> Reeves, 'Gold-Plated Doors If You Want Them', p575

<sup>35</sup> Philip Goad, *Melbourne Architecture*, The Watermark Press, 1999, p184

<sup>36</sup> See the discussion of Alice T Friedman's interpretation (*American Glamour and the Evolution of Modern Architecture*, 2010) in Reeves, 'Gold-Plated Doors If You Want Them', p575

## • 6.4 Post-War Residential Development

### Comparative Analysis

As far as is known, Holgar & Holgar were only responsible for two designs in the City of Banyule: *Green Mount Court* and the *Holgar Residence* at 6 Eaglemont Crescent, Eaglemont.<sup>37</sup> The latter, a two-storey, flat-roofed and white rendered house built in 1965, was their personal long-term residence. It features a multi-geometric form and façade with a curved window wall and a plush interior but has been partly altered.<sup>38</sup> While Holgar & Holgars' prolific output in Melbourne has not been comprehensively examined, their oeuvre was chiefly that of the single-family residences. Flats and apartments were less common.<sup>39</sup>

Generally, blocks of flats are not well represented in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay for Banyule, despite their increasing presence within the built history of the municipality from the end of the Interwar period. Only one example of this typology is individually listed:

- 83-85 The Boulevard, Ivanhoe (HO152) – two-storey Moderne-style walk-up flats of cream and brown brick construction with a parapeted hipped roof, constructed in 1941. Distinctive curved forms, including steel-framed windows, sweeping front stairs and brick garden beds, contrasted by a vertical chimney.

While the International Style residence at 93 Banksia Street, Eaglemont (HO144) is described in its Statement of Significance as a 'flat', it is actually a single-family house, albeit with a flat-like quality.

Other examples of the flats in the southern part of the municipality that are not affected by a HO but may have significance include:

- *Banksia Close*, 68 Banksia Street, Heidelberg – two-storey pair of flat-roofed, cream-brick flat blocks facing each other across an internal driveway and arranged in a 'cascading', staggered manner down a sloping site, designed by L V Connell and constructed in 1961. Graeme Butler identified this site as 'locally important' in the *Heidelberg Conservation Study, Part 1* (1985).
- *Lorna Court*, 61-63 Maltravers Road, Ivanhoe East – pair of detached, largely intact 1950s cream-brick blocks that run perpendicular to the street, divided by a landscaped internal courtyard. Voluminous and relatively austere with a moderately stepped profile, hipped/gabled roofs and steel-framed casements. The frontage features a 'crazy stone' retaining wall and defined entryway (stairs, flanking square brick columns, metal letters, letterboxes). Believed to have been constructed as an investment development by the estate agent, Mansel S Kingsford. He may also be responsible for the adjacent similarly designed 1960s flats (33 Carmichael Street and 5-7 Hilltop Crescent).<sup>40</sup>

### Intactness

Largely 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 (brick walls and spandrels)
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

<sup>37</sup> The large-scale early 1970s, two-storey residence at 30 Dalvey Street, Heidelberg – defined by Neimeyer-influenced curves to the ground floor – could plausibly be attributed to Holgar & Holgar.

<sup>38</sup> The original enclosed section of the *Holgars House's* upper balcony has been removed and a small addition constructed on its southern elevation.

<sup>39</sup> Another known Holgar & Holgar flat development is *Fountain Court*, 70 Orrong Crescent, Caulfield North – a three-storey walk-up, erected in 1967, with an unusual concave plan alongside more standard modernist design elements (plain walls, full-height windows and an undercroft supported by *pilotis*). (Built Heritage, *City of Glen Eira Post-War & Hidden Gems Heritage Review 2020, Stage Two: Citations*, draft, citation no. PW27)

<sup>40</sup> Mr Steven Barlow, conversation



## Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



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



## ROYD

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<b>Address</b>	61-63 Mount Street, Eaglemont
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1901
<b>Period</b>	Federation
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Royd* at 61-63 Mount Street, Eaglemont is significant. It was constructed in 1901 on an allotment in the Eaglemont Estate for husband-and-wife Henry Vines Champion and Christiana Champion. Henry was a civil engineer, then in partnership with his younger brother, Alfred Champion, an architect. The Champion brothers were almost certainly responsible for *Royd's* design. In 1938, the property was sold by Henry's daughter to Dr Edgar Alexander North, a medical scientist with the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories at Parkville. He and his wife remained in residence until the mid-1960s.

*Royd's* significant elements are its original footprint and gambrel roof, clad in slate, terracotta crests and finials, exposed rafter ends (to the side elevations), and red-brick chimney. The façade with its three-street facing gables with bargeboards, timber screens and ventilators, as well as return hipped-roof verandah with red-brick plinth (including three arched openings) and timber decoration (turned timber posts with moulded capitals, triangular brackets and balustrade with crosses), weatherboard cladding, three front tripartite bay windows, and multi-panelled door with sidelights (if original) are also significant.

The several mature exotic trees that characterise the front garden, specifically the Lebanon cedar (*Cedrus Deodara*), Algerian oak (*Quercus canariensis*) and the row of Pencil Pines (*Cupressus Sempervirens*), are complementary to the garden setting of the place.

Later additions, including the rear wing and verandah, garage/workshop, and garden paths and steps, are not significant.

## How is it Significant?

*Royd* is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

## Why is it Significant?

*Royd* is of historical significance as a commodious timber villa from the early Federation period. It illustrates the gradual emergence of the Eaglemont Estate as an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century pocket of affluence within the municipality, typified by residences of architectural pretension in established gardens that attracted professionals like the original occupant, the well-regarded civil engineer Henry Champion. *Royd*'s role as the Melbourne-residence of Dr North, a leading postwar medical researcher, who, amongst other advances, pioneered the introduction of the triple antigen vaccine is also of some associational note. North and his wife were ardent gardeners and are likely responsible for many, if not all, of the mature exotics in the front garden. (Criterion A)

*Royd* is of aesthetic significance as a substantial and generally intact, architect-designed weatherboard example of the Queen Anne style from the early Federation period. The more formal roof composition and restrained picturesqueness of the gable and verandah with pronounced geometric timber detailing are distinguishing, reflecting a less typical variant of Federation architecture. Such considered design emphasises the prominence of the return verandah – its presence also underscored by the red-brick plinth with arches – and the villa's elevated ridgeline siting and deep setback from the street. Together with the informally planned garden, resplendent with mature exotic trees, such attributes endow *Royd* with a sense of distinction and exclusivity, indicative of a historic and continuing architectural trend in Eaglemont. It is the principal known timber example of its idiom in the municipality. (Criterion E)

## Description

*Royd* is a large-scale, single-storey residence, situated parallel to the ridgeline, at the rear part of a substantial rectangular allotment on the west side of Mount Street (split-level in the vicinity of the site). The deep setback and elevated siting confer a prominence to the residence. The sizeable front garden slopes in an undulating manner to the footpath and includes lawn and an array of mature exotics, including a Lebanon cedar (*Cedrus Deodara*), Algerian oak (*Quercus canariensis*) and Pencil Pines (*Cupressus Sempervirens*).

These tall exotic trees likely stem from the planting efforts the second occupants, the Norths, and contribute to *Royd*'s stately character and garden setting. It is unknown if the existing low drystone retaining wall (volcanic rock) at the front of the place is original or early; however, there was likely always some masonry breast wall at this location. There is no evidence that the front of the property has ever been fenced. The brick steps at the front of the property and splayed stairs (dwarf walls) forward of the house are contemporary additions.

At the rear, the allotment abuts an unnamed concrete right of way. A double gabled and weatherboard garage/workshop was constructed to the rear boundary in the late 1990s. Rear and side timber paling fences are non-original.

A series of architectural drawings prepared by Andrew Fedorowicz for modifications to *Royd* (dated May 1998) inform this assessment and are referred to below.<sup>1</sup>

*Royd*'s original footprint was capped by a low-peaked gambrel roof (partly altered, see below) incorporating three street-facing gables.<sup>2</sup> The latter arrangement is comprised of a central gablet (small gable) flanked by a pair of larger gables. This symmetrical composition imparts a formality to the design, one less common for its type and idiom (see below), albeit still picturesque in intent. The gable ends feature timber decorative elements, consisting of bargeboards that break forward with timber screens, behind which are louvred ventilators. The smaller central gable is surmounted by a timber finial whereas the larger flanking

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Fedorowicz, ARAIA, *Proposed Alterations for Mrs Sheehan at 63 Mount Street, Eaglemont*, dated 11 May 1998 – provided by the City of Banyule

<sup>2</sup> In Australia, a gambrel roof is generally defined as a hip with small gablets under the ridge.



gables are surmounted by terracotta ball finials. The restrained, geometric detailing to the verandah and gable ends is striking and in conjunction with its elongated form, readily distinguishes *Royd*.



The main part of the roof is clad in slate, which was replaced during the late 1990s. Drawings note that the original terracotta cresting (faceted and pierced to the ridgeline) were re-used or substituted like-for-like 'if necessary'. Rafter ends are exposed to the primary roof (mainly to the side elevations). There is also a tall red-brick chimney with strapwork, pronounced corbelling and dual terracotta pots to the east roof plane.

A hipped roof verandah that returns to the north defines the frontage of *Royd*. It is clad in non-original corrugated metal sheeting and supported by turned timber posts with distinctive moulded/stepped capitals and triangular brackets. Saltire (Scottish) crosses are included in the timber balustrade. The verandah is raised above a red-brick plinth, characterised by three evenly spaced rounded arches (with voussoirs) to the remaining original section, with timber batten infill (possibly doors providing access to the subfloor).

In the late 1990s, the verandah was extended forward in the northwest via a faceted-like projection (a 'balcony/patio') and adjacent timber stairs provided. The hipped roof was also extended partly over the projection. Posts, brackets and balustrade matched the original. Despite this not altogether unsympathetic modification, the original character of the long return verandah and its key role in the facade's composition remains readily interpretable.

As part of an extension to the south elevation, a small part of the verandah return was lost. The extent of change to the northern return is unclear, but it appears that at least the verandah posts/detailing was replaced like-for-like. *Royd*'s verandah original central timber stair has also been removed. The extant type of the verandah deck is not known.

*Royd*'s 1901 extent is of timber-framed construction and clad in painted weatherboard.





Royd, 1980s, showing the original verandah with central timber stair – plinth screened by vegetation  
(Source: Graeme Butler, survey images, *Heidelberg Conservation Study*, 1985 – used with permission)



Royd's extant façade

Additions were constructed at *Royd* in the late 1990s, replacing some of its original rear wing and back verandah (refer to undated MMBW plan in Site-Specific). The design and scale of the rear additions were relatively respectful, echoing the established character and continuing the high-quality material palette. An original gable – facing the backyard – was partly retained in this later scheme. As part of this modification, the southern section of the primary gambrel roof (likely a mirror design of the intact north part) was altered into a hip.





Aerial photograph of *Royd*, viewed obliquely from the south, with original primary and verandah roof approximately indicated by the red shading (Source: Nearmap, November 2020)

Beneath the gables, set in the verandah wall, are three large timber-framed, tripartite bay windows. The flanking pair are faceted with long double-hung sashes, while the centre is a square bay with paired casement windows and toplights. Its base did have shingled boards (in the 1980s). A door to the right of the central window has been infilled. What appears to have always been the main entrance remains in the north elevation of *Royd*, at the end of the verandah's return. Its panelled timber door with sidelights is assumed original.

Other windows at *Royd*, mostly timber-framed double-hung sashes or casements grouped to the rear, are the outcome of changes in the late 1990s.

*Royd* is classifiable as Queen Anne revival in style, notwithstanding the malleability of the descriptor. This label primarily derives from the red-brick, terracotta-tiled houses with rendered trim and white-painted sashes designed in England by Richard Norman Shaw and others during the 1870s that often incorporated Dutch motifs but bore little similarity with the architecture of Queen Anne's chiefly 17<sup>th</sup>-century reign. With its transfer to Australia by London-trained architects and proliferating architectural/building journals over the 1880s, the English Queen Anne was dramatically recast, particularly around the turn of the century. Several architectural historians suggest it is better understood as a 'broad agreement' in architectural principles than a style.<sup>3</sup>

In Melbourne, the Queen Anne idiom signalled a radical departure from the 'boom time' excesses of the late Victorian era. The 'Free' and eclectic red-brick or timber 'villas' that emerged abandoned academic imitation or formalism, instead emphasising irregularity in planning/massing and reducing applied (or non-functional) ornamentation. Before petering out with the First World War, such a design scene was vibrant and transformative. Underlying its expression was a profound embracement of the English Arts & Crafts movement, the Ruskinian vision that materials should be employed with regard to their nature and valorisation of labour. This belief was paired with a then permeating Anglo-Saxon national sentiment; the desire that buildings should say something of the new nation and their local context.<sup>4</sup>

*Royd* is indicative of the 'broad agreement' that characterised progressive architecture in the Federation period, although its overall aesthetic is comparably restrained for a Queen Anne-style residence. Such repose is distinctive and likely arises from the natural advantages of the site. In that, the careful siting of the villa high on its ridgeline, combined with the scope for a well-planted deep front garden and multiple viewpoints of the place from the lower street, afforded an essential 'drama' that obviates the need for a bolder facade. Such allotments were not typical for Melbourne suburban subdivisions at the time. The linear return verandah at *Royd* and its simplified primary roof form also reflects the tendency of some Queen Anne-designs to subtly integrate aspects of the vernacular homestead, both as a necessary climatic device and a gesture to regional antecedents.

<sup>3</sup> Julie Willis and Philip Goad, 'A Myth in its Making: Federation Style and Australian Architectural History', in Andrew Leach, Antony Moulis and Nicole Sully, eds, *Shifting Views: Selected Essays on the Architectural History of Australia and New Zealand*, UQP, 2008, p133

<sup>4</sup> Conrad Hamann, 'Against the mainstream: the inclusive tendency in Victoria's architecture, 1890-1984', in Alan G L Shaw, ed, *Victoria's Heritage*, 1986, chapter 8

## 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.<sup>5</sup> The lightly wooded grasslands of what became known as 'Ivanhoe' and 'Heidelberg' were quickly targeted for sheep runs and by timber-cutters from the 'illegal squatter camp' downstream of the *Birrarung/Yarra* at Melbourne (est. 1835).<sup>6</sup> Much of the area, surveyed and ordered as the Parish of Keelbundora, passed rapidly into private hands via an auction in Sydney Town in 1838.<sup>7</sup>

Over the following decade, a patchwork of 'prestige' estates emerged, along with a surveyed township – *Warringal* (possibly Wurundjeri for 'eagle's nest'), later 'Heidelberg' – on the river's west bank.<sup>8</sup> 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 mostly undertaken by tenant farmers.<sup>9</sup>

The neat area of hilly terrain between Heidelberg and Ivanhoe, dominated by 'Mount Eagle' and generally referred to as Eaglemont from the 1900s, remained relatively embryonic during the first several decades of settlement. From the 1840s, it was divided between a pair of expansive agricultural estates, 'Leighton' (north) and 'Hartlands' (south), attracting attention for its rustic and scenic qualities and panoramic views. Following the partial breakup of Hartlands in 1853, a residence was constructed at the summit of Mount Eagle for the politician John Henry Brooke. The name of the peak was adopted for Brooke's landscaped estate, which he reforested with then-fashionable conifers (the variety of such trees in the suburb today may originate from this 'pinetum').<sup>10</sup> The holding passed through multiple hands, and the house accommodated some of the celebrated *plein air* artists in the late 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.<sup>11</sup>

Suburban growth, characterised by a generally 'high class of homes', advanced steadily over the ridges and hillsides of Eaglemont over the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in the north-western part of the locale (formerly Leighton, subdivided as the 'Eaglemont Estate'). In 1914, Peter E Keam – an avid town planning enthusiast – commissioned Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin to design a progressive Garden City Movement-infused subdivision for the Mount Eagle estate. The Griffins innovative plan retained trees and featured contour responsive curvilinear streets, common reserves and generous allotments, and was advertised as 'Eaglemont'. Two years later, on lower land to the northeast, again at the behest of Keam, the Griffins prepared a similar subdivision at the Glenard estate, previously a farm. The presence and associations of artists, the Griffins (who lived at Glenard at *Pholiota*, a self-designed Knitlock house for five years) and other creative types, such as the architect Harold Desbrowe-Anneer, instilled Eaglemont with something of a bohemian, even alternative reputation.<sup>12</sup> The opening of the Eaglemont railway station in 1926 supported intensified suburban growth over the late Interwar period.

### Site-specific

The subject land derives from Portion 2 (420 hectares) of the Parish of Keelbundora, purchased (along with portions 1 and 3) by Thomas Walker in 1838. A Sydney-based Scottish banker and 'philanthrope' with an eye for marketable land across the colony, Walker's intention in the Port Phillip District was speculative from the start. He commenced subdividing his acquisitions as early as mid-1839, amassing enormous profit.<sup>13</sup>

The northern part of Portion 2, some 146 hectares, including the subject property, was purchased by the 'overlander' Joseph Hawdon – the founder of the 'Banyule Estate' (part of Portion 6) – and became known as the Leighton. Hawdon sold it to

<sup>5</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

<sup>6</sup> James Boyce, *1835: The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc. 2011, pxi

<sup>7</sup> 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), City (1934), and amalgamated as the City of Banyule (1994).

<sup>8</sup> Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13; and Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, p15

<sup>9</sup> Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

<sup>10</sup> Fox Paul, *Clearings: six colonial gardeners and their landscapes*, Melbourne University 2004, p183

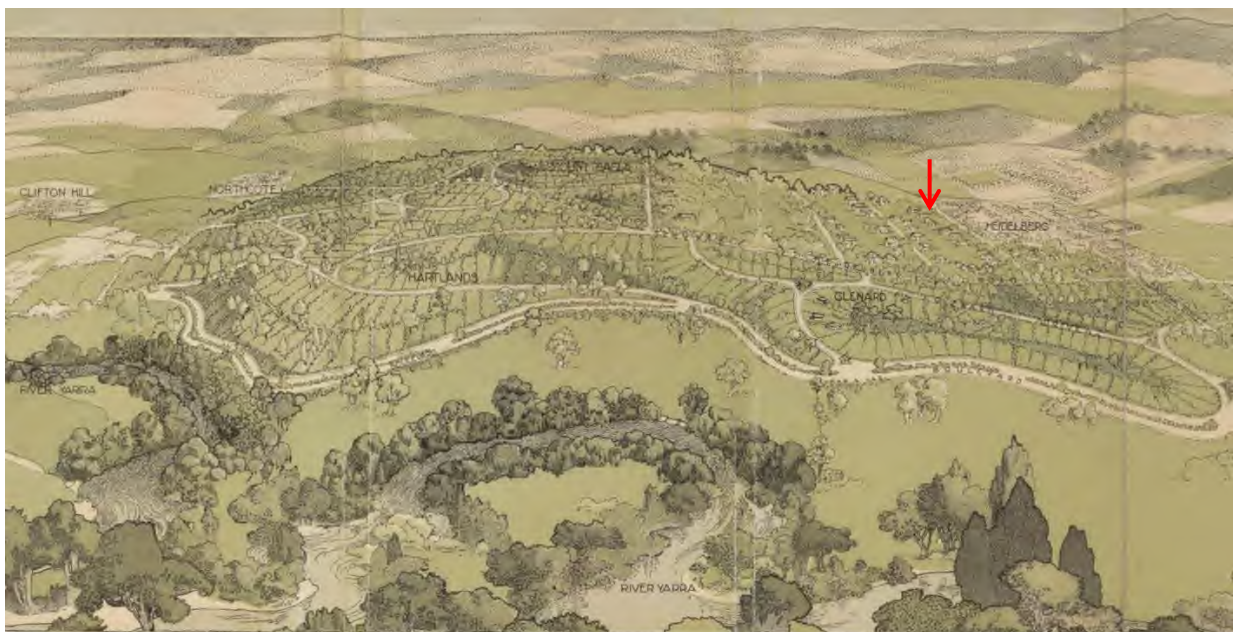
<sup>11</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, sections 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.5, and 2.3.10; and Janine Rizzetti, 'Heidelberg', in Richard Broome et al, eds., *Remembering Melbourne 1850-1960*, Royal Historical Society of Victoria, 2016, p282

<sup>12</sup> Don Garden, 'Eaglemont', *eMelbourne*, The University of Melbourne, July 2008, available online

<sup>13</sup> W Joy, 'Walker, Thomas (1804-1886)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1967, available online

members of the Bolden family, important cattle breeders in Port Phillip District, in 1840.<sup>14</sup> By the end of the decade, it was being leased to a handful of tenant farmers. In 1885, at the outset of Melbourne's 'Land Boom', local representatives for the Boldens put Leighton up for sale as two large-scale lots divided by Lower Heidelberg Roads. The subject place formed part of the 81-hectares western offering, acquired by a wealthy Fitzroy draper, John Christopher – it seems likely as a front to a syndicate who had previously been rebuffed from purchasing Leighton for subdivision.<sup>15</sup>

Besides selling a strip of land for the railway (1888), Christopher retained the holding until 1890, when it was transferred to the recently formed 'Eaglemont Estate Company', of which he was a key stakeholder.<sup>16</sup> By this stage, the western part of Leighton was routinely referred to as the 'Eaglemont Estate', while the adjoining eastern section (previously 'Glenard Farm') had been rechristened the 'Mount Eagle Estate'. The company had procured the latter in 1888, with the intention to oversee a pair of high-status (and lucrative) residential subdivisions. Accordingly, wide roads were laid (such as Mount Street, initially Main) and well planted with English trees. Provisions were also stipulated on contracts as to the expenditure and quality of prospective housing.<sup>17</sup> By at least 1913, the estates were described as one 'where the streets are planted with English trees, now in all their umbrageous beauty, and which differentiates the land to be offered from that in other parts'.<sup>18</sup> Opening sales, however, were disappointing as the overheated Melbourne market had entered a phase of contraction. The onset of the 1890s Depression proved terminal, with none of the lots offered as part of the Eaglemont Estate bought between 1893 and 1899.<sup>19</sup>



Extract from an artist's impression of the Eaglemont area in 1916

Approximate location of Royd, immediately south of the township of Heidelberg, is identified by the red arrow

(Source: *Sale brochure for Glenard Estate, Mount Eagle, Victoria*, Eric Milton Nicholls collection, NLA, Bib ID 3701541)

The pace of sales picked up in the Eaglemont Estate with the turn of the century. At this time, Christian Hall Champion – the wife of a well-regarded civil engineer, Henry Vines Champion – purchased the subject allotment in August 1901. A covenant attached to the title stated:

no dwelling – house building or erection whatsoever (exclusive of fences outbuildings and stables relating---thereto or to be used therewith) to cost less than £500 may be erected ... [no] brickmaking quarrying fellmongering ... butchering or other noisome offensive or ... dangerous pursuits operations or manufactures ...<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> P L Brown, 'Bolden, Armyne (1817-1843)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1966, available online

<sup>15</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, 28-31, 92, 141-3

<sup>16</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 220, folio 900

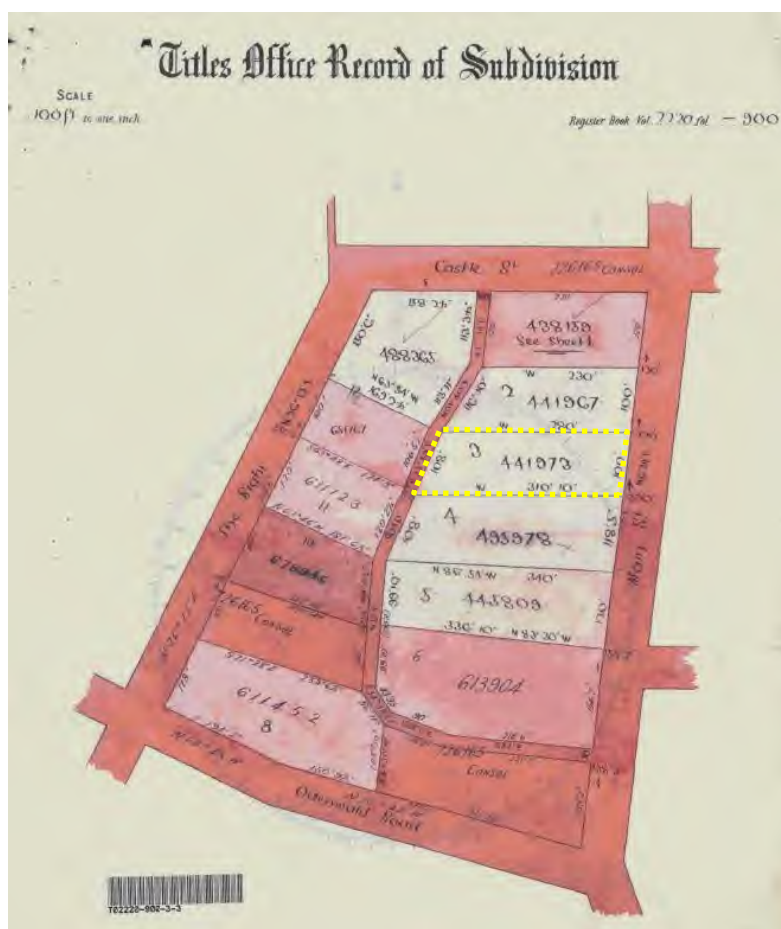
<sup>17</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, p151-2

<sup>18</sup> 'Charming Heidelberg', *Herald*, 11 December 1913, p5

<sup>19</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, pp182-3

<sup>20</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 2832, folio 336





Subdivision map of the block bound by Castle Street (north), The Righi (west), Odenwald Road (south), and Main/Mount Street (east). Subject allotment is outlined in dashed yellow (LP 4245).

Note presence of the existing right of way to the rear (identified as a 'Road').  
(Source: Certificate of Title, vol 220, folio 900)

The Champions appear to have brought the property with the intention of establishing it as their personal residence. At the time, Henry was in partnership with his younger brother, Alfred Champion, a registered architect, practising under the name 'H.V. and A. Champion, Architects, Civil Engineers & Licensed Surveyors'. The Champion brothers were almost certainly responsible for the design of *Royd* (a name that descends from Old Norse for forest clearing).

A press article concerning the supply of drainage mains for Main/Mount Street in July 1901 noted that:

The purchasers—Messrs M. Omerod, G.A. Evans, and H. V. Champion—intend building at once. The houses, with land will cost from £1200 to £1500 each.<sup>21</sup>

Such a figure was well above average in the Federation period. Interestingly, it was also noted that Henry's advice as a civil engineer was sought by the Eaglemont Estate Company for the best means of 'cut[ing] down' and 'fix[ing]' the levels of the thoroughfare itself. It is plausible he may have had a role in the split-level format of Main/Mount Street.

In late August 1901, the Champions' practice issued a tender notice for the 'Erection of a Wooden Villa and Stabling, &C., at Heidelberg' in *The Age* (just days after the formal transference of the land), which was almost certainly for *Royd*.<sup>22</sup> Another newspaper in September that year noted that contracts for 'new villas on Eaglemont, Heidelberg' had been signed, including by one of the Champions, suggesting that construction was imminent.<sup>23</sup> The City of Heidelberg rate book records Henry in residence at the property in 1901.<sup>24</sup> The *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria* lagged, not listing any Champions in occupation until its 1904 edition.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> 'Heidelberg Council', *Mercury and Weekly Courier*, 12 July 1901, p2

<sup>22</sup> 'Advertising', *Age*, 17 August 1901, p3

<sup>23</sup> 'Buildings on Eaglemont', *Mercury and Weekly Courier*, 6 September 1901, p2

<sup>24</sup> City of Heidelberg rate book, 1901, p121 (Allom Lovell & Associates, *Banyule Heritage Places Study: Building Citations*, vol 2, part 1, Banyule City Council, July 1999, p290)

<sup>25</sup> *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria*, 1904, p355. During the preparation of this study, RBA has repeatedly noticed instances of a longer lag time than typical for *Sands* in the Study Area, sometimes between two and four years between known building activity or occupancy changes being listed.





MMBW, Municipality of Heidelberg, no 2578, undated buy likely 1940s

The original footprint of Royd is circled. Rear outbuildings have been removed.

(Source: PROV, VPRS 8601, P0002, Unit no 7)

After previous lodgings in Williamstown, Hawthorn and the township Heidelberg,<sup>26</sup> the decision of Henry and Christian Champion to establish their new residence in leafy Eaglemont – then gradually metamorphosing into a well-heeled commuter suburb – on an elevated and large lot is telling of the potency of the suburban ideal in the early 1900s. Such a setting was where the successful middle-class professional was supposed to establish the family household. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century, the concept of the villa ‘suburb’ as a refuge from the social and sanitary maladies of the city had remained for many a decidedly ‘modern’ mindset, one underpinned by several prevalent contemporary beliefs: ‘evangelicalism, which sanctified domestic privacy; sanitary science, which preached the importance of fresh air; Romanticism which inculcated a reverence for nature; and class-consciousness, which fed the demand for exclusive bourgeois neighbourhoods.’<sup>27</sup> The home was framed as a place where the male breadwinner could find refuge from the public realm and domestic architecture a vessel for delivering an ‘authentic’ life.<sup>28</sup>

Royd’s development is a microcosm of such broader forces in Eaglemont during the early 1900s when the pace of construction was slowly renewing in the wake of the 1890s Depression and attempts were made via restrictive covenants and planning to create more ‘exclusive’ locales.

In 1904, the Champions (again under Christiana’s name) expanded Royd’s grounds, purchasing the vacant lot (no 4) adjacent to the south.<sup>29</sup> At the back, on the high ground, they built a tennis court (still extant) – a sport then the preserve of the privileged – and incorporated the remainder of the land into their garden. A 1931 aerial photograph, reproduced below, depicts the property, still occupied by the Champions, as well-treed with an expansive lawn.

<sup>26</sup> Sands & McDougall’s *Directory of Victoria*

<sup>27</sup> Graeme Davison, ‘Suburbs’, in Davison, John Hirst, Stuart Macintyre, eds. *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, Oxford University Press, rev 2001, p623

<sup>28</sup> Harry Margalit, *Australia: modern architectures in history*, Reaktion Books, 2019, pp24

<sup>29</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 3017, folio 202



1931 aerial photograph

Subject site, then encompassing lots 3 and 4, is outlined in dashed red

(Source: Landata, Project no 1931, Run 17, Frame 3328)

Following Henry's death (1918), Christiana remained at *Royd* until her passing in 1935. It then passed to their only child, Elizabeth Mary Champion. She promptly advertised the house and grounds for auction:

ROYD, No. 63 Mount-Street, Heidelberg.

One of the Most Beautiful Sites on THE FAMOUS EAGLEMONT ESTATE, With Glorious Uninterrupted Easterly Aspect Across to the Dandenong and Dividing Ranges.

Under Instructions from Miss Elizabeth Champion.

The House is a COMMODIOUS AND SUBSTANTIAL TIMBER VILLA, With Slate Roof. Having Extensive Verandahs, and Containing 8 Splendid Rooms &c. The Outbuildings Include Stables and Sheds. There is An Asphalt Tennis Court.

The LAND Has Frontage to MOUNT-STREET of 218 ft. 5 In. by Depths of 280 Ft. and 340 Ft.

The Situation is Ideal. It is Only a Few Minutes' Walk from Heidelberg and Eaglemont Railway Stations. A Great Feature of This Property is the Magnificent Panoramic View Which is Obtainable from Any Part.<sup>30</sup>

*Royd* – on its existing allotment – was ultimately sold in 1938 to Dr Edgar Alexander North (1896-1970), a medical scientist, who had recently arrived in Melbourne to take up an appointment to the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories at Parkville, where he ultimately rose to be the chief of the research division (1950).<sup>31</sup> North was an erudite medical authority, involved during the Second World War with the manufacture of the smallpox vaccine and of the tetanus toxoid. He was also later part of the vaccine improvements for pertussis (whooping cough), the production and distribution in Australia of the *Bacillus Calmette-Guérin* vaccine (to prevent tuberculosis), and in the early 1950s, pioneered the introduction of triple antigen vaccines. Both Edgar and his wife were avid gardeners. It is likely that some of the place's plantings stem from their activity, particularly those along the northern perimeter and in the southeast corner of the property.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> 'Advertising', *Age*, 23 November 1935, p2

<sup>31</sup> 'Principle at Stake, says Counsel', *Evening News* (Rockhampton), 8 March 1934, p1; and 'Personal Notes', *Argus*, 16 February 1939, p12

<sup>32</sup> Anthony Proust, 'North, Edgar Alexander (1896-1970)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 2000, available online. The *Herald* noted soon after the Norths had moved into *Royd* that Mrs North had 'thousands of sprays of lily of the valley at present in full bloom' at the property. (Sale of Flowers for Comforts Funds', *Herald*, 23 October 1939, p13).

The Norths remained at *Royd* into the mid-1960s, afterwards retiring to Tasmania (Edgar's birthplace).<sup>33</sup>

Lot 4 – along with the tennis court – was ultimately sold by Elizabeth to different owners in 1940. A new residence followed within a few years (now 59 Mount Street).<sup>34</sup>



1945 aerial photograph of *Royd*, outlined in dashed red, then owned/occupied by the Norths  
(Source: Landata, *Melbourne and Metropolitan Area Project*, Run 30, Frame 59706)

### **Henry Vines Champion (1859-1918) and Alfred Champion (1872-1913)**

A leading practitioner of engineering science in Melbourne during the Federation period, Henry V Champion was remembered at his sudden death as 'one of the most brilliant civil engineers the Melbourne University had turned out'.<sup>35</sup> His younger brother, Alfred Champion, also had a public profile and formed an active design/engineering partnership with Henry during the Federation years.

<sup>33</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 6187, folio 331

<sup>34</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 3017, folio 202

<sup>35</sup> 'Engineer's Death Regretted', *Herald*, 8 January 1918, p1

Henry Champion was born in Victoria, the oldest boy of thirteen children. His parents had immigrated to Victoria in the mid-1850s, his father from Cornwell and his mother, the Channel Islands.<sup>36</sup> Educated at Wesley College, Henry attained 'the then coveted degree of Master of Civil Engineering' from the University of Melbourne in 1886.<sup>37</sup> Municipal positions as surveyor/engineer followed, notably at Williamstown and Port Melbourne, with Henry cultivating a reputation as an 'energetic admirer of order' and 'innovator of things that practical'.<sup>38</sup> He was considered a particular authority on sewerage schemes, on which he was widely consulted.<sup>39</sup> Closely involved with the Victorian Institute of Engineers, Henry was also admitted as an associate of the prestigious London-based Institute of Civil Engineers – possibly the first Australian-born engineer to be so – and made a life member of the Society of Engineers.<sup>40</sup> Henry married Christin Hall Inglis (1852-1935), a Scottish immigrant, in 1889. At the time of his death, he was a reserve officer with the Australian Field Artillery and held the rank of major.<sup>41</sup>

Alongside providing engineering services to public and private clients, particularly rural shires and Victorian/Tasmanian mines, Henry also entered into a partnership with his younger brother, Alfred Champion, a trained and registered architect.<sup>42</sup> Alfred had completed an articulated education under Peter Matthews, 'who in his day had a very large architectural practice in Melbourne', and soon after was elected an associate of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RVIA) in the early 1890s. At that time, the slackness of the Victorian economy saw Alfred emigrate to Perth and later Fremantle (Western Australia), where he was involved with multiple architectural offices, after which he returned to Melbourne.<sup>43</sup>

The brothers' partnership – 'H.V. and A. Champion, Architects, Civil Engineers & Licensed Surveyors' – operated between 1897 and 1903 from offices in Queen Street, Melbourne.<sup>44</sup> It undertook various architectural projects as well as the measurement and layout of subdivisions (such as the local 'Hillsley Estate' in Ivanhoe, 1908). The obituary for Alfred in the RVIA's journal described the Champions' office as having 'designed and supervised the erection of many buildings in Melbourne and suburbs, including new buildings in Russell-street for the "Herald", Malt Store and Brewery, Carlton, Civil Service Stores in Flinders-street, Roycroft's Building, and Massina's Warehouse and Shops in Swanston-street, and other important works.'<sup>45</sup> Alfred had married Florence Clark in 1905 and died in his early 40s.

At Henry's death, aged 58, from 'Brights' disease' (Glomerulonephritis), his obituary was widely published in metropolitan and rural newspapers, and flags lowered to half-mast at a few town halls – 'His sudden demise created quite a gloom in municipal circles'.<sup>46</sup> Champion Road in Williamstown is named after him.<sup>47</sup>

## 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:

- 6.3 Residential development 1900-1940s

<sup>36</sup> As the long-time licensee-holders for the Queens Arms Hotel at the corner of Swanston Street and Flinders Lane (demolished), both parents, Benjamin and Elizabeth Champion, were familiar figures ('Crossed the Bar. Mrs. Elizabeth Champion', *Herald*, 27 April 1911, p8; and Ancestry.com.au)

<sup>37</sup> 'Men of To-day', *Williamstown Chronicle*, 14 November 1896, p3

<sup>38</sup> 'Men of To-day', *Williamstown Chronicle*, 14 November 1896, p3

<sup>39</sup> Henry V Champion, 'The Benefits of Sewerage: To the members of the Victorian Engineers' Association', *Williamstown Chronicle*, 10 March 1888, p2

<sup>40</sup> 'Complimentary Dinner', *Williamstown Chronicle*, 31 August 1912, p3

<sup>41</sup> Henry obtained a commission in the Garrison Artillery at Williamstown as a lieutenant in 1862. He was promoted to captain in 1895 and major in 1904, attached to the Australian Field Artillery. During the First World War, he was placed in the reserve of officers. ('Obituary, Major H. V. Champion', *Ararat Chronicle*, 8 January 1918, p2)

<sup>42</sup> Henry V Champion's application to 'The Institution of Civil Engineers', dated 1890-91 (UK Civil Engineer Records via Ancestry.com.au)

<sup>43</sup> 'The Late Alfred Champion (A)', *The Royal Victorian Institute of Architects: Journal of Proceedings*, September 1913, p204

<sup>44</sup> UK Civil Engineer Records via Ancestry.com.au

<sup>45</sup> 'The Late Alfred Champion (A)', p204

<sup>46</sup> 'Death of Mr. Champion', *Williamstown Advertiser*, 12 January 1918, p3; 'Late Mr. H. V. Champion', *Port Melbourne Standard*, 12 January 1918, p3; and 'Obituary', *Ararat Chronicle*, 8 January 1918, p2

<sup>47</sup> 'Obituary', *Footscray Chronicle*, 12 January 1918, p2



## Comparative Analysis

There are various substantial Queen Anne-style residences included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay for Banyule, either as individual HOs or in precincts, with clusters in Ivanhoe and Eaglemont. These examples, however, are nearly all of red-brick construction and – in an Arts & Crafts-influenced manner – rather decorative. Comparatively, there are few timber residences dating from the Federation period in the municipality affected by HOs, particularly those of a grander, more understated type like *Royd*. In Eaglemont, the three picturesque timber/roughcast residences from the early 1900s known as the ‘Chadwick Houses’ by the inventive architect Harold Desbrowe-Anneer are singular in design, reflecting the marked fusion of design sources and reformulation occurring in the Federation period.<sup>48</sup>

There is only one other timber example of the Queen Anne in Banyule affected by a HO:

- 3 St Helena Road, Greensborough (HO143) – an elongated gabled roof ‘homestead’ constructed in the 1890s with an elevated hillside siting. It has a return verandah embellished with Queen Anne fretwork and a projecting rotunda-shaped feature on the corner. The residence has been altered, though the extent of which is unclear.

There are also several Federation Bungalow-style or transitional timber dwellings, for instance:

- 137 Waterdale Road, Ivanhoe (HO156) – a modest timber villa, built about 1905. Its hip roof, bracketed eaves, bullnose verandah roof and mixture of timber and cast-iron decoration make it a good example of a transitional Victorian/Federation design.
- 2 Rockbeare Grove, Ivanhoe (HO114) – a later example of an eclectic Federation Bungalow-style residence, built 1915. It displays the simplified bungalow roof form but is embellished with common Federation detailing and incorporates at the corner a square, hipped-roof ‘tower’ (timber/roughcast).
- *Mollison Lodge*, 32 Old Lower Plenty Road, Viewbank (HO47) – a symmetrical example of the Federation Bungalow-style with a dominant hipped roof (slate) and wrap-around verandah, erected on a rural property in circa 1915.

## Intactness

Mostly intact

## Previous Assessment

- Graeme Butler, *Heidelberg Conservation Study*, part 1, Heidelberg City Council, 1985 (provided with a ‘C’ rating)<sup>49</sup>
- Allom Lovell & Associates, *Banyule Heritage Places Study: Building Citations*, vol 2, part 1, Banyule City Council, July 1999 (provided with a ‘C’ grade)<sup>50</sup>
- Context, *Banyule Heritage Review*, March 2012 – recommended for a future HO
- 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 (walls of weatherboard)
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	Yes (front garden – Lebanon cedar, Algerian oak, Pencil Pines)
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

<sup>48</sup> 38 The Eyrie, Eaglemont (HO67 + VHR H1009); 55 Outlook Drive, Eaglemont (HO48 + VHR H2082); and 32-34 The Eyrie, Eaglemont (HO66 + VHR H1156). See also 234 Rosanna Road, Rosanna (HO55) and *East View*, 16 Martin Street, Heidelberg (VHR H1033 + HO43) and all the *Former Heidelberg Shire Offices and Library* (HO171), all designs by Anneer.

<sup>49</sup> C grade: ‘Regional importance architecturally and/or historically significant’

<sup>50</sup> C grade: ‘places that contribute to the architectural or historical character and cohesiveness of the City of Banyule and as such are either of local importance or interest ... While they do not warrant individual protection under the planning scheme, they should nevertheless be retained.’

## Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



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

## LOBBS' TEAROOMS (FORMER) AND DVLC

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<b>Address</b>	1 Diamond Creek Road, Greensborough
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1925
<b>Period</b>	Interwar
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Lobbs' Tearooms (former) and Diamond Valley Learning Centre (DVLC)* at 1 Diamond Creek Road, Greensborough is significant. It was constructed in 1925 at Greensborough Park, likely to design the City of Heidelberg for use as a tearoom, caretaker's residence and changing facility. The place continued in this role into the late 1960s, operated by a succession of lessees. The building appears to have been officially known as the 'Greensborough Park Tearooms'; however, the lengthy occupancy of the last commercial tenants, William and Olive Lobb, saw the name 'Lobbs' Tearooms' popularly adopted. Since 1974, the building has accommodated the DVLC.

The significant elements are the gabled-roofed structure perpendicular to the main thoroughfare and immediately north of the car park's driveway and the latter's exposed rafters, gable ends (timber lattice and weatherboarding), front-gabled porch (excluding non-original weatherboard enclosure), walls of painted weatherboard, and timber-framed, double-hung sashes.

The pair of mature English elms (both likely *Ulmus procera*) that frame the porch are early plantings associated with the place's former role as a tearoom and complement its setting.

Other elements, including the car park, while illustrative of the DVLC's late 20<sup>th</sup>-century growth and development, are not significant.



## How is it Significant?

*Lobbs' Tearooms (former) and DVLC* is of local historical, rarity, representative and social significance to the City of Banyule.

## Why is it Significant?

*Lobbs' Tearooms (former) and DVLC* is of historical significance as a reasonably intact example of a purpose-built 1920s tearoom/kiosk. It is illustrative of Greensborough Park's early and continuing role as a centre for leisure, sport and recreation, serving light refreshments for visitors, change room facilities for sporting teams and accommodation for the caretaker. More broadly, the building's role as a tearoom reflects the early-to-mid 20<sup>th</sup>-century reputation of Greensborough as a pleasing landscape frequented by Melbourne excursionists and day-trippers. Many of the tearooms' operators were women. Their association with the building speaks to a layer of often-overlooked female experience during the interwar and postwar years, that of entrepreneurial women running local businesses. The building is also closely associated with the DVLC, which had set up at the former tearoom within a year of their formation. This non-profit organisation was one of Victoria's first community education centres and an influential pioneer in facilitating adult female vocational education during the 1970s and 1980s. (Criterion A)

*Lobbs' Tearooms (former) and DVLC* has significance for its rarity as the only known purpose-built tearoom/kiosk remaining in the Greensborough area, where such a typology was once more common. More broadly, the survival of such large interwar timber buildings in the municipality is also uncommon. The pleasant, home-style design of the weatherboard building is also likely representative of the design of outer-suburban tearooms in the Interwar period. (Criterion B and D)

*The former tearoom* is of social significance for its use by the DVLC. The important, life-changing educational role played by this organisation is valued by a large community of current/former users and is closely tied to the building, out of which the DVLC has operated for over four decades. Such attachment is demonstrated through the continued lively engagement of the diverse array of learners with the place. (Criterion G)

## Description

*Lobb's Tearooms (former) and DVLC* is situated on the eastern boundary of Greensborough Park, between the oval and Diamond Creek Road.



1925 façade – note distinctive fenestration and retention of signage panel

The Interwar period footprint of the single-storey building is formed by two intersecting sections that are orientated diagonally to the nearby thoroughfare, which it addresses at a small setback. Both wings have gabled roofs, clad in replacement corrugated sheet metal, with exposed timber rafter ends. The front wing's ridgeline – initially, over the kiosk/tearoom – sits above the rear, which housed the operator and changerooms. Originally, the latter was narrower but was expanded with the addition of flanking skillion-roofed extensions that appear to date from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The original footprint is depicted in the aerial photograph at the end of this citation.



Eastern elevation – note the skillion-roofed extension, left of frame

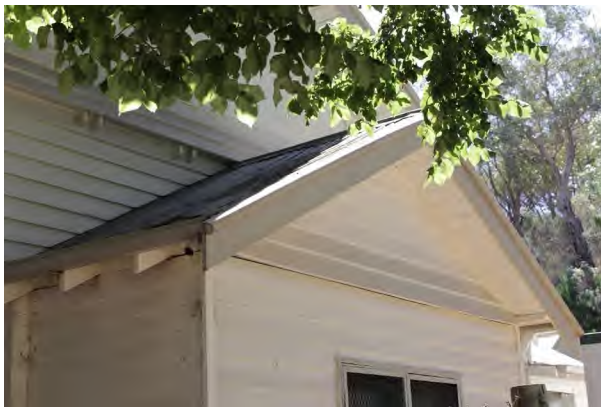


1925 rear – flanking skillion volumes are later additions

The two brick chimneys, evident in historical photographs, are no longer extant, although the timber-lined soffit remains.

Gable ends are finished in weatherboard with a small section of lattice to the apex. The primary front gable has timber brackets and now blank signage panel, which previously accommodated a painted sign ('Greensborough Park Tearooms').

This central gabled porch defines the symmetrical façade and operated as the public entrance to the tearooms. It was previously open and characterised by two groups of paired timber square posts, a low waisted timber/glazed door bordered by high waisted sidelights and raised deck. In recent times, the porch has been enclosed with weatherboarding and no longer functions as an entry. The weatherboard finish with a central notched band to the porch's gable end is likely original.



The gable end and roof form of the porch are likely original



Original fenestration, note 'corner' window

The building is timber-framed and clad in painted weatherboard. Based on historical photographs, the colour scheme has always been light (possibly cream with detail picked out in earthy hues), as it remains.

Original windows are timber-framed double-hung sashes arranged in pairs, including those at the corners of the front (north) elevation. Such 'corner windows' are distinctive (note thick mullion). While an efficient and practical means of bringing light into the tearoom's interior, such fenestration was not typical for the mid-1920s. Such corner windows are more associated with the late Interwar period, raising the possibility that these windows were introduced or modified in the 1930s. Aluminium-frames or horizontal windows elsewhere at the place represent later alterations.



Stylistically, the building's rugged realism and 'natural' and 'honest' material palette of timber reflects the still then prevalent expression of the Arts & Crafts movement. The design, while relatively utilitarian, is also influenced by the homely character of the 1920s bungalow, a case illustrated in particular by the gable arrangement.

The pair of English elms (both likely *Ulmus procera*) situated either side of the north elevation are mature specimens that were likely purposefully planted to enhance the aesthetic of the entrance to the building.



English elm, south of the porch

Attached to the west elevation of the 1925 section of the building are two interconnected gable-roofed weatherboard wings, which were added during the late 20<sup>th</sup>-century. Their detailing (gable ends, porches, windows, rafter ends) largely mimic the former tearoom, while their siting allows for the legibility of the former tearoom to remain interpretable. A bitumen finished driveway and car parking edge the building to its east and south.



View to later additions from the rear carpark – the former tearoom is situated right of frame



## 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.<sup>1</sup> The undulating open woodlands, threaded by the River Plenty, which later became known as Greensborough (initially 'Keelbundora',<sup>2</sup> after the parish), were mostly purchased in 1838 by the Sydney-based speculator Henry Smythe.<sup>3</sup> He sold it two years later to Edward Bernard Green (1809-61), a shrewd English entrepreneur.<sup>4</sup>

Seeking to capitalise on the contract he held for the overland delivery of Melbourne-to-Sydney mail, Green manoeuvred to alter the route during the mid-1840s. He proposed running the mail through his undeveloped holding at Keelbundora/Greensborough, surveying a private township – grandly named 'La Trobe' (after the lieutenant-governor) – on the high ground overlooking the river flats in preparation.<sup>5</sup> Green's heady expectations for the location were dashed when the riled authorities publicly endorsed the official route. While the surrounding district was progressively cleared over the remainder of the decade to make way for market gardens and orchards, 'Green's town' languished. In the early 1900s, the township (population 270) was still classed as a 'pretty little village'.<sup>6</sup>

The promotion of Greensborough's 'picturesque' river banks and scenery to day-trippers and 'excursionists' from Melbourne – arriving via rail (the station opened in 1902), charabanc and, later, private motor vehicles – conferred a noted recreational and leisure reputation upon the locale, which continued well into the postwar period.

However, the area's residential profile only rose markedly in the 1920s, chiefly along the railway corridor. The 'live' Greensborough Progress Association proclaimed it 'Melbourne's premier rural suburb', with 'Neat bungalows, of every conceivable design, both brick and hardwood ... springing up everywhere'.<sup>7</sup> Less effusive assessment classed the area as something of an outer-ring 'backwater'.<sup>8</sup>

Broader Greensborough remained primarily rural – a belt of family-run orchards, dairies and poultry farms – into the late 1950s, before receding in the face of rapid suburban expansion.<sup>9</sup> The consolidated township continued as the commercial and service hub of an extensive peri-urban district administered as the Diamond Valley Shire (1964-94). From the late 1980s, the town itself underwent an intensive multi-phased redevelopment, transforming into 'Greensborough Plaza', a regional retail/employment centre.

### Site-specific

The River Plenty denoted the boundary between the parishes of Keelbundora (west) and Nillumbik (east), the extent of contemporary Greensborough traversing both.<sup>10</sup> The subject land – on the east bank of the river – derives from Portion 13 of the Parish of Nillumbik, a 259-hectare purchase of 'good pastures timbered with Gum & Box' made in 1840 by the Scottish merchant John Alison, who set up the earliest commercial flour mill in the Port Phillip District (King Street, Melbourne).<sup>11</sup>

Around 1907, a group of residents – concerned at the lack of reserved Crown land in the area – 'manfully' organised to raise funds that were used to procure approximately 5 hectares of Portion 13 for the establishment of a public park.<sup>12</sup> Trustees and a committee were appointed and beautification efforts initiated. By the following year, *The Evelyn Observer* described the result:

<sup>1</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

<sup>2</sup> Keelbundora stems from a European rendering of 'Kulbundora' – the name of the eldest son of Billibellary, the *ngurungaeta* (essentially 'head man') of the Wurundjeri-willam clan. ('Suburban Native Names', *Argus* 28 April 1906, p5)

<sup>3</sup> Gary Presland, *The Place for a Village: how nature has shaped the city of Melbourne*, Museum Victoria, 2008, pp122-23

<sup>4</sup> 'Pastoral Pioneers: E. B. Green. No. 60', *Australasian*, 9 February 1935, p4

<sup>5</sup> Dianne H Edwards, *The Diamond Valley Story*, The Shire of Diamond Valley, 1979, p111

<sup>6</sup> *The Australian Handbook*, Gordon & Gotch, 1905, p449

<sup>7</sup> 'Greensborough's Beautiful Hills & Valleys', *Herald*, 2 July 1924, p15

<sup>8</sup> Edwards, *The Diamond Valley Story*, p175

<sup>9</sup> 'Greensborough', *Victorian Places*, 2014, available online

<sup>10</sup> Nillumbik originates from the Aboriginal world *nyilumbik*, thought to mean bad, red or no good earth.

<sup>11</sup> (Description of Portion 13) *Plan of the Lands in the Parish of Nillumbik*, 1 March 1841, M62, Landata, Put-away map; (purchase) 'Port Phillip', *Sydney Herald*, 24 February 1840, p2; and (Alison) 'Family notices', *Herald*, 1 February 1864, p2; and *Give us this day our daily bread – millers and mills in Port Philip*, Port Philip Pioneers Group Inc, available online

<sup>12</sup> 'State Schools' Picnic At Greensborough', *Evelyn Observer*, 6 December 1907, p2; and 'Greensborough', *Heidelberg News*, 31 January 1914, p2

The Greensborough Park ... is picturesquely and conveniently situated close to the township, and is bounded on two sides by the River Plenty [and the Diamond Creek Road to the east]. The land was obtained for £260 ... improvements, such as levelling, erecting wire netting fence twelve feet high along the bank of the river ... It is a public Park, open to the public free, that is as far as foot traffic is concerned, a small fee is charged for the admittance of vehicles.<sup>13</sup>

In the early 1920s, ownership of Greensborough Park passed to the Shire of Heidelberg.<sup>14</sup> The park, well utilised by locals and sporting bodies, was also considered a destination for tourists within the broader sylvan landscape of Greensborough by this point:

Five miles from Heidelberg is GREENSBOROUGH, on the Plenty River, and within easy reach of the station are many beautiful picnic spots along the course of the stream, or in the hills farther back. There is good fishing to be had, and hares and rabbits are plentiful in the vicinity. Good hotel accommodation is available, consequently Greensborough is a favourite week-end resort.<sup>15</sup>

The Shire undertook upgrades at the park, including the construction of the subject building in 1925:

The pretty sports ground and park here is rapidly approaching completion ... The caretaker's residence, a handsome structure, to which is attached two dressing rooms, showers, etc, and the kiosk have been completed.<sup>16</sup>

The structure – initially known as the 'Greensborough Kiosk' – was likely erected by a contractor to plans prepared by the Shire's engineer, as was typical for projects of this ilk throughout the Interwar period in the area.<sup>17</sup>

In the context of the 1920s, the descriptor 'kiosk' (from the Turkish word *köşk*) carried vaguely exotic overtones but were generally understood as a modest building that sold light food and drinks, particularly tea, that were found at parks, the beach and shopping arcades. The classification of kiosk/tearoom was interchangeable across the period. The fashionable practise of public tea-drinking in Australia followed soon after the emergence of specialised tearooms in the United Kingdom from the 1870s, a phenomenon that held strong links with the temperance movement.<sup>18</sup> The influential Sydney-based Chinese merchant Mei Quong Tart (1850-1903) is attributed with popularising tearooms as an attractive commercial enterprise in Australia. In building type, tearooms varied widely, ranging from sophisticated urban operations to small-scale, basic timber pavilions and structures in suburbs and country towns.

The change rooms were utilised by the locally celebrated Greensborough Football Club (established 1905). Their spectators, along with 'picnickers' and hikers from Melbourne formed the kiosk/tearoom's key customer base.<sup>19</sup> Mr and Mrs Roy of Greensborough, granted a 12-month tenancy in 1925, the year of construction, were the first lessees of the kiosk and park caretakers. Their lease held an option for three years, on the condition that for three annual 'carnivals', they would not 'sell soft drinks, confectionery, etc.'<sup>20</sup> Wider park improvements in the next few years further increased the park's use and recognition:

It is pleasing to note the increased patronage that our pretty park and reserves are receiving from visiting picnic parties. Some important large societies and sections of unions, viz., the Railway Guards' and Transport branches, have held their picnics at the park. The bathing sheds (men's and women's), tennis courts (three), cricket pitches, and kiosk help to make the park equal to anything anywhere.<sup>21</sup>

In 1928, the Shire announced via a tender that a 'larger scheme' of works to the 'Greensborough Park Kiosk' was envisioned. At the same time, Mrs Roy was reconfirmed as the tenant at an annual rent of £25 and promise to spend £500 'on improvements'.<sup>22</sup> The substance of these works is unclear or whether they took place is unclear (possibly there were focused on the interior).

The Roys had to request a rent abatement in 1930, likely due to the onset of a severe economic contraction brought about by the Great Depression. By early the following year, a new lessee – Mrs Leed – was accepted.<sup>23</sup> She too, it seems, struggled to keep the kiosk economical. Both 'kiosk and residence' were again offered to let in 1933. Soon after, Mr and Mrs McGeorge were noted as both operators and occupants.<sup>24</sup> Their tenure, coincided with the uneven economic uptick of the mid-to-late thirties and may

<sup>13</sup> 'Bazar at Greensborough', *Evelyn Observer*, 4 December 1908, p2

<sup>14</sup> 'Heidelberg Shire Council', *Advertiser* (Hurstbridge), 18 May 1923, p2. The chronically under-resourced local body, the Greensborough Road District (formed in 1858) had requested annexation to the Shire of Heidelberg in 1875.

<sup>15</sup> *Visitor Guide to Melbourne*, Victorian Government Tourist Bureau, circa 1925, p39

<sup>16</sup> 'Greensborough', *Advertiser*, 7 August 1925, p4

<sup>17</sup> 'Greensborough Park Kiosk', *Advertiser*, 20 July 1928, p1

<sup>18</sup> Jane Pettigrew, *A social history of tea*, National Trust (London), 2001, passim

<sup>19</sup> 'Greensborough', *Advertiser*, 10 June 1938, p1

<sup>20</sup> 'Shire of Heidelberg', *Advertiser*, 22 May 1925, p3

<sup>21</sup> 'Greensborough', *Advertiser*, 6 January 1928, p2

<sup>22</sup> 'Heidelberg Council', *Advertiser*, 20 June 1928, p1

<sup>23</sup> 'Heidelberg Council', *Advertiser*, 19 September 1930, p6; and 'Heidelberg Council', *Advertiser*, 13 February 1931, p4

<sup>24</sup> *Age*, 3 May 1933, p5; 'Greensborough', *Advertiser*, 9 March 1934, p10

have benefited from the 1937 decision of the park committee to permit games on the Sabbath, 'provided they are conducted without undue noise and barracking.'<sup>25</sup>

It appears that during the tenure of the McGeorges the kiosk was renamed the 'Greensborough Park Tearooms' (see photograph below).



Late 1930s photograph of the Greensborough Park Tearooms  
(Source: Greensborough Historical Society)



1973 sketch by Roy Reynolds, inscription: 'Mrs Lobbs Kiosk, Lwr. Park' (Source: Turvey, Greensborough and Greenhills)

Beyond representing a shift in the public consumption of food and drink, tearooms were also considered 'decent' venues that, due to their associations with domesticity and even femininity (strong counterpoints to the masculine drinking culture of public houses), offered a rare social sphere for women to interact and engage freely. As reflected in the number of known female operators and proprietors at the place, tearooms were also – in the highly gendered domain of the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century business world – one of the few 'respectable' enterprises that women could run. The presence of interwar businesswomen runs counter to the dominant interpretation of women in the period as constrained to the private realm, focused on charitable activities or forced into lower-order work, such as domestic service and factories.

The tearooms entered the public discourse during 1938 when A J Fahle – then the owner of the Greensborough Hotel – made an offer to the City of Heidelberg to spend £500 on the building if he was granted a ten-year lease. Fahle's proposed improvements included a 'new dining hall, new training rooms for the home team and visitors, and the provision of a hot-water service and showers.' Fahle exclaimed at a council meeting that discussed his proposition, 'It would help the town on. No one could get a meal in the town to-day except at his hotel. In other public parks people could get what refreshments they required at the kiosks'. The offer, however, had been rejected as the current tenant, Mrs McGeorge, upon interview by the Parks and Garden committee, made it clear she had no interest in relinquishing the lease. At the same meeting, the prominent councillor John C Jessop commented:

he did not think the buildings in the park were in a bad state. One hour's work in cleaning them out would make them all right. The object of the park was not to make a profitable business for one person, but for all the convenience of all the people. No other park in the present football competition was as well fitted as the Greensborough Park insofar as rooms for the players were concerned. The rooms cost £700 and were in a very good state of repair ...<sup>26</sup>

The McGeorge family relinquished the lease in 1940 and tenders were invited by the municipality for the 'Dwelling and Kiosk'.<sup>27</sup> Husband and wife, William and Olive Lobb took over the tenancy at the end of the year, after negotiating 'certain renovations' for the kiosk:

The health inspector to arrange for covering of garbage at the rear of the park; trucks and lines to be removed; troughs in laundry to be renewed; stiff brooms and phenyle to be supplied as required; three new windows and new material for seven blinds to be supplied in the shop and power point installed for refrigerator; the stove in the residence to be re-set and verandah outside kitchen door to be completed.<sup>28</sup>

During the Second World War, as part of civil defence air-raid precautions, wardens and other members of the local Volunteer

<sup>25</sup> 'New Park Committee', *Advertiser*, 19 November 1937, p2

<sup>26</sup> 'Greensborough Affairs', *Advertiser*, 24 June 1939, p3

<sup>27</sup> *Age*, 25 May 1940, p6

<sup>28</sup> 'Greensborough: Council Matters', *Advertiser* [Eltham], 18 October 1940, p5



Defence Crops met and trained at tearooms.<sup>29</sup>

The Lobb family lived at the site into the late 1960s.<sup>30</sup> Their presence gave rise to its designation as 'Lobb's Tearooms', although photographs dating from their tenure show the retention of 'Greensborough Park Tearooms' to the front signage panel. Lobb's Tearooms, however, appears to remain favoured locally in references to the place.



1945 aerial photograph with the subject building identified by the red arrow – note Diamond Creek Road has been re-aligned  
(Source: Department of Lands and Survey, *Aerial Survey of Victoria*, Adastra Airways, 839 C3B, Zone 7, The University of Melbourne)



1950s photograph of the rear of the Greensborough Park Tearooms, looking north across the oval  
(Source: Victorian Places, courtesy of Greensborough Historical Society)

<sup>29</sup> Irene Turvey, *Greensborough and Greenhills*, Cypress Books, 1973, np

<sup>30</sup> Information supplied by the Greensborough Historical Society



Photograph of the façade (left of frame) and northern elevation in the early 1960s  
(Source: courtesy of Greensborough Historical Society)



Photograph of the Greensborough Park Tearooms from Diamond Valley Creek Road, in 1978, prior to additions  
(Source: wikinorthia)

In 1974, the Diamond Valley Shire made available the tea rooms – ‘known locally as Lobbs’ kiosk’ – for the Diamond Valley Learning Centre (DVLC), then just recently incorporated as a non-profit organisation after having been found the previous year by the Centre for the Study of Innovation at La Trobe University.<sup>31</sup> Its formative history and fluid purpose, function and survival has been comprehensively detailed and discussed in Michele Lonsdale’s publication, *Insistent voices: the story of the Diamond Valley Learning Centre* (1993).

The DVLC emerged from various shifting cultural currents of the late 1960s, particularly the women’s liberation movement and a radical ‘progressivism’ that had begun to characterise Australian education. The women-centre, flexible and participatory learning and social environment it fostered was, at the time, radical:

... the innocuous appearance of the Centre is deceiving. At various times in its history, the Diamond Valley Learning Centre has been seen as a refuge for the distressed, a Church-like body with an all-encompassing spirituality; a hotbed of militant lesbian socialists; and a scaled-down equivalent of the average suburban secondary school ... One of its most fundamental principles is to affirm the experience of women...

The Diamond Valley Learning Centre has been a pioneer in the field of adult education. It has proved to be the inspiration for hundreds of other, similar, community-education centres throughout Australia. Its emphasis on a non-threatening, informal learning environment, and in its recognition of childcare, the Centre has influenced the ways in which bodies like the Council for Adult Education (CAE) and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) have operated.<sup>32</sup>



DVLC class, front room of the former tearooms, 1970s  
(Source: Michelle Lonsdale, *Insistent voices*, 1993, p74)

<sup>31</sup> Michele Lonsdale, *Insistent voices: the story of the Diamond Valley Learning Centre*, Diamond Valley Learning Centre, 1993, p24

<sup>32</sup> Lonsdale, *Insistent voices*, p2

In the late 1970s, council concern at the former tearooms physical condition raised the spectre of demolition. In response, the DVLC's management committee and others campaigned for its conservation, arguing that 'Lobbs's Kiosk is worth looking after as a part of Old Greensborough and hopes some plan to preserve it can be produced.'<sup>33</sup> Seemingly in response to this call, the building was maintained and expanded, with two interconnected weatherboard wings constructed to the west elevation of the original footprint over the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The DVLC remained in occupation at the time of this assessment.

## Thematic Context

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

- Theme 5: Suburban development
- Theme 6: Community and cultural life
- Theme 8: Parks and gardens and the urban landscape

## Comparative Analysis

No former kiosks/tearooms are known to be subject to a heritage overlay in the City of Banyule nor – at least in Greensborough – are known to remain.<sup>34</sup> In general, few early timber buildings from the interwar years, particularly those related to parks or recreation/leisure, survive in the municipality.

The only other heritage-listed timber building in Greensborough is the 1890s Arts & Crafts-style residence at 3 St Helena Road (HO143), roughly opposite the subject place.

## Intactness

Reasonably 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	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	Yes (pair of English elms)
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

<sup>33</sup> 'Call to Keep Lobb's Kiosk', *Diamond Valley News*, 19 September 1978, np in Lonsdale, *Insistent voices*, p75

<sup>34</sup> Known examples, since demolished, include 'Hutt's Tearooms' (Greensborough Historical Society, Victorian Places, object registration 1482) and various newspaper references to tearooms, such as 'Millan's', to Main Street in the township.



## Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



Recommended extent of heritage overlay

The original extent of the interior building is approximately outlined in dashed yellow  
(Source: Nearmap, April 2020)

## STUBLEY'S HAY AND GRAIN STORE (FORMER)

<b>Address</b>	96-104 Main Street, Greensborough
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1935
<b>Period</b>	Late Interwar
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Stubley's Hay and Grain Store (former)* at 96-101 Main Street, Greensborough is significant. It was constructed in 1935 by the Greensborough Development Company to the design of Alfred K Lines.

The significant elements are its cuboid form, gable and skillion roofs, parapet, variegated and textured brown/umber brickwork (including overpainted sections), stepped and cantilevered awning, all applied ornamentation, timber-framed double-hung sashes, steel-framed hopper windows, and the eastern shopfront (no 96).

The red-brick rear half of the central wing and lean-to side volumes (eastern elevation) are original or early and complement the significance of the place.

The modified central and western shopfront, all signage, rear three-quarters of the western wing and car park are not significant.

#### How is it Significant?

*Stubley's Hay and Grain Store (former)* is of local historical, rarity and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

#### Why is it Significant?

*Stubley's* is of historical significance as a substantial, architect-designed, interwar commercial building in the Greensborough Town Centre, the region's long-established retail/service focal point. It is associated with multiple figures of some local note, having been constructed as an investment property for a district farmer by the energetic Greensborough Development Company – active in the development of the locality and directed by John C Jessop, an astute businessman and councillor – to a design by



Alfred K Lines, a progressive architect also active in municipal affairs. Press coverage of the scheme's completion framed *Stubley's* as a construction project of note, symbolic of an economy reviving from the severe and lingering impact of the Great Depression. Soon after completion, father and son, Purcell Bourke *Stubley* and Robert 'Bob' *Stubley*, occupied the central store, running an agricultural supply operation that catered for the needs of the town's then-rural hinterland into the 1960s. Their presence remains popularly associated with the place. (Criterion A)

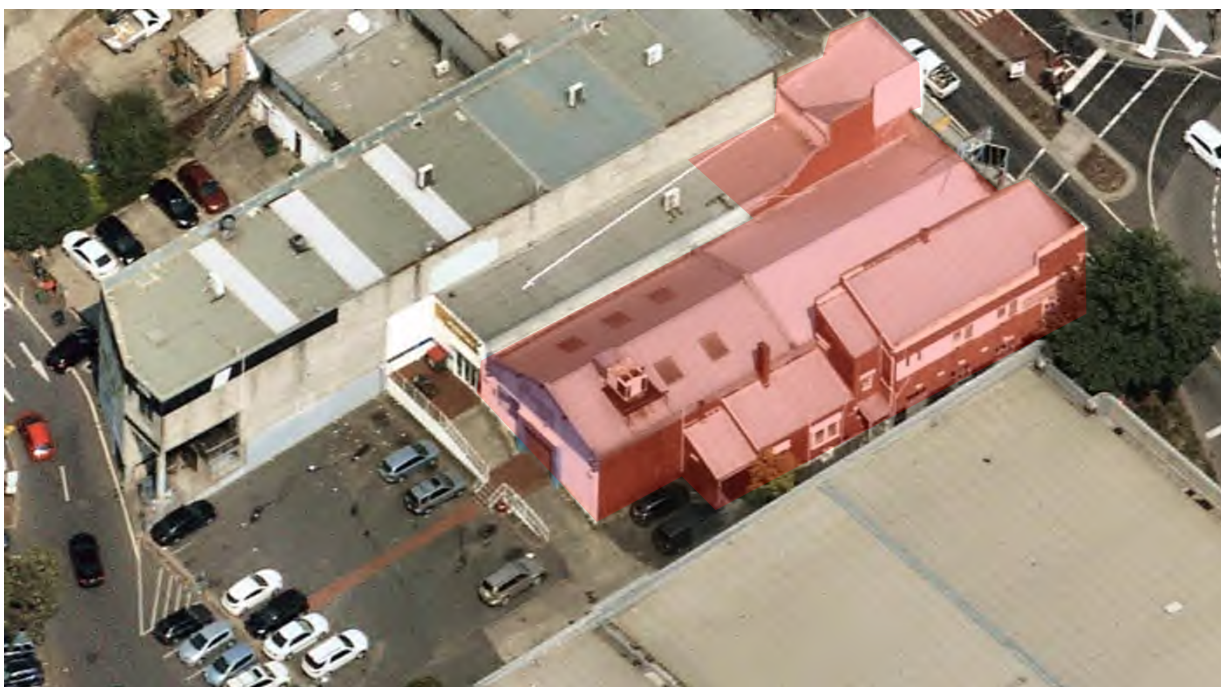
*Stubley's* is significant as one of the very few buildings in the Greensborough Town Centre that is not the result of late 20th century or recent development. More broadly, it is also an uncommon example of the Moderne style in the Greensborough area, with most examples of this idiom situated in the southern portion of Banyule. (Criterion B)

*Stubley's* is of aesthetic significance as a generally intact and impressive example of the Moderne idiom, which carried popular connotations with modernity and clean living in the 1930s – a progressive built image for modern businesses. Underscoring *Stubley's* prominence to Main Street is its geometric form and the puncturing of its overall horizontal emphasis by the verticality of its flanking two-storey wings, which imparts a sense of movement into the frontage. Stripped back but confident and varied Art Deco-influenced ornamentation and streamlining further animate the facade and side elevations (albeit traduced on the west elevation). *Stubley's* volumetric expression and variegated 'earthy' brickwork, with only the parapet and banding picked out in a smooth render, distinguish it from other Moderne examples in Banyule. The utilisation of steel-framed hopper windows in the ground floor for the east elevation is distinctive for an interwar commercial building. The east shopfront, which is mostly unchanged, contributes to the character of the frontage. (Criterion E)

## Description

*Stubley's Hay and Grain Store* (former) is situated on the south side of Main Street in the Greensborough Town Centre, roughly halfway between Greensborough Walk and Para Road. It is a sizeable late Interwar period commercial building, which occupies over half of its west-east sloping lot. Built to the Main Road footpath, *Stubley's* is bordered by a contemporary two-storey shop to the west (nos 92-94) and a narrow laneway in the east. The latter allows ready views to its east elevation, which is generally intact. The rear of the site is a bitumen-surfaced car park that is bound to the south by a service road.

The broadly rectangular footprint of *Stubley's* depicted in the 1945 aerial photograph (see Site-specific) largely equates with the existing extent of the building, which is presumed original or early.<sup>1</sup> The rear three-quarters of the western wing is a later addition, built during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.



The extent of the original or early building is shaded red  
(Source: Nearmap, April 2020)

<sup>1</sup> There no known earlier aerials or drawings of the building.



*Stubley's* is composed of three distinct sections, giving it an overall cuboid form. The broad central part is single-storey and capped by a low-pitched gable roof divided in half by a visible rendered party wall. Its front unit (addressing Main Road) is flanked by a pair of broad, two-storey wings with skillion roofs. Roof cladding to all is non-original corrugated metal sheeting.

From Main Road, these roof forms are concealed by smooth-rendered, straight and bevelled parapets, which continues to the bordering wings' stepped side profile, though truncated on the western elevation by the neighbouring development (nos 88-92). The coping to the parapet also runs a short distance to the 'inside' of the wings, the rear part of which has retains its original grey-tinted cement render. The horizontal emphasis of the building, conveyed by the central wing and applied detailing, is counterpoised by the verticality of the tall flanking wings, which introduces a degree of movement into the façade.



*Stubley's* viewed from the west

The 1945 aerial shows a dozen square skylights spaced evenly to the central gable. Five of these skylights remain to the rear half (one has been punctured by an A/C unit).

The cantilevered awning is original, including its stepped profile (responding to the landfall); however, the metal deck soffit and fascia are later additions.

Set behind the eastern double-height wing is a recessed group of three skillion-roofed, lean-to ancillary buildings. The one immediately to the rear is two storeys; the other pair are single-storey volumes (note short and taller red-brick chimneys).

The front half of *Stubley's* is constructed of variegated brown, ochre and umber face brick in stretcher bond. These bricks display regular and ordered incisions. Elsewhere red-brick was utilised. Such a composition was common at the time, demarcating the more public parts of the structure from the more utilitarian. The façade, rear, west elevation and lower section of the east elevation has since been overpainted.<sup>2</sup> The parapet and first-storey window banding are rendered (painted white). As noted, *Stubley's* original material palette remains evident at its east elevation.

<sup>2</sup> The sensitive removal of later addition paint from textured brown/umber brickwork in the façade and overpainted west elevation is encouraged.

*Stubley's* is an architect-rendered example of the Moderne idiom. This design mode, prevalent in Melbourne over the 1930s, embraced varied sources, particularly early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch brick and German functionalist/expressionist models, to produce simplified but appealing designs that could convey progressive images. The sleek forms and artful lines emanating from the interwar drawing boards of industrial and furniture designers were also influential on the Moderne, expressed architecturally through 'streamlining' forms and ornamentation (clean, unbroken, horizontal lines). All statements of the era's interest in motion, speed and efficiency.

More pragmatically, the stripped-back character of the Moderne also suited the strained economic circumstances of the 1930s ('Depression moderne').<sup>3</sup> Although the style was not at the forefront of the modern movement – with little experimentation in construction, structure or materials and continuing employment ornamentation – it did familiarise a broad audience to the more progressive forms and visuals, laying some of the groundwork (especially in the suburbs) for the wider spread of modernism following the Second World War.<sup>4</sup>



Lean-to volumes – east elevation, facing north

*Stubley's* decorative treatment is concentrated in its frontage and side elevations, although curtailed in the west. Beneath the parapet and upper-storey windows of the façade are bands of recessed brick stretchers separated by umber headers (overpainted to the front and west), which continue to the side elevations. Such a decorative effect – without the intervening headers – is also apparent along the ground floor of the eastern elevation. The upper windows of the two-storey wings are encompassed within a rendered band, defined by three extruded and moulded lines that return to both elevations (interpretable as 'speedlines'). Above these bands, to the face of each flanking wing, is a linear Art Deco-influenced motif, consisting of a thin, upright, rendered band articulated by four rows of small, protruding, triangular bricks. The upper portion of the central wing features is embellished differently with a pair projecting and parallel brick courses (x6) divided by a rendered signage panel. Collectively, such applied ornamentation imparted a strong sense of movement/horizontality and modernistic aesthetic.

<sup>3</sup> Julie Willis, 'Moderne', in Philip Goad and Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, pp462-63

<sup>4</sup> Charles Pickett and Caroline Butler-Bowdon, 'Houses & housing', in Hannah Lewi and Philip Goad, eds, *Australia Modern: Architecture, landscape & design*, Thames & Hudson, 2019, p66

Original windows to the upper section of the building were timber-framed, double-hung sashes with fine horizontal mullion: the latter, a subtle contribution to streamlining. To the façade, these openings are composed of a large central window bordered by narrower openings. Such an arrangement has been lost to the western window, replaced by aluminium-framed casements. The lintel was initially a soldier course since rendered. Along the upper eastern elevation, the sashes are paired with two deeply recessed window slots set back evident at the termination of the rendered band.

There are three vertically proportioned, recessed windows of steel-framed multi-paned hopper windows on the ground floor of the eastern elevation, which are generally more associated with industrial buildings during the Interwar period. These are less typically seen at interwar commercial premises, being far more related to with industrial buildings of the period. Angled brick sills and soldier-course lintels highlight their unusual presence. These windows are partly covered by metal security railings, which could be original. There is also a deeply recessed side door with a decorative pattern of alternating projecting or recessed brick headers as its lintel.



Eastern elevation

The rear elevation has a plain brick gable end and is punctured at the ground level by a central double width door, which is likely original (excluding the roller door). There is also a small square window. As discussed, the western wing is a later addition, as is the ramp.



Rear – later addition wing is left of frame



Only the eastern shopfront remains largely intact. It comprises a central recessed entrance (later addition, but original architrave remains) with brick threshold, decorative pressed metal soffit, and tapestry brick pilasters (overpainted). The slender metal shopfront is also original (note shopfitters stamp 'Silverwood & Beck'), as is the thin metal-framed highlight windows of frosted glass (overpainted). Signage mounts are later additions.

Finely composed shopfronts such as this were a key feature of commercial buildings during the Interwar period, resulting from professional shopfitters and designers. During the interwar years, the 'art' of shopfitting was supported by a multifaceted industrial field, which had taken advantage of the increased availability of high-quality materials during the interwar years to produce elegant and conspicuous shopfronts (still a primary means of advertisement) to draw the eye of consumers.



Eastern shopfront

## History

### Context

Banyule City Council 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.<sup>5</sup> The undulating open woodlands, threaded by the River Plenty, which later became known as Greensborough (initially 'Keelbundora',<sup>6</sup> after the parish), were mostly purchased in 1838 by the Sydney-based speculator Henry Smythe.<sup>7</sup> He sold it two years later to Edward Bernard Green (1809-61), a shrewd English entrepreneur.<sup>8</sup>

Seeking to capitalise on the contract he held for the overland delivery of Melbourne-to-Sydney mail, Green manoeuvred to alter the route during the mid-1840s. He proposed running the mail through his undeveloped holding at Keelbundora/Greensborough, surveying a private township – grandly named 'La Trobe' (after the lieutenant-governor) – on the high ground overlooking the river flats in preparation.<sup>9</sup> Green's heady expectations for the location were dashed when the riled authorities publicly endorsed the official route. While the surrounding district was progressively cleared over the remainder of the decade to make way for market gardens and orchards, 'Green's town' languished. In the early 1900s, the township (population 270) was still classed as a 'pretty little village'.<sup>10</sup>

The promotion of Greensborough's 'picturesque' river banks and scenery to day-trippers and 'excursionists' from Melbourne – arriving via rail (the station opened in 1902), charabanc and, later, private motor vehicles – conferred a noted recreational and leisure reputation upon the locale, which continued well into the postwar period.

However, the area's residential profile only rose markedly in the 1920s, chiefly along the railway corridor. The 'live' Greensborough Progress Association proclaimed it 'Melbourne's premier rural suburb', with 'Neat bungalows, of every conceivable design, both brick and hardwood... springing up everywhere'.<sup>11</sup> Less effusive assessment classed the area as something of an outer-ring 'backwater'.<sup>12</sup>

Broader Greensborough remained primarily rural – a belt of family-run orchards, dairies and poultry farms – into the late 1950s, before receding in the face of rapid suburban expansion.<sup>13</sup> The consolidated township continued as the commercial and service hub of an extensive peri-urban district administered as the Diamond Valley Shire (1964-94). From the late 1980s, the town itself underwent an intensive multi-phased redevelopment, transforming into 'Greensborough Plaza', a regional retail/employment centre.



Early 20<sup>th</sup>-century photograph of Main Street, Greensborough, looking west across the River Plenty (foreground)  
(Source: Greensborough Historical Society, Victorian Collections, object registration 6601)

- <sup>5</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online
- <sup>6</sup> Keelbundora stems from a European rendering of 'Kulbundora' – the name of the eldest son of Billibellary, the *ngurungaeta* (essentially 'head man') of the Wurundjeri-willam clan. ('Suburban Native Names', *Argus* 28 April 1906, p5)
- <sup>7</sup> Gary Presland, *The Place for a Village: how nature has shaped the city of Melbourne*, Museum Victoria, 2008, pp122-23
- <sup>8</sup> 'Pastoral Pioneers: E. B. Green. No. 60', *Australasian*, 9 February 1935, p4
- <sup>9</sup> Dianne H Edwards, *The Diamond Valley Story*, The Shire of Diamond Valley, 1979, p111
- <sup>10</sup> *The Australian Handbook*, Gordon & Gotch, 1905, p449
- <sup>11</sup> 'Greensborough's Beautiful Hills & Valleys', *Herald*, 2 July 1924, p15
- <sup>12</sup> Edwards, *The Diamond Valley Story*, p175
- <sup>13</sup> 'Greensborough', *Victorian Places*, 2014, available online

### Site-specific

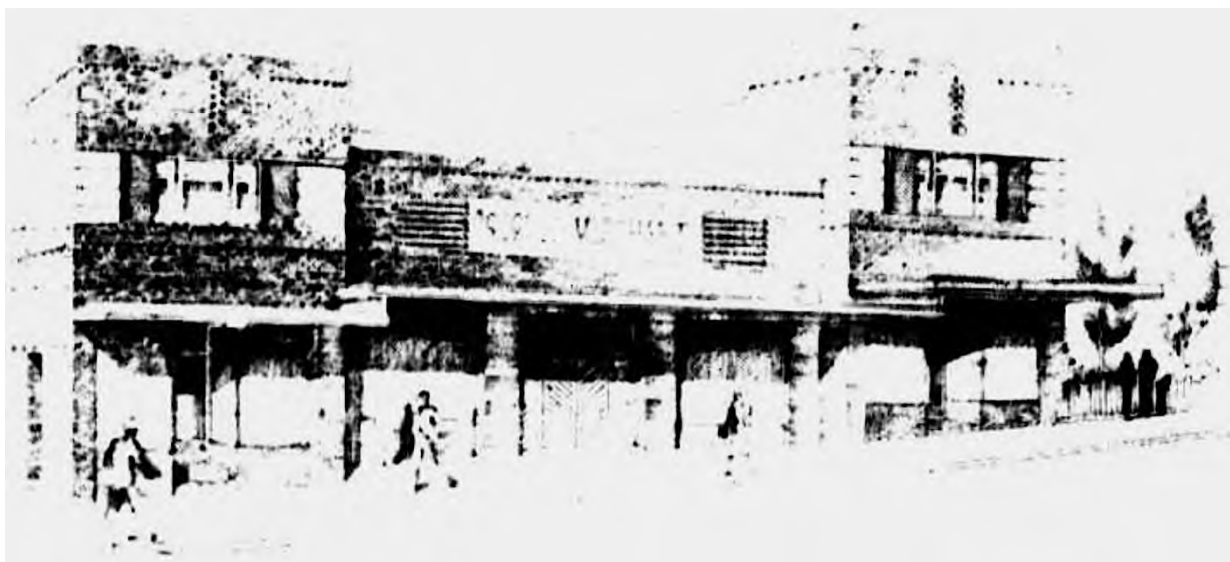
The subject land derives from the Edward B Green survey for the township of La Trobe (later known as 'Green's Town', ultimately 'Greensborough') in the mid-1840s, the first lots of which sold in 1852.<sup>14</sup>

By January 1935, William Black, an affluent district farmer, had acquired the subject allotment, then a vacant block fronting the town's consolidating Main Street.<sup>15</sup> That same month, the area's mouthpieces, *The Advertiser* (Hurstbridge), reported on building works at Black's purchase:

excavations for the foundations of three new shops in the main road have started. Our young townsman, Mr. Albert K. Lines, is the architect and the Greensborough Development Company are the builders. We will with pleasure further record the development of this splendid asset to the township.<sup>16</sup>

The voluminous commercial structure built by the Greensborough Development Company (GDC) to the design of Albert K Lines appears to have been an investment for Black.<sup>17</sup> His family retained ownership into the mid-1950s. Given the scale of the building, it seems likely that the occupation of the central wing by 'Stubbley's Hay and Grain Store' (see below) had been pre-planned and factored into Lines' design.

In February 1935, one of the metropolitan dailies ran a feature article on the Heidelberg municipality – 'the largest area of any city in the British Empire' – in which a perspective drawing of the subject building, noted as still under construction, was included (below). The article again identified Lines and the GDC as behind the project. It also pointed out that the development had been stimulated by the recent growth of Greensborough, noting its change 'from a rural village 16 years ago with 30 or 40 homes to a bustling town with a population of 1100.'<sup>18</sup>



'This block of shops is now being erected in the main street of Greensborough by the Greensborough Development Company. They consist of a store and two residential shops all of which have already been let. The architect is Mr A. K. Lines of 117 Collins Street.'  
(Source: *Herald*, 27 February 1935, p19)

The building appears to have been finished in August 1935, as Mr Franklin – a hairdresser – was reported as preparing to move in as a tenant (presumably in one of the flanking wings).<sup>19</sup> Such a large-scale commercial development, viewed within the still distressed economic conditions of the mid-1930s, would have likely been perceived by contemporaries as a promising sign of regional revival. The Moderne style itself played to such an interpretation, imparting an image associated modernity, light, hygiene and progress.

The *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria* did not assign listed names and businesses to street names in Greensborough in the interwar period, rendering the identification of commercial tenants at the building difficult. However, foremost amongst the

<sup>14</sup> Edwards, *The Diamond Valley Story*, p112

<sup>15</sup> Certificate of Title, vol. 5944, folio 642 (courtesy of Greensborough Hist. Society); and 'Mr. W. Black', *Advertiser*, 14 April 1939, p3

<sup>16</sup> 'Greensborough', *Advertiser* (Hurstbridge), 25 January 1935, p5

<sup>17</sup> Certificate of Title, vol. 5944, folio 642 (courtesy of Greensborough Historical Society)

<sup>18</sup> 'Property and Architecture; Heidelberg', *Herald*, 27 February 1935, p19

<sup>19</sup> 'Greensborough', *Advertiser*, 2 August 1935, p1



initial/early occupants were 'Stubley's Hay and Grain Store', a long commercial fixture in Greensborough that remains locally associated with the building.<sup>20</sup>



View along Main Street, facing east, likely late Interwar period  
The red arrow identifies the façade and northern elevation of Stubley  
(Source: John Young Collection, *Victorian Places*, available online)

In the early 1930s, Purcell Bourke Stubley (1896-1978) – a businessman with multiple interests along Main Street<sup>21</sup> – agreed to set up a rural supply enterprise (hay, grain, fodder, chaff) to cater for poultry farmers in the region with his teenage son, Robert 'Bob' Purcell Stubley (1917-2011). 'Bob', it is recounted, had been keen to work for himself from 'an early age' and 'talked' his father into establishing the business. Father and son were initially based out of two rented sheds at the railway siding, moving goods on the back of a horse-drawn lorry cart between depots in the CBD and customers in Greensborough, Lower Plenty, Watsonia, and Yarrambat. The sight of the adolescent Bob failing asleep 'on top of the load' on the return trip was apparently familiar.<sup>22</sup>

The business 'flourished' and relocated to the subject building's central wing at or soon after its completion, with the Purcell and 'Bob' replacing horses with trucks and hiring staff. They appear to have continued operating from the site into at least the late 1960s.<sup>23</sup> The nearby Stubley Court was likely named after the family.

The flanking wings appear to have been self-contained tenancies. In the 1950s, the eastern shop accommodated a men's hairdresser with a billiards room upstairs or to the rear, while 'Mr Gree's hardware store' occupied the western wing.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Name of the business provided in June Roberts with the assistance of Grace Cavill, *Late Thoughts on Main Street, 1958-1978*, Greensborough Historical Society, object registration 406

<sup>21</sup> Stubley (Snr) owned Stubley Motors at the corner of Main Street and Parra Road (now Savers) from the mid-1940s as well as a furniture/hardware store on the north-eastern intersection of Main Street and The Court.

<sup>22</sup> *Eulogy for Robert Stubley*, Greensborough Historical Society, Victorian Places, object registration 4795, available online

<sup>23</sup> 'New Companies', *Herald*, 2 June 1936, p5. An article by Greensborough-resident Victor P Coe noted he worked for Stubley's between 1935 and 1967. ('Victor Preston Coe', *World War I Project*, Greensborough Historical Society, 2016, available online)

<sup>24</sup> U M Woods, *Map of Main and Grimshaw Streets Greensborough in the early to late 1950s*, Greensborough Historical Society, object registration 1109, available online



Photograph of *Stubleys* from Main Street, 1950s – signage panel reads ‘PRODUCE MERCHANTS’ – note unpainted brick and rendered banding (Source: Greensborough Historical Society, Victorian Collections, object registration 3939)



(Above) 1945 aerial photograph of the town – note the size of *Stubleys* (red arrow) relative to other buildings addressing Main Street North is left of frame.

(Left) 1945 aerial close-up of *Stubleys* (red arrow)

(Source: Landata, *Melbourne and Metropolitan Area Project*, Project no 5, Run 37, Frame 60616, December 1945)





Extract from a mid-1950s postcard photograph of Greensborough, likely taken from today's 'Pioneer Park' Stubleys is identified by the red arrow  
(Source: W M Butterworth, *Main Road, Greensborough*, SLV, Accession no H2006.34/27)



Tom Lane Pharmacy, western wing of the site, 1970s  
(Source: Greensborough Historical Society, Victorian Collections, object registration 3175)



### Greensborough Development Company (GDC)

The GDC had been formed around 1925 by John Cecil Jessop, 'a dominant force in the business, social, and civic life of Greensborough'.<sup>25</sup> A canny real-estate agent and councillor (1930-40), acclaimed for his role in organising sustenance work and relief during the Great Depression, Jessop went on to become the chairman of the formidable MMBW.<sup>26</sup>

The GDC appears to have proved a lucrative venture for Jessop. It maintained a strong presence in construction activity across Greensborough, Montmorency ('Mountain View Estate') and Eltham up until around the Second World War, after which it seems to have wound up operations. The GDC's undertakings were versatile, ranging from selling land/house packages and speculative development to tendering for construction work and undertaking private commissions, both residential and commercial. During the interwar years, the GDC were routinely presented in the press as a driver of the district's 'steady progress'.<sup>27</sup> It is possible that Lines may have been a frequent collaborator.<sup>28</sup>

### Albert Keith Lines (1897-1981)

A well-known figure in Greensborough, Lines was also the founder of a successful Melbourne architectural practice steadfast in its exploration of the modern movement from the mid interwar period.

Born in Albert Park, Melbourne, Lines grew up in Greensborough after his father – a 'ganger' for the railway department – relocated there following the extension of the line from Heidelberg to Eltham (1902). Lines (Snr) opened a greengrocer after the move on Main Street, where the family residence was also located.<sup>29</sup> In 1916, the 19-year-old Lines (Jnr) enlisted in the Australia Imperial Force, stating his trade as 'draftsman', suggesting he had already commenced or completed an architectural apprenticeship.<sup>30</sup> He served as a driver in the Third Divisional Train Army Service Corps, spent two years on the Western Front in France (1918-19) and was awarded both the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.<sup>31</sup> Upon discharge, Lines worked briefly for the tile company Morewood & Rogers, eventually setting up his own architectural office in 1923.<sup>32</sup>

Houses, flats and commercial commissions – all resolutely modern – ensured.<sup>33</sup> Unusually for the highly gendered nature of the era's architectural field, a strong professional relationship developed between Lines and his architectural employee, Jessica MacFarlane (1910-95). After a war-induced hiatus, MacFarlane (previously a senior designer) was made a full partner in the firm ('A. K. Lines & MacFarlane'). It was reformed in 1952 as 'Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall'. The new partner, Bruce Robson Marshall, also fostered the progressive bent of the practice. Over the postwar decades, it became renowned for a series of boldly Modernist council offices (Eltham, Benalla, Oakleigh, Myrtleford, Ringwood, etc) and large-scale industrial/commercial work. After marrying, MacFarlane moved to South Australia in 1954 and Lines retired in 1967. The firm continued until relatively recently.<sup>34</sup>

Parallel with his architectural career Lines was also closely involved in municipal affairs. In 1940, the electors of the Greensborough Ward elected him councillor, returning him several times.<sup>35</sup> At his initial election, the *Eltham and Whittlesea*

<sup>25</sup> 'Prominent Personalities', *Advertiser*, 9 June 1933, p3

<sup>26</sup> Carolyn Rasmussen, 'Jessop, John Cecil (1892-1968)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, National University, 1996, available online; and Norm Colvin, 'John Cecil Jessop: A Community Minded Individual', Greensborough Historical Society, nd, available online. The other directors were H R Franklin and D C Andrew ('New Companies', *Daily Commercial News & Shipping List*, 2 October 1926, p4

<sup>27</sup> 'Greensborough', *Advertiser*, 9 August 1929, p2

<sup>28</sup> For instance, Lines was identified as responsible for the design of a large brick butchery on Main Street for the Greensborough Development Co in 1930. ('New Butchery Premises', *Advertiser*, 7 March 1930, p1)

<sup>29</sup> 'Obituary: Mr C. C. Lines', *Eltham and Whittlesea Shires' Advertiser*, 23 April 1942, p1; and various editions of the *Sands & McDougall's Melbourne, suburban and country directory*, 1910-35

<sup>30</sup> World War I Service Records, National Archives of Australia, no. 12805, via Ancestry.com.au

<sup>31</sup> Australian War Memorial, 'Private Albert Keith Lines', <[www.awm.gov.au/collection/P10765758](http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P10765758)>; and Greensborough Historical Society, World War I Project, 2015-2017, <<https://greensboroughhistorical.org.au/Articles>>

<sup>32</sup> Built Heritage, *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria. Stage Two: Assessment of Community & Administrative Facilities*, Heritage Victoria, 31 May 2010, p135

<sup>33</sup> Commercial project – all Moderne in design – attributed to Lines' office during the 1930s include the Mernda Dairy at 100 Tooronga Road, Malvern (1936, since demolished); two-storey block of shops in King Street (1937, seemingly demolished); and 'four residential shops' at 66-66C Doncaster Road, Balwyn North (1939). Notable residences include the 1937 *Myhill house*, 19 Oakdale Avenue, Balwyn (part of HO192/Boroondara) and the 1939 *Wilson house*, 8 Cityview Road, Balwyn North (demolished).

<sup>34</sup> Julie Willis, 'Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall', in Philip Goad and Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp411-12; and ASIC Published notices, 'Note of Proposed Deregistration: Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall Architects Pty Ltd', 10 January 2014, available online

<sup>35</sup> 'Heidelberg Transport Services', *Age*, 16 September 1944, p3

*Shires' Advertiser* described him as a longstanding and active local behind a 'considerable [amount of design] work in the metropolitan area of it being in the City of Heidelberg'.<sup>36</sup> A vocal proponent for the Municipal Association of Victoria over the 1950s, Lines won wider recognition for his astute commentary on metropolitan planning issues.<sup>37</sup> The AK Lines Reserve in Watsonia is named after him.



(Top left) 'Attractive New Dairy Design' by Lines, Malvern (demolished) – another known instance of Lines interwar Moderne work  
(Source: *Herald*, 10 June 1936, p16) c

(Left) Lines in his early 60s  
(Source: *Age*, 2 February 1956, p2)

## Thematic Context

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

- Theme 5: Suburban development

## Comparative Analysis

Due to late 20<sup>th</sup>-century and contemporary redevelopment, few buildings from the interwar period – a phase of growth and consolidation for the locale – remain in the Greensborough Town Centre. *Stubley's*, along with the Spanish Mission-style Greensborough Hotel (constructed 1925, HO140), which is situated near opposite, comprise the most intact and sizeable development remaining from this era in the centre.

While the interrelated Moderne and Functionalist design modes were a noteworthy component of 1930s and 1940s development in the Ivanhoe and Heidelberg, it appears far less common in the northern reaches of the municipality. As such, *Stubley's* presents as an uncommon example of the Moderne aesthetic within the broader context of Greensborough. Other existing designs by Lines in the municipality are not known.

The municipality's tour de force in interwar Moderne/Functionalism is the 1937 Heidelberg Town Hall (HO77/H2077), a monumental building of buff brick and interlocking asymmetrical masses modelled after the Dutch architect Willem M Dudok's celebrated Hilversum Town Hall (1927-31). Aspects of its form-driven design, surface treatment and pared-down/sleek detailing are reflected across a wide range of interwar and postwar domestic and commercial buildings in Banyule, although as noted more concentrated in the southern part of the municipality.

Commercial places included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in Banyule that are comparable to *Stubley's* follow; however, none match its scale, cuboid expression or extensive use of brick:

- *Coles Store* (former) 117 Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe (HO192, also part of HO90) – a two-storey, rendered and stripped-back Moderne-style store and office for C J Coles, designed by the prolific interwar architect Harry Norris and

<sup>36</sup> 'Greensborough Ward Vacancy', *Eltham and Whittlesea Shires' Advertiser*, 23 February 1940, p1

<sup>37</sup> For instance: 'Melbourne Needs a Country Council', *Age*, 2 February 1956, p2

constructed in 1939-40. Its façade features a bevelled cornice to the parapet, cantilevered canopy, vertical fins, horizontal speedlines, surmounting flagpole and intact shopfront (double door entrances, rounded windows, terrazzo tiling). Originally rendered a gleaming white, it has since been overpainted.

- *Chandler Buildings*, 94-104 Upper Heidelberg Road (part of HO90) – a large two-storey rendered block of multiple late interwar shops with a straight parapet, incised speed-lines and metal flagpole. Fenestration includes a remnant 'Chicago window' as well as Art Deco 'skyscraper' motifs above the vertically proportioned window slots. The exposed cream brick, hipped roof section may be a later addition. It includes some intact shopfronts.
- 73 Silverdale Road, Eaglemont (part of HO3) – a two-storey shop/residence with a broad rendered façade, exposed brick banding (vertical/horizontal), central ribbed fin and parapet, and paired timber-framed double-hung sashes (one lost). Windows have thin horizontal mullions. Cantilevered awning (streamlined fascia) and shopfront are original. There are also restrained, single-storey, streamlined variants at 76, 78 and 80 Silverdale Road.
- 253-259 Lower Heidelberg Road (part of HO193) – a two-storey clinker brick and rendered hip-roofed shop/residence, constructed in 1939 by the A V Jennings Construction Co to plans by their in-house designer 'Ed' Gurney. While described in their citation as English Domestic Revival, the design also exhibits some Modern influences, illustrated by its low-key streamlining and setting horizontal and vertical elements off against each other. It has some intact shopfronts.
- 146-148 Burgundy Street, Heidelberg – an unusual single-storey pair of interwar shops with a high and stepped rendered parapet concealing a gabled roof. Unusual quoining and a zig-zag ('Jazz') motif distinguish the upper façade, which has been overpainted. Shopfronts are altered.

## Intactness

Generally 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)
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or fences	No



## Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



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

## COLLINS HOUSE

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<b>Address</b>	45 Bronte Street, Heidelberg
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1954
<b>Period</b>	Postwar
<b>Date Inspected</b>	June 2020



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Collins House* at 45 Bronte Street, Heidelberg is significant. It was constructed in 1954 on the Adamson Estate, established during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century but which remained largely undeveloped until after the Second World War. It was likely designed by Robin Boyd for carpenter John Morgan Collins, who presumably constructed it, and his wife Joan Patricia Collins (*née* Fitzgerald).

The significant elements are the front (north) wing, attached west wing, the skillion roofs, soffit/s lined in slatted timber boards, walls clad in weatherboards and canted window wall to the front wing.

The front garage and bungalow located in the southwest corner are not significant.

#### How is it Significant?

*Collins House* is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

#### Why is it Significant?

*Collins House* is of historical significance for its likely connection with Robin Boyd, one of the foremost architects and design commentators of postwar Australia, when he was a principal of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd – Melbourne's leading architectural



practice of the 1950s and early 1960s. *Collins House* is among the earliest examples of a boldly designed 'modern' postwar house in the municipality, which are particularly uncommon in this locale and provides a stark contrast from its contemporary neighbours. (Criterion A)

*Collins House* is aesthetically significant for being a largely intact and distinctive timber example of an early modernist house in the municipality. Its character is broadly indicative of progressive design currents in the mid-1950s, including some of Boyd's key interests in this phase, such as the bold articulation and clear volumetric expression achieved via the broad skillion roofs and expansive canted window, which is orientated to take in views. Such elements are evocative of the postwar modern movement, especially the Melbourne variant of the type. (Criterion E)

## Description

The rectangular allotment, near the corner of Martin Street, has an area of 820m<sup>2</sup>. The site extends to Shirley Grove to the south and slopes about 2 metres (down) from west to east. There is no fence to the front boundary; however, there is one setback some 10 metres from the front boundary in line with the house. The front of the property is defined by established shrubs and trees, which largely screen the house from the public domain, although there are partial views from some vantage points. There is a short concrete driveway to the east end, commensurate with the garage, which projects forward of the house. The garage is white painted, red brick (evident where the paint has failed) with a patio over. The latter has a decorative metal balustrade typical of the 1950s. The metal tilt door is likely original to the garage.



*Collins House* from the east



*Collins House*, entry path



The original, single-storey house has an L-shaped footprint and consists of two wings – front (northern) and rear (western). Both have a long skillion roof, clad in profiled metal sheeting. The two wings interlock or overlap at the northwest corner so that the entry bay likely forms part of the rear section.

The front wing may have a concrete floor raised at the east end under a partial undercroft. There is a wide fascia to the facade, and the soffit is lined with slatted timber boards (stained or painted), which run the length of the façade. Where visible, the side walls clad in white painted weatherboards and vertical boards are evident near entry at the west end, but a doorway is not apparent. The use of weatherboards was unusual for the believed designer, Robin Boyd, suggesting that he is unlikely to have supervised the construction. For timber-framed buildings, progressive architects would typically employ vertically orientated timber boards to distinguish their buildings from the suburban norm (evident near the entry).

A forwardly canted window wall is visible at the east end of the north wing façade and presumably extends along its length. While exposed to the street, it was said in late 20<sup>th</sup>-century advertisements to provide panoramic views. The windows are timber-framed, and three vertical divisions are evident, comprised of larger fixed, upper and lower bands with a narrow central band of openable (probably awning) windows.

Canted window walls were a novel detail in residential architecture in the mid-1950s. However, Boyd had employed a similar forwardly angled version previously at his own house in Riversdale Road, Camberwell (1946) and the *Nicol House*, Warrandyte (1949-50). These two earlier examples are not as tall as this instance (as the roofs have a lower pitch) and consist of two bands of windows with some openable panes to the upper band. In 1953, the architect Peter McIntyre unusually incorporated a reverse canted window wall at the *Stargazer House* in North Balwyn.<sup>1</sup>

The rear/western wing is also partly visible. It is clad in weatherboards and has a central band of timber-framed windows, which is not continuous and consists of a wider lower fixed pane and narrower upper openable pane.

There is a later addition bungalow in the rear, south-west corner close to Shirley Grove. It has a flat/skillion roof and is clad in white painted weatherboards with aluminium-framed windows.

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Goad, 'Modern House in Melbourne 1945-1975', PhD Thesis, University of Melbourne 1992, chapter 5, p55

## 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.<sup>2</sup> The lightly wooded grasslands of what became known as 'Ivanhoe' and 'Heidelberg' were quickly targeted for sheep runs and by timber-cutters from the 'illegal squatter camp' downstream the *Birrarung/Yarra* at Melbourne (est. 1835).<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup> 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).<sup>9</sup> Throughout, the established environs of Heidelberg – undulating and river-orientated – consolidated as a middle-class area, characterised by single-family, detached housing.



View of semi-rural Rosanna, circa 1914  
(Source: Cyril Cummins, *A pictorial history of Heidelberg Since 1836*, Heidelberg Historical Society, 1982, p71)

<sup>2</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

<sup>3</sup> James Boyce, 1835: *The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi

<sup>4</sup> 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 reformatting into a Road District (1860), Shire (1871) and then City (1934). It was amalgamated as the City of Banyule in 1994.

<sup>5</sup> Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13

<sup>6</sup> Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

<sup>7</sup> 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

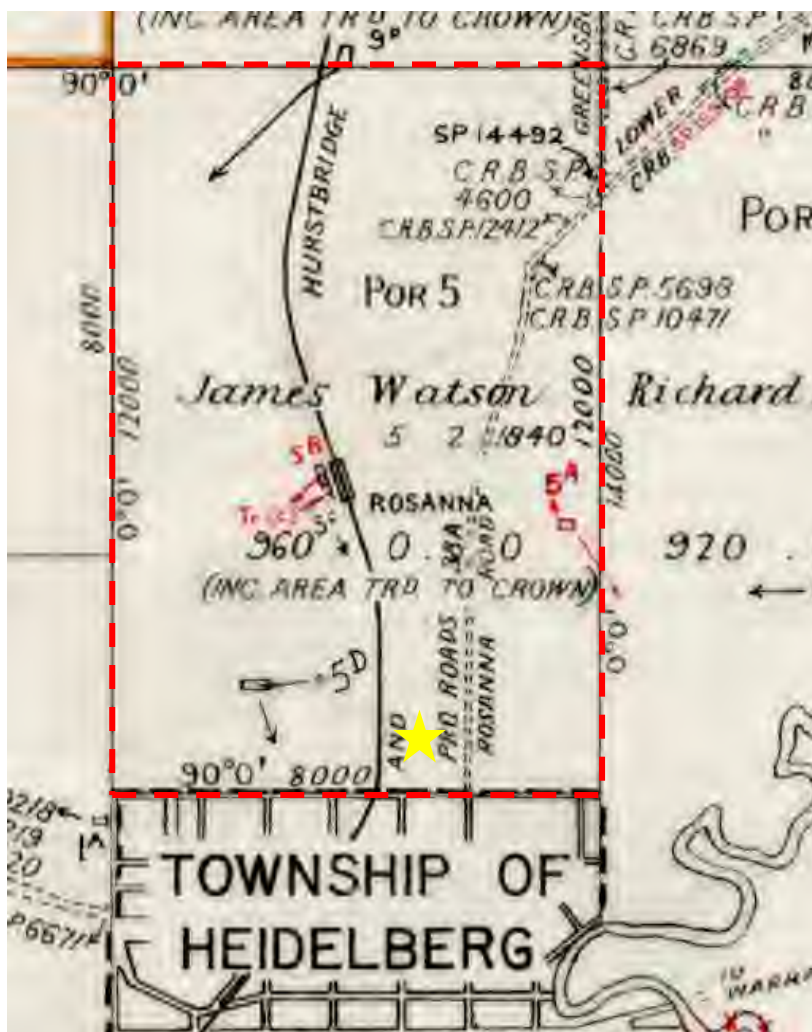
<sup>8</sup> Don Garden, 'Heidelberg', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008, available online

<sup>9</sup> Geoffrey Ballard, 'Olympic Village', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, 2008, available online

### Site-specific

The site formed part of a vast Crown Allotment north of the original Township of Heidelberg – Portion 5 in the Parish of Keelbundora – consisting of 388 hectares. This portion had been reserved for the Resident Judge, John Walpole Willis, by the New South Wales Government; however, he rejected the offer. Instead, the land was acquired by James Watson of Watson & Hunter in February 1840 for £4,080. A rate considerably higher than the surrounding parcels, which had been otherwise sold in September 1838.<sup>10</sup> At the time, this company were one of the largest pastoral companies in the District of Port Phillip, operating as agents for a group of Scottish aristocrats.

Portion 5 was reputed to have poor agricultural prospects due to a lack of water access. But noting its proximity to the nascent *Warringal* (Heidelberg) township, Watson proceeded to subdivide and sell his acquisition, named *Rose Anna Farm* ('Rosanna') after his Scottish bride, Elizabeth Anna Rose, within weeks of purchase.<sup>11</sup> It appears that these early land dealings were confused and may not have been official. As the colonial economy slackened over the early 1840s, the majority of these purchases reverted to Watson & Hunter. The company declared insolvency in 1843 (the Scottish backers accused of 'gross mismanagement' and censured 'for their extravagant style of living'). The 'Rosanna Estate', after much legal wrangling, was transferred to James Brown, who leased it to multiple small-scale tenant farmers.<sup>12</sup>



Extract from Keelbundora Parish Plan with Portion 5 outlined in dashed red

A yellow star depicts the approximate location of subject land (Source: Keelbundora Parish Plan)

<sup>10</sup> Cyril Cummins, ed, *A Pictorial History of Heidelberg since 1836*, Melbourne, Heidelberg Historical Society, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, 1982, p15

<sup>11</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, pp21-2, 43; and Cummins, *A Pictorial History of Heidelberg since 1836*, p15

<sup>12</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, p93; and Paul de Serville, *Port Phillip Gentleman*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1981, p157



The Brown family retained ownership of the majority of Portion 5 into the late 1870s when notices announcing its breakup began to appear:

The Rosanna Estate, Heidelberg, comprising 870 acres [note this figure varies] of valuable freehold land, suitable for agricultural, dairy farm, and other purposes, delightfully situated in one of our most rapidly increasing suburbs. It is at present distant only eight miles, but will doubtless be very shortly brought within railway connexion with the metropolis, whereby its value must be immensely increased.<sup>13</sup>

By November 1881, the estate had been acquired by the Heidelberg Land Company, formed by Matthew Henry Davies and Charles Henry James, both later infamous 'land boomers' who owned vast tracts of land across Melbourne. James consolidated ownership of the estate, which had been 'land banked', around 1885.<sup>14</sup> He initially campaigned for a private railway between Heidelberg and Eltham to run through this holding. When that fell through, James then backed the government line to nearby Heidelberg (est. 1888). Yet the sharp economic downturn of the early 1890s curtailed any wholesale speculative intentions for the Rosanna Estate. By 1897, it had passed into the hands of the liquidators.<sup>15</sup>

In December 1881, James Alexander and William Addison Adamson, commission agents of Melbourne, acquired nearly 8 hectares of Portion 5, including the subject land.<sup>16</sup> They undertook what ultimately became a 75-lot subdivision in 1883 bound by St James Street (north), Radnor Street (east, originally George Street), Bronte Street (south, originally Edward Street), and Woburn Street (west, initially William Street).<sup>17</sup> The subdivision, on offer for sale from early 1883, was advertised as the 'Adamson Estate':

#### 75 VALUABLE FULL-SIZED ALLOTMENTS

All of which have frontages to 66ft road a by noble depths, the whole of which will be pegged and marked out so a intending purchasers can inspect each lot previous to sale.<sup>18</sup>



Adamson Estate with the subject allotment outlined in dashed red (Source: Certificate of Title, vol 1311, folio 082)

<sup>13</sup> 'Preliminary Notice', *Argus*, 10 June 1879, p2

<sup>14</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, pp139-41

<sup>15</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, p181

<sup>16</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 1311, folio 082

<sup>17</sup> Subdivision plan LP510. The date was 23 August 1883. Initially, there was a lot (no 23) at the north end of Martin Street – so that it did not connect with Woburn Street (originally William Street).

<sup>18</sup> *Herald*, 26 April 1883, p4

In October 1885, James Kelly, a Melbourne draper, acquired over half the estate (36 lots) from the Adamsons, including the subject land (Lot 21), which was located in its southwest corner.<sup>19</sup> A sales notice of April 1888 for 34 lots must relate to those that Kelly purchased three years prior:

In the charming suburb, having frontages to William, Adamson, George and Edward streets, and to an unnamed Government road, one chain wide. A visit to the spot will be quite sufficient for anyone on the look-out for a healthy and desirable building site. The Heidelberg railway line is to be opened up for traffic on the first of May, 1888, only three days after the sale of this property, but arrangements have been made with the Railway Department for a special train to leave Clifton-hill station ...<sup>20</sup>

About fifteen years later, in July 1901, Leofwyn Ewart Gladstone Gamble, then aged 14, inherited two adjoining lots – nos 21 (45 Bronte Street) and 22 (71-73 Martin Street), which he would officially attain at the age of 21 (in 1908). Gamble, later a farmer,<sup>21</sup> held the sites for over five decades years. During that time, the allotments may have been utilised for agriculture, like much of the broader locale.<sup>22</sup>



Plenty Road, Rosanna – photographed about 1914 – either rural setting either side  
(Source: Cyril Cummins, ed, *A Pictorial history of Heidelberg since 1836*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, 1982, p70)

The lack of development is evident in plans and aerial photographs dating to the early to mid-1940s, by which time the street named had been changed from Edward to Bronte.<sup>23</sup> The 1942 MMBW detail plan (below) identified the subdivision pattern but depicted only a handful of residences in the vicinity of the subject allotment.

Similarly, a 1945 aerial photograph (following) shows that development remained sparse in this part of Heidelberg. While along the main roads such as the north side Lower Plenty Road, many houses had been constructed, most streets in the Adamson Estate were not apparent, even as dirt tracks, although the land had been cleared with only some trees in the area that was to become the Bronte Street remaining.

<sup>19</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 1311, folio 082 and vol 1747, folio 231

<sup>20</sup> *Argus*, 14 April 1888, p16

<sup>21</sup> *Argus*, 19 May 1920, p15

<sup>22</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 2829, folio 731

<sup>23</sup> While there are no listings in Bronte/Edward Street at this time in the *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria*, it is noted as the southern end street for Adamson Street. In 1938, Edward Street was noted whereas in 1940, Bronte Street was listed. The name was presumably changed as there was another Edward Street off Greensborough Road in Heidelberg.



MMBW detail plan no 2520, dated 1942  
 The undeveloped subject allotment is outlined in dashed red  
 (Source: SLV)



1945 aerial, showing approximate location of subject site  
 (Source: Department of Lands and Survey, *Aerial Survey of Victoria*, Adastral Airways, 839 C3C)



Parts of the Adamson Estate were sewered by 1950 when a notice indicates that such works were being undertaken in the east part of Bronte Street along with Adamson Street and others.<sup>24</sup> Only one house was listed as being occupied in Bronte Street in that year with two others being erected.<sup>25</sup>

John Morgan Collins, carpenter of Ascot Vale, and Joan Patricia Fitzgerald, typist of East Preston, purchased the subject allotment in July 1954.<sup>26</sup> The *Collins House* was constructed during that year.<sup>27</sup> The design of the house is said to be a commission of Robin Boyd, the seminal Australian architect/social commentator, though this has not been definitively confirmed.<sup>28</sup> However, the employment of a canted window wall is reminiscent of Boyd's own house at 158 Riversdale Road, Camberwell (1946) as well as his *Nicol House*, Warrandyte (1949-50).

No documentation for this project has come to light, so that working drawings were probably not prepared, nor was the construction supervised by Boyd.<sup>29</sup> This circumstance may have arisen because Collins himself may have constructed the house as he was carpenter and it was difficult, as well as expensive, to procure a builder in the years immediately after the Second World War, when owner-builder projects were commonplace.<sup>30</sup>

John Collins and Joan Fitzgerald were married in 1955, a year after they bought the site together.<sup>31</sup> At the time, John was working at A E Bond P/L,<sup>32</sup> a building company based in Elwood, which operated during the late 1940s through the 1950s.<sup>33</sup> John died only a year after the purchase in April 1956 at the age of 24.<sup>34</sup> In May 1956, when the probate was advertised, the married couple lived at separate addresses – 42 The Parade, Ascot Vale (John) and 13 Joffre Street, Reservoir (Joan) – and not at the subject place.<sup>35</sup>

At the time of John's death, the *Collins House* appears to have been completed as evidenced on the following aerial photography dating to February 1956, which shows that the front (north) wing and attached wing (west) to the rear had been constructed, as well as the brick garage. As the couple were not residing there, it is possible that internally the residence had not been completed.<sup>36</sup> There had been much residential development in the vicinity since 1945 though only the western part of Bronte Street had asphalted and guttered. The section in front of the *Collins House* remained a dirt track. Similarly, Mann Street had not been sealed.

Joan Patricia Collins became the surviving proprietor in March 1958, when she was still listed at 13 Joffe St, East Preston.<sup>37</sup> Joan remarried in 1959 to Leon Edward Jose Walsh.<sup>38</sup> On 18 November 1959, the place was transferred to both Joan and Leon, identified as a motor mechanic. On the title, the couple are noted as in residence at *Collins House*.<sup>39</sup> In 1960, Leon and Joan Walsh were also listed at the site, their professions respectively noted as contractor and typist.<sup>40</sup>

The Walsh's retained ownership of the site until June 1963, when it was transferred to Donald William, engineer, and Bell McCamley, who was then living at the site. It was subsequently sold during September 1969, then again in September 1974 and July 1979, with none of these proprietors noted as living there.<sup>41</sup> Its March 1979 auction notice follows below with a description of *Collins House*.

<sup>24</sup> 'Board of Works', *Age*, 4 May 1950, p7

<sup>25</sup> *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria*, 1950, p510

<sup>26</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 8050, folio 934

<sup>27</sup> Information extracted from the council property valuation archive by council officers

<sup>28</sup> The association of Boyd with this place came by the nominator, reportedly from an authority at the Robin Boyd Foundation. There is no record of this house in the *Grounds, Romberg and Boyd collection*, MS 133363, [SLV].

<sup>29</sup> Banyule Council have no drawings, etc.; Correspondence with the Robin Boyd Foundation, 10 March 2021

<sup>30</sup> Searching for tender notices produced no results on TROVE, etc.

<sup>31</sup> BDM Victoria, registration no 8712/1955

<sup>32</sup> 'Deaths', *Age*, 9 April 1956, p11

<sup>33</sup> *Age*, 9 February 1949, p15. The company was located in Tennyson Street according to an advertisement.

<sup>34</sup> BDM Victoria, registration no 7894/1956. Collins was born in Melbourne in 1932, son of Albert John and Maud (née Smith).

<sup>35</sup> 'Law Notices', *Argus*, 12 May 1956, p6

<sup>36</sup> *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria*, at this time, does not list anyone at the subject site. However, the directories appear particularly unreliable in this part of the municipality at this time and have proven to routinely be a few years out of date.

<sup>37</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 8050, folio 934

<sup>38</sup> BDM Victoria, registration no. 9118/1959

<sup>39</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 8050, folio 934

<sup>40</sup> Victorian electoral roll, 1960, Division of Deakin, Subdivision of Heidelberg p136

<sup>41</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 8050, folio 934

According to the 1979 auction notices, the bungalow to the south-west corner had been constructed by that time.



February 1956 aerial photograph with the subject place outlined in dashed red  
(Source: Landata, Project 250, Run 14, Frame 114)

**HEIDELBERG. Auction Sat., Mar. 24 at 12 noon on the property, 45 Bronte St. Outstand. contemp. home on delight. garden block with panoramic views. Feat. Incl. entry, spac. lnge-dining with door to patio, well fitt. kit., 2 dble. bedrms. (master with BIRs), bung. with cook. facs. and shwr. rec., Ideal in-law accomm., qual. WW carps. thr'out., curts., ELF's, &c. Garage. Terms: 10 p.c. dep., bal. 60 days.**  
**AUCTIONEER R. W. HAUGHTON & SON P.L., RESI, 86 Mount St., Heidelberg.**  
**4595500; AH 4359622, 451725.**

Collins House description at sale  
(Source: Age, 10 March 1979, p5)

## Robin Boyd (1919-71)

Robin Gerard Penleigh Boyd was one of Australia's pre-eminent architects, cultural critics and public educators. His prominence and influence were such that he was one of the few architects to have become a household name during and after the postwar period, attaining a broad reputation – rare for his profession – as a public intellectual. His life and work have been subject to comprehensive academic review.<sup>42</sup>

Born into the famous Melbourne artistic family, Boyd's father Penleigh was a highly regarded landscape painter who designed and built the family home, *The Robins*, in North Warrandyte in 1913. His mother Edith Susan (*née* Anderson) was also an accomplished artist, especially at drawing.<sup>43</sup> After Boyd's father's death in 1923, the family moved to a flat in Toorak then a brick bungalow in East Malvern from where he undertook his secondary school education. He studied architecture at Melbourne Technical College (now RMIT) and the University of Melbourne before being articled to the leading practice of A & K Henderson. Boyd's burgeoning interest in modernism often put him at loggerheads with the conservative forces in the profession, especially through his nascent critiquing activities in *Smudges*. Boyd worked as an assistant for (Sir) Roy Grounds during the late 1930s.

In 1941, Boyd married Patricia (*née* Madder) and served in Queensland and Papua New Guinea during the Second World War. Subsequently, he began solo practice and entered into a short-lived, unofficial partnership with Kevin Petherbridge and Francis Bell as Associated Architects. Between 1947 and 1953, he became the founding director of the pioneering and inventive RVIA Small Homes Service, which provided contemporary architectural outcomes to the public at an affordable price. The services support by the *Age* newspaper provided Boyd with a popular weekly column and, over hundreds of pithy but pointed articles, he projected his vision of urban design, taste and 'modern' living into the public discourse.<sup>44</sup> At this time, Boyd designed his first house in Camberwell in 1947 and published the first of several provocative books, *Victorian Modern*. Other publications now regarded as classics include *Australia's Home* (1952) and *The Australian Ugliness* (1960).

In 1953, Boyd formed the partnership of a generation – Grounds, Romberg & Boyd – with (Sir) Roy Burman Grounds and Swiss-trained émigré architect Frederick Romberg, though they tended to work separately. This resolutely modernist practice dissolved in 1962 with the bitter wrangle over the National Gallery of Victoria and Cultural Centre commission, which was taken by Grounds. Romberg & Boyd continued until Boyd's sudden death.<sup>45</sup> His awards and honours were numerous.

Boyd's celebrated architectural output was prodigious and was almost exclusively residential. Several of his houses are seminal modernist works and he explored a range of ideas about enclosure with them. He is famed for the singularity of many of his designs, including his second home in Toorak of 1957, which has been purchased as museum/design foundation.

## 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

Four houses designed by Boyd are currently included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in Banyule. Three of these heritage places date to the mid-1950s when he was part of the practice of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd (HO110, HO148, HO160). The other, *Featherston House* (HO65), was constructed in 1968 and represented a different phase of his output.

Two other houses by Boyd are also being recommended as part of this Study, both of which date to the 1950s. Boyd's other known projects in the municipality are shop/supermarket at 73 Haig Street, West Heidelberg (1954, since demolished) and *Burgess House*, Ivanhoe (1965), which alterations have severely compromised.

<sup>42</sup> The literature on Boyd is extensive - Serle, *Robin Boyd: A Life* is the definitive biography; see also 'Robin Boyd: Special Issue', *Transition*, no 38, 1992; and Goad, 'Boyd, Robin', in Goad and Julie Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp100-2

<sup>43</sup> Marjorie J Tipping, 'Boyd, Theodore Penleigh (1890–1923)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1979, available online

<sup>44</sup> Neil Clerehan, 'Boyd, Robin Gerard (1919–1971)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1993, available online

<sup>45</sup> Philip Goad, 'Grounds, Romberg & Boyd', *Melbourne Architecture*, 1999, pp250-1



The following HOs are broadly comparable *Collins House*:

- *Victor & Peggy Stone House*, 22 Mount Eagle Road, Ivanhoe, 1954 (HO110) – obscured from the street with a garden designed by Ellis Stones, this two-storey house is also located on a sloping site. Much of the façade is blank with a combined entry canopy and carport. The brickwork was bagged and there were brise-soleil (sunscreens) to the large rear window wall, which took in the views to the east.
- *Holford House*, 14 Hardy Terrace, Ivanhoe, 1955 (HO148) – at this design, Boyd explored a combination of his key mid-1950s ideas or formats, encompassing a parasol roof with a U-shaped pod beneath about a central courtyard. This house has a carport to the front and incorporates breeze block grille/screens into the bagged brick walls.
- *Joseph Simpson House*, 35 Douglas Street, Rosanna 1958 (HO160) – located on a tapering corner site and partly obscured, it similarly has an elongated form with salmon brick walls to the most visible parts of the site and is largely glazed otherwise. The beams of the roof framing are less prominent, with a fascia across their ends and a panel to the upper part of the wall so while the walls are tall, they are not full height and have a different unit configuration.
- *Featherston House*, 22 The Boulevard, Ivanhoe (HO65) – designed by Robin Boyd in 1968 for Grant and Mary Featherstone, notable industrial and furniture designers, it received a posthumous citation in the RIAA (Victoria) awards of 1972. This iconic house of tan brick with reinforced concrete floors is defined by a series of elevated platforms to a large 'garden room' featuring a full, double-height window wall to the rear. From the street, it has an unassuming presence, with a garage effectively screening it.

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'.

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.

## Intactness

Largely 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 (walls of weatherboard)
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

## Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



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

## WELSH HOUSE

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<b>Address</b>	4 Eton Court, Heidelberg
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1965-1972
<b>Period</b>	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>Date Inspected</b>	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 local 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*, 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, reflecting 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup> 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'<sup>3</sup>) 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.<sup>4</sup>

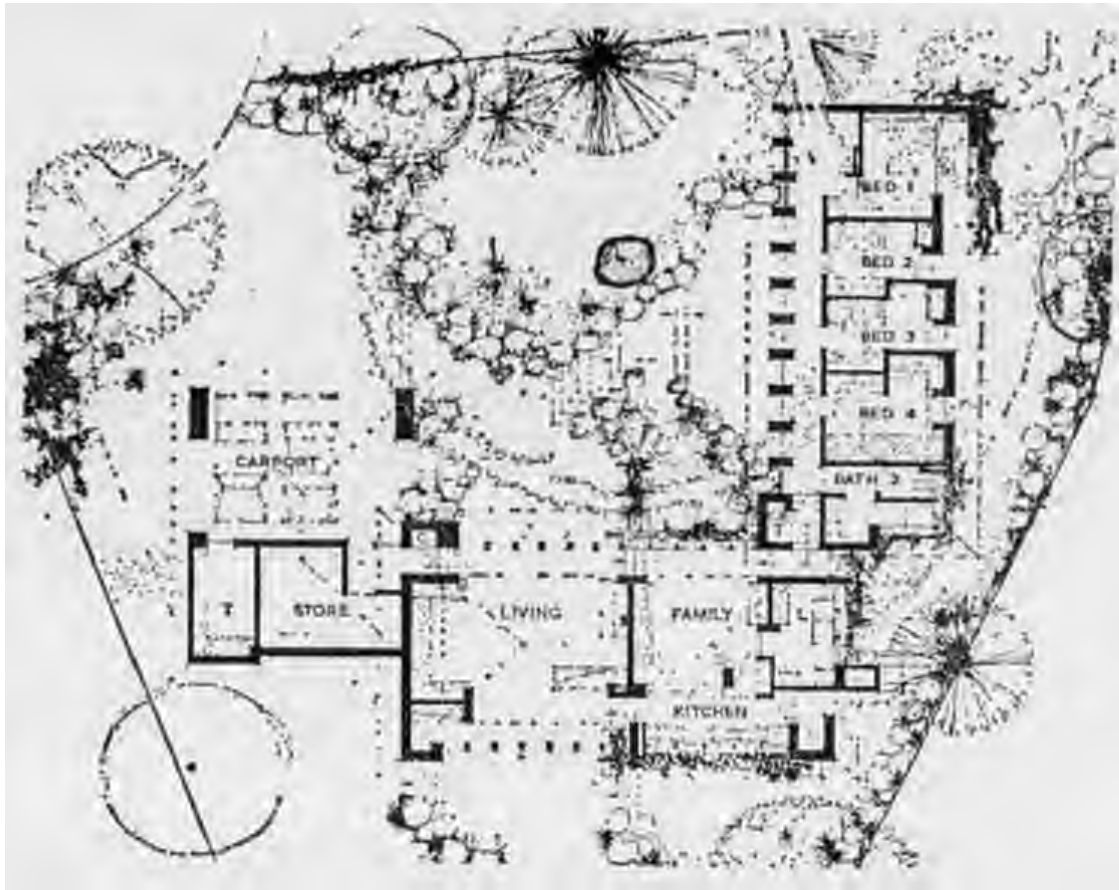
<sup>1</sup> This description is also informed by public realm photographs, see '4 Eton Court, Heidelberg', <https://www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-heidelberg-116772603>, May 2014, available online

<sup>2</sup> John Barker, "'Do-it-yourself' house is a winner", *Age*, 11 December 1972, p14

<sup>3</sup> Barker, "'Do-it-yourself' house is a winner", p14

<sup>4</sup> 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'.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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

<sup>5</sup> Geoffrey London, Philip Goad and Conrad Hamann, *An Unfinished Experiment in Living: Australian Houses 1950-65*, UWAP Publishing, 2017, p17

<sup>6</sup> Realestate.com.au, '4 Eton Court, Heidelberg', May 2014, <[www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-heidelberg-116772603](http://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.



Landsaped filtered view to west wing from street, note different bay treatment with casement windows/ low 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'.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup> 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 enthrallment 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.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Goad, *The modern house in Melbourne, 1945-1975*, Chapter 6, pp31-32

<sup>8</sup> 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

<sup>9</sup> Goad, 'Regionalism', in Goad and Julie Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p589

<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> 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).<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup>

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.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.<sup>16</sup>

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.<sup>17</sup> 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).<sup>18</sup> 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)

<sup>11</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

<sup>12</sup> James Boyce, *1835: The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13

<sup>15</sup> Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

<sup>16</sup> 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

<sup>17</sup> Don Garden, 'Heidelberg', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008, available online

<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup>



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*, Adastral Airways, 849 AIB, Zone 7, University of Melbourne)

<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>

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.<sup>22</sup> 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*.<sup>23</sup> This record included Graham and Adele, although, as discussed below, their residence had not been completed.<sup>24</sup>

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.<sup>25</sup>

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.<sup>26</sup>

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.

<sup>20</sup> 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 Coast (Peter Spearritt and John Young, 'Korman, Stanley (1904-1988)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 2007, available online)

<sup>21</sup> 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

<sup>22</sup> 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 Hurlled at Stadium', *Age*, 28 April 1958, p3)

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

<sup>24</sup> The Welsh family retained ownership of the site until 2014. (Certificate of Title, vol. 8462, folio 459)

<sup>25</sup> John Barker, "'Do-it-yourself' house is a winner", *Age*, 11 December 1972, p14

<sup>26</sup> Barker, "'Do-it-yourself' house is a winner", p14



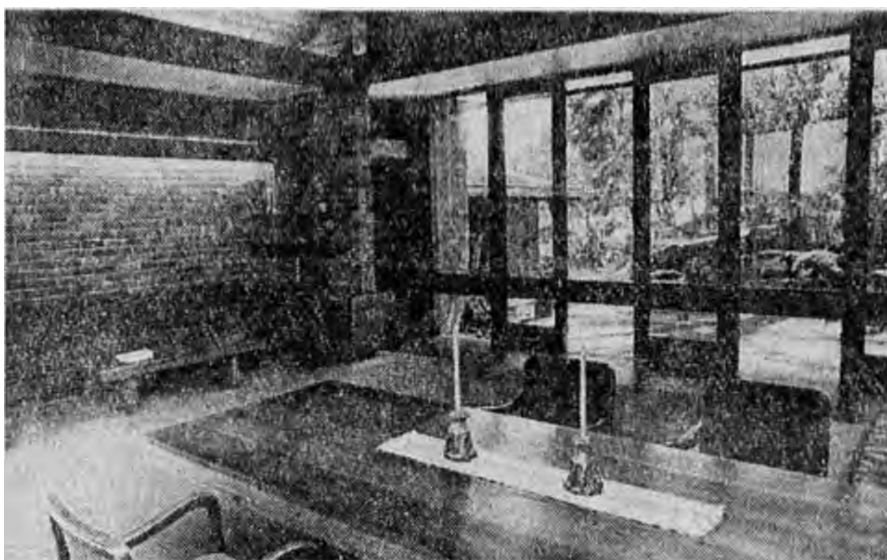
Brick planting boxes outside windows are used to retain the ground where the house has been cut into the high side of the site. Walking around the house it is possible to reach out and touch the weathered shingle roof, which at times comes within four feet of the ground. Bluestone paving combined with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

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.<sup>28</sup> 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)

<sup>27</sup> Barker, Barker, "'Do-it-yourself' house is a winner", p14

<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup>



*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)

<sup>29</sup> 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)



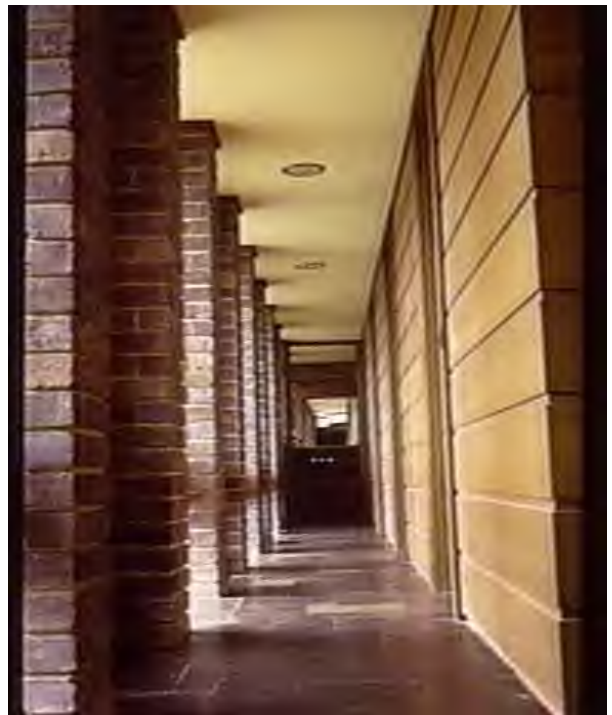
Central wing, mid frame  
(Source: Peter Wille, SLV, H91.244/1696)



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.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup>

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.<sup>32</sup> 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.<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup>

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 RIAA 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.<sup>35</sup>

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.<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> It was later the recipient of the RIAA Victoria Architecture Medal (1965) and consists of a series of overlapping volumes with stepped flat roofs and extensive window walls. While displaying

<sup>30</sup> Goad, *The modern house in Melbourne, 1945-1975*, Chapter 6, p30.

<sup>31</sup> Ray Davie, 'It's a grand winner' *Age*, 7 February 1970, p25

<sup>32</sup> Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd: A Life*, Melbourne University Press, 1996, p104

<sup>33</sup> 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

<sup>34</sup> *Merchant Builders: Towards a new archive*, Melbourne School of Design, 2015, p19

<sup>35</sup> *Cross-Section*, The University of Melbourne Department of Architecture, issue no 142, 1 August 1964

<sup>36</sup> *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

<sup>37</sup> *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.<sup>38</sup> 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.<sup>39</sup>

## 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

<sup>38</sup> 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, Banyule; *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.

<sup>39</sup> 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)



## GRACEBURN

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<b>Address</b>	38 Quinn Street, Heidelberg
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1905-6
<b>Period</b>	Federation
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Graceburn* at 38 Quinn Street, Heidelberg, is significant. The house was constructed between 1905 and 1906, likely by Charles Rouch for its long-term original occupants, Edward and Alice Rouch.

The significant elements are the house's broadly symmetry, gambrel roof, red-brick chimney, raised return verandah with small central gable and squared timber posts, projecting gable wing (north), walls of painted weatherboard, entrance door, timber-framed and double-hung sashes, faceted bay windows, and all external timber decoration.

Later additions to the house are not significant.

The general garden setting is complementary to *Graceburn*; however, specific landscape elements, including plantings, garage and tennis court, are not significant.

#### How is it Significant?

*Graceburn* is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

## Why is it Significant?

*Graceburn* is of historical significance as a commodious timber residence constructed during the early Federation period for, and likely by, the Rouch family – locally well-known owners of a Heidelberg timber mill. It illustrates an important pattern in the growth and consolidation of Heidelberg; the establishment of large-scale, often distinctive, dwellings within sizable holdings by the affluent that were subdivided decades later, particularly as the area underwent more intensive growth in the wake of the Second World War. The survival of *Graceburn* following the 1956 sale of its originally expansive grounds and their subsequent development appears uncommon for Banyule. In most cases, the original house was demolished as part of the breakup. More generally, few timber buildings from the early 1900s remain in the municipality, particularly those that illustrate the Federation Bungalow style, of which the residence is a relatively early example. *Graceburn's* continued prominence to the public realm, engineered as part of its subdivision, assists in marking it out as a building of some note. When viewed within the broader context of surrounding postwar and contemporary dwellings, the house's Federation character can evoke contemplation of an earlier phase in the evolution of the locale, allowing for an interpretation of the residence as the erstwhile centrepiece of a large property. (Criterion A)

*Graceburn* is of aesthetic significance as a largely intact and considerable instance of the more infrequently seen Federation Bungalow style, which referenced established and emergent domestic design trends – prefacing the wholesale embracement of the bungalow over a decade later. Its overall restrained character is indicative of the more relaxed bungalow mode, while the still widespread penchant for the picturesque is met subtly in the pleasing composition of the façade and north elevation. In combination, the dominant gambrel roof, raised verandah and (the less typical) near symmetry of the façade endow *Graceburn* with a stately character. An effect heightened by the employment of solid decorative timber elements to the verandah creating a screen-like effect, which encourages the strong interplay of light and shadow to the façade. The pronounced utilisation of timber throughout the house also reflects the pervading influence of the Arts & Crafts movement in the period and its interest in 'honest' and 'natural' materials. (Criterion E)

## Description

The single-storey residence is situated at a moderate setback from the east side of Quinn Street on a large and irregularly shaped allotment, which rises gently towards the rear of the property. The house is situated near the southern boundary with a concrete driveway, open area and small gabled/timber shed to the north side, and a tennis court to the rear. It is likely that the hitch in Quinn Street, laid to facilitate the subdivision and development of *Graceburn's* former grounds, was included to preserve sightlines to and from the dwelling's north elevation.

*Graceburn* has an attractive garden setting, although existing landscaping stems from late 20<sup>th</sup>-century activity. Outside the mature Golden Elm (*Ulmus glabra*) and Golden Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) that flank the driveway (left and right, respectively), plantings are generally low, which allows for broad views to the dwelling from the street.



View to rear garage and north elevation with projecting gabled wing



The house is of timber-framed construction with walls clad in painted weatherboard. It is capped by a prominent high-pitched gambrel roof clad in short-length corrugated metal sheeting.<sup>1</sup> The original roof cladding is unclear, terracotta tiles, slate, or metal sheeting are all possibilities. A gabled wing is present to the north elevation (half-timbering and roughcast end). The hipped wing to the rear is original, although it has a skillion-roofed addition attached to its eastern face. The adjacent rear verandah has been enclosed with weatherboard and boxed windows.<sup>2</sup> Only one of the three tall red-brick and corbelled chimneys with rendered cap remains on the south side.

The main roof encompasses the verandah with a 'broken back' (change from a steeper to lower pitch). A small gable with horizontal timber boards surmounts the central part of the verandah, emphasising the entry sequence to *Graceburn*. The allusion to symmetry is disrupted by the northern gable wing, which is visible within the frontage of *Graceburn*.

The verandah is raised and extends across the full width of the façade and returns on the south side. It is supported by squared timber posts in pairs (three at the corners) and detailed with a mostly solid, arched (depressed) frieze with small cut-out motifs and ogee profile brackets interspersed with slatted sections. A short set of stairs, clad in later addition bricks, leads to the front door. The latter, which is obscured by a contemporary metal screen, features timber-framed sidelights with toplights and a transom window.

Flanking the entrance are faceted tripartite bay timber-framed windows, composed of a central casement with toplight and double-hung sashes. At the north end of the verandah wall is a double-hung sash. A pair of sashes are also evident to the face of the north wing. Views to windows on the south elevation are unavailable.

*Graceburn* is broadly indicative of the Federation Bungalow style, a transitional design mode that intermixed the older homestead and bungalow (adopted from the Indian subcontinent) tradition with the emergent contemporary bungalow designs arriving from North America. Concurrently, it synthesised was a continuing interest in the picturesque, although tempered from its often-elaborate Queen Anne renderings. The hybrid design outcomes, more generally seen in the years on either side of the First World War, varied but generally manifested as unpretentious and assertive, revolving around uncomplicated massing, commanding roofs, and pared-down decoration. The relative challenge of successfully reconciling different idioms meant the Federation Bungalow style was less popular with speculative designer/builders and is more often associated with higher-end development. As with most design currents in the Federation years, the Arts & Crafts movement was influential. A fact reflected at *Graceburn* by its utilisation of material palette – timber and some roughcast – that would have been perceived as 'honest' and 'natural' by its contemporaries (compared to the machine-made metal ornamentation of the Victorian period).<sup>3</sup>



View to north elevation and northwest corner of front verandah

<sup>1</sup> In Australia, a gambrel roof is generally defined as a hip with small gablets under the ridge.

<sup>2</sup> '38 Quinn Street, Heidelberg', realestate.com, August 2020, <[www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-heidelberg-133378322](http://www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-heidelberg-133378322)>

<sup>3</sup> Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*, Angus & Robertson, 1994, pp144-8



## 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.<sup>4</sup> 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).<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup> 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).<sup>11</sup> Throughout, the established environs of Heidelberg – undulating and river-orientated – consolidated as a middle-class area, characterised by single-family, detached housing.



View of semi-rural Rosanna, circa 1914  
(Source: Cyril Cummins, *A pictorial history of Heidelberg Since 1836*, Heidelberg Historical Society, 1982, p71)

<sup>4</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

<sup>5</sup> James Boyce, 1835: *The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi

<sup>6</sup> 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 reformatting into a Road District (1860), Shire (1871) and then City (1934). It was amalgamated as the City of Banyule in 1994.

<sup>7</sup> Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13

<sup>8</sup> Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

<sup>9</sup> 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

<sup>10</sup> Don Garden, 'Heidelberg', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008, available online

<sup>11</sup> Geoffrey Ballard, 'Olympic Village', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, 2008, available online

## Site-specific

The subject land formed part of Crown Portion 5 in the Parish of Keelbundora. This roughly 388-hectare holding was purchased by the wealthy investor James Watson, of the pastoral company Watson & Hunter, in 1840. The delayed sale, relative to other Crown transactions in Heidelberg, was reputedly due to the holding's poor agricultural prospects, particularly lack of water access. However, noting its proximity to the nascent *Warringal* (Heidelberg) township, Watson proceeded to subdivide and sell his acquisition within weeks of purchase, advertising it as the 'Rosanna Estate'.<sup>12</sup> It appears that these early land dealings were confused and may not have been official. As the colonial economy slackened over the early 1840s, the majority of these purchases reverted back to Watson & Hunter. When this company had declared insolvency in 1843, the Rosanna Estate – after much legal wrangling – was transferred to James Brown (d. 1849), who leased it to multiple small-scale tenant farmers.<sup>13</sup>

The Brown family retained ownership of the majority of Portion 5 into the late 1870s when notices announcing its breakup began to appear:

The Rosanna Estate, Heidelberg, comprising 870 acres [*note this figure varies*] of valuable freehold land, suitable for agricultural, dairy farm, and other purposes, delightfully situated in one of our most rapidly increasing suburbs. It is at present distant only eight miles, but will doubtless be very shortly brought within railway connexion with the metropolis, whereby its value must be immensely increased.<sup>14</sup>

By November 1881, the Rosanna Estate had been acquired by the Heidelberg Land Company, formed by Matthew Henry Davies and Charles Henry James, both later infamous 'land boomers' who owned vast tracts of land across Melbourne. James consolidated ownership of the estate, which had been 'land banked', around 1885.<sup>15</sup> He initially campaigned for a private railway between Heidelberg and Eltham to run through this holding. When that fell through, James then backed the government line to nearby Heidelberg (est. 1888). Yet the sharp economic downturn of the early 1890s curtailed any wholesale speculative intentions for the Rosanna Estate. By 1897, it had passed into the hands of the liquidators.<sup>16</sup>

The subject allotment formed part of an approximately 4.5-hectare rectangular parcel that had been excised from the Rosanna Estate in 1889, just before the commencement of James' spectacular crash. Although its buyer, John Marshall, a Collins Street-based 'merchant'. He also appears to have fared poorly during the collapse of the Melbourne property/development market. Marshall's Heidelberg property was foreclosed and transferred to the mortgagee, Thomas Wilson of Brighton, in 1892.<sup>17</sup>

Some years later, between 1905 and 1906, the subject building was constructed to the southern reaches of the large property – still owned by Wilson – seemingly as a home for the newlyweds Edward Charles Rouch and Alice Maud (*née* Hughes).<sup>18</sup> Edward, then a clerk, was first recorded residing in Rosanna Road (the property's original address) in the 1906 electoral roll, having the previous year resided elsewhere in the locality.<sup>19</sup> The 1910 edition of the *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria* provided the name 'Graceburn' to the Rouch's residence.<sup>20</sup>

It seems likely that *Graceburn* had been built by Edward's father, Charles Rouch, a well-known local contractor and owner/operator of a major timber mill in Heidelberg.

In August 1914, ownership of the property was conveyed from Wilson to Alice Rouch, presumably via sale.<sup>21</sup> Just prior to the purchase, Edward and Alice appear to have moved to nearby Cartmell Street for about a year before returning to *Graceburn*, where they remained into the 1950s.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, pp21-2, 43

<sup>13</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, p93

<sup>14</sup> 'Preliminary Notice', *Argus*, 10 June 1879, p2

<sup>15</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, pp139-41

<sup>16</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, p181

<sup>17</sup> Certificates of Title, vol 2207, folio 221; and vol 2452, folio 347

<sup>18</sup> Ancestry.com.au

<sup>19</sup> *Australian Electoral Roll*, Division of Bourke, 1905 (p12) and 1906 (p8)

<sup>20</sup> Listings for the east side of Rosanna Road, between Brown Street and Plenty Road, first appear in the 1906 *Sands Directory*. In the 1910 edition, seven occupants are identified in this stretch. The *Directory* was not produced in 1908 and 1909. Research undertaken during this study has routinely demonstrated extensive lag time between known occupancy/construction changes and the *Directory*. It is possible that more expedient information gathering techniques were excised in then largely rural Heidelberg than more established urban or suburban areas.

<sup>21</sup> Certificate of Title, volume 2452, folio 347

<sup>22</sup> Certificate of Title, volume 2452, folio 347; and *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria* editions for 1914, 1915, 1916

A 1945 aerial photograph of *Graceburn* shows a curved tree-lined driveway leading from Rosanna Road to the northern elevation of the sizable residence within a fenced/hedged yard. Immediately south appears to be an orchard. The remainder of the property is comprised of a paddock dotted with a few trees. While well set back from Rosanna Road, *Graceburn's* elevated position on the high side would have made it a prominent built feature from this key local artery.



1945 aerial photograph of *Graceburn*, its then boundaries approximately outlined in dashed red  
The house and its immediate garden setting is circled in dashed yellow  
(Source: Landata, Project no 5, Run 31, Frame 60256)

Following Alice's death in December 1954, her will granted *Graceburn* to her children Alan Edward Charles Rouch and Eileen Ruth Hoban.<sup>23</sup> This transfer, along with the encroaching urban footprint of Heidelberg, seems to have triggered considerations of subdivision.

In March 1956, after weeks of advertisements, the subdivisional sale of the long-held 'Graceburn Estate' was held. Seven sites for shops and 59 residential allotments, fronting Rosanna Road and newly created streets (St James Road, Quinn Street, Hodgson Street), were offered:

Every allotment in elevated position, with delightful aspect. Bus along Rosanna Road. Water and electricity at the estate; close schools, churches and shops. This is the most outstanding land available in the district and is surrounded on all sides by attractive homes.<sup>24</sup>

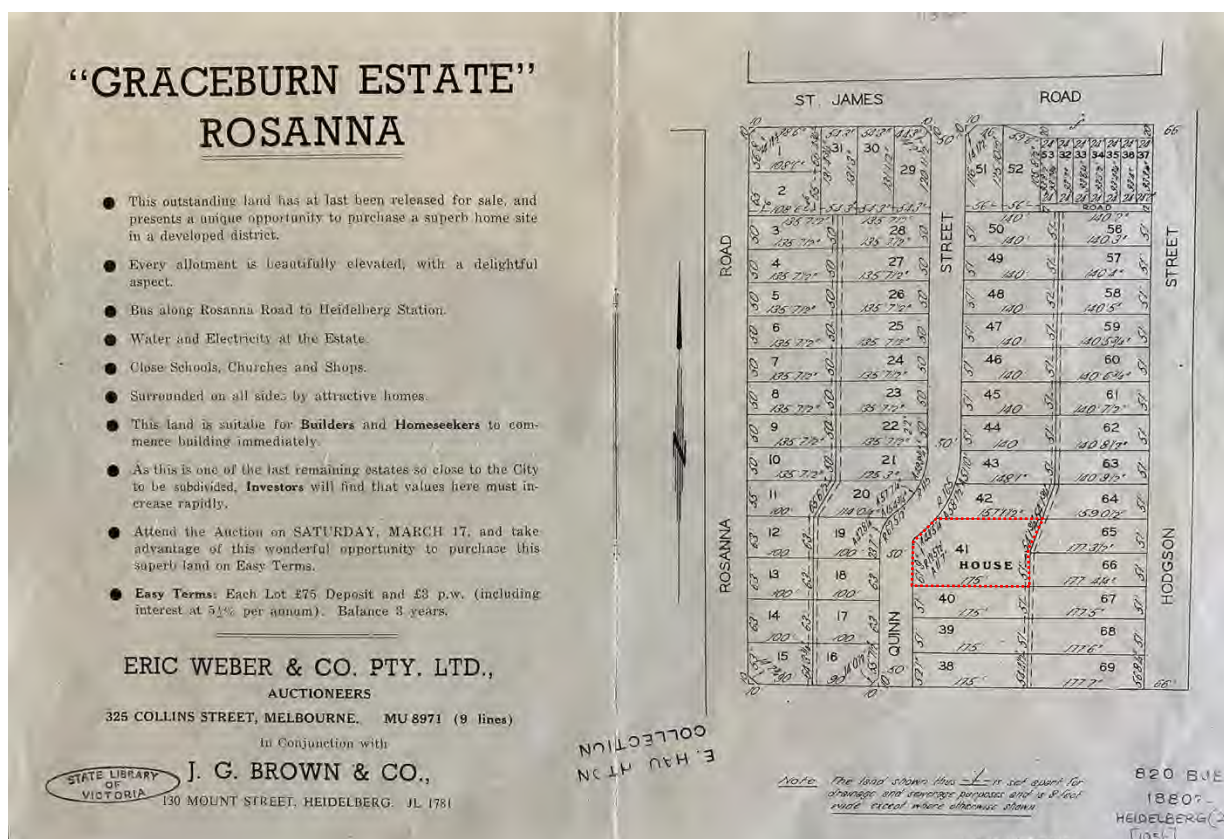
Over 1,000 people flocked to the on-site auction, during which all the lots were sold for a combined total of £69,700.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Certificate of Title, volume 4926, folio 169; Edward Charles Rouch died ten years after his wife in 1964.

<sup>24</sup> *Argus*, 17 March 1956, p25

<sup>25</sup> *Argus*, 19 March 1956, p7





Promotional auction map of the subdivision with the existing subject allotment (no 41) with house outlined in dashed red  
(Source: *Graceburn Estate, Rosanna*, 1956, SLV, MAPS 820 BJE 1880?)

*Graceburn*, specified as containing seven rooms, was also sold at this time for £5,000, retaining an allotment about twice the size as the others in the subdivision.<sup>26</sup> As part of the subdivision, Quinn Street was provided with a bend at the subject property, seemingly to provide additional opportunities for viewing the residence from the public realm. Photographs of *Graceburn* taken around its 1957 sale, possibly for promotional purposes, are reproduced below. These show a front garden planted with ornamental palms and bushes surrounded by a post and rail fence. None of these elements remain. The residence has a light colour scheme with window frames and timber battening to the gable end picked out in a dark shade.



*Graceburn*, viewed from the Quinn Street, circa 1957  
(Source: courtesy of Heidelberg Historical Society)





*Graceburn*, view from the north along Quinn Street, circa 1957

The outbuilding (red arrow) may be the extant timber garage in its original position  
(Source: courtesy of Heidelberg Historical Society)



*Graceburn*, north-west corner, circa 1957

Note two chimneys on north side, since removed, and likely original colour scheme  
(Source: Heidelberg Historical Society)

Ownership was formally transferred to the new owners in 1957, who occupied the property for over 50 years.<sup>27</sup> During their tenure, the front and rear garden's existing landscape character was cultivated, and tennis court provided. The existing garage, which dates from at least the 1950s, was also relocated to its current position.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4926, folio 169

<sup>28</sup> Correspondence from owners to Banyule City Council, dated 4 November 2010

### Rouch family

The close association of the Rouchs with Heidelberg commenced in 1890 when the Collingwood-born Charles Rouch – an experienced builder, then in his early forties – became foreman at a steam sawmill and timber yard in Burgundy Street. Nine years later, he purchased the mill, founding Charles Rouch Pty Ltd. The business was flourished, its sawn timber providing the raw material for an expanding Melbourne. Additional premises were established in Peel Street, West Melbourne, and the business became one of the largest importers of timber in Victoria.<sup>29</sup> His son, Edward Rouch of *Graceburn*, was also involved in the business, continuing it after Charles death.<sup>30</sup> The sharp sound of the steam whistle from Rouch's complex, which closed in 1964, and its tall industrial brick chimney (demolished in 1972), are still well-remembered locally.<sup>31</sup>



1920s photograph, from the corner of Lower Heidelberg Road and Burgundy Street  
The Rouch's chimney dominates the skyline  
(Source: Picture Victoria, ID 7381)

### 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:

- 6.3 Residential development 1900-1940s

### Comparative Analysis

There are few timber residences included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay for Banyule that date from the Federation period, particularly those of a grander type like *Graceburn*. In general, the transitional Federation Bungalow idiom, either in timber or brick, is less frequently seen in the municipality. The Queen Anne style is far more prevalent, albeit largely constructed of red brick. In Eaglemont, the three picturesque timber/roughcast residences from the early 1900s known as the 'Chadwick

<sup>29</sup> 'Mr. Charles Rouch', *Argus*, 12 September 1934, p6

<sup>30</sup> *Argus*, 4 October 1934, p16; and *Argus*, 11 February 1939, p2

<sup>31</sup> Discussion with the Heidelberg Historical Society



Houses' by the inventive architect Harold Desbrowe-Annear are singular in design, reflecting the marked fusion of design sources and reformulation occurring in the Federation period.<sup>32</sup>

The main comparable Federation Bungalow timber house affected by a HO in Banyule is *Mollison Lodge* at 32 Old Lower Plenty Road, Viewbank (HO47). It was built after *Graceburn*, in circa 1915, on a large holding (since truncated) and exhibits a more standard array of attributes associated with the style, such as a simplified form and dominant slate-clad hipped roof that incorporates a wrap-around verandah (turned timber posts). *Mollison Lodge* is more reflective of its more unassuming role as the primary residence of a working property. *Graceburn*, while also initially set within a semi-rural setting, was positioned on a key route outside the township of Heidelberg and accommodated the locally well-known and socially respectable Rouch family, factors that likely compelled its more architecturally considered composition.

Other broadly comparable timber residences in Banyule affected by a HO include:

- 3 St Helena Road, Greensborough (HO143) – an elongated gabled roof 'homestead' constructed in the 1890s with an elevated hillside sitting. It has a return verandah embellished with Queen Anne fretwork and a projecting rotunda-shaped feature on the corner. The residence has been altered, but the extent to which is unclear.
- 137 Waterdale Road, Ivanhoe (HO156) – a modest timber villa, built about 1905. Its hip roof, bracketed eaves, bullnose verandah roof and mixture of timber and cast-iron decoration make it a good example of a transitional Victorian/Federation design.
- 2 Rockbeare Grove, Ivanhoe (HO114) – a later example of an eclectic timber residence, built 1915. It displays the simplified bungalow roof form but is embellished with common Federation detailing and incorporates at the corner a square, hipped-roof 'tower' (timber/roughcast).

This Study has also recommended another timber residence for a HO – *Royd* at 61-63 Mount Street, Eaglemont. It is of commensurate size with *Graceburn* but had been constructed several years earlier (1901). While it also has a broad frontage, original gambrel roof (altered), prominent return verandah and similarly restrained detailing, *Royd* is more expressive of the Queen Anne design mode.

Overall, *Graceburn* presents as the principal timber instance of the Federation Bungalow style in Banyule.

## Intactness

Largely intact

## Previous Assessment

- Context Pty Ltd, *Banyule Heritage Review*, prepared for the City of Banyule, 13 March 2012 – 'Places recommended for a future HO'
- 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 (timber elements)
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

<sup>32</sup> 38 The Eyrie, Eaglemont (HO67 + VHR H1009); 55 Outlook Drive, Eaglemont (HO48 + VHR H2082); and 32-34 The Eyrie, Eaglemont (HO66 + VHR H1156). See also 234 Rosanna Road, Rosanna (HO55) and *East View*, 16 Martin Street, Heidelberg (VHR H1033 + HO43) and all the *Former Heidelberg Shire Offices and Library* (HO171), all designs by Annear.

## Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



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



## BEDDISON/SWIFT HOUSE

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<b>Address</b>	5 Crown Road, Ivanhoe
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1963
<b>Period</b>	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Beddison/Swift House* at 5 Crown Road, Ivanhoe is significant. It was designed in 1962 by the architectural practice of (Guilford Marsh) Bell & (Neil) Clerehan to a brief provided by the related Beddison and Swift families, joint owners of the property, for a multi-generational dwelling. Construction occurred the year after.

The significant elements are the cuboid and interlinked single-storey 'unit' and rear two-storey 'block', flat roofs, steel decking cladding, white-painted fascia, the sunken courtyard, carport, stained timber square posts and beams, walls of 'Jay Besser' brick, rear double-height timber 'verandah', and original fenestration (mainly timber-framed full-height French windows and sheeted Mountain Ash plywood doors).

The Lemon-scented gum (*Corymbia citriodora*) in the courtyard and front garden (north) are significant trees as is likely the mature Prickly-leaved Paperbark (*Melaleuca styhelioides*), also in the front garden (south). The native/indigenous whole-site landscape treatment, compact gravel driveway, post box, concrete panel crossover and basalt kerbing complement the Beddison/Swift House.

Some original elements in the interior are also of significance, specifically hardwood timber floorboards, internal walls lined with timber battens or plastered, and the open timber staircase.

Later additions are not significant.



## How is it Significant?

*Beddison/Swift House* is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

## Why is it Significant?

*Beddison/Swift House* is of historical significance as one of the relatively small numbers of designs undertaken by the progressive – if uneasy and fleeting – partnership of Bell & Clerehan. Their architectural response to the atypical request of the clients for multi-generational living was elegantly simple and direct, revolving around a one-storey 'unit' for the older Beddisons at the front of the property with an attached two-storey 'block' for the younger Swifts family to the rear. Neil Clerehan, then consolidating his reputation as one of Melbourne's leading modernists and architectural commentators, was largely responsible for the design. Such architect-crafted expressions of a 'modern' lifestyle still compromised only a minority of developments in the municipality during the early 1960s and are emphatic illustrations of the lifestyle and aesthetic shifts occurring at the time. More broadly, *Beddison/Swift House* reflects the pronounced engagement with professional architects by owners of undeveloped, sloping property along the *Birrarung/Yarra* River banks in the Ivanhoe area, commencing in the postwar years, which endowed the locale with a distinctive layer of modernist design. (Criterion A)

*Beddison/Swift House* is of aesthetic significance as a refined and largely intact example of Bell & Clerehan's work, which exemplified the classicised and minimalist currents of international modernism in the early 1960s. It is now the foremost example of their oeuvre in Banyule. The two finely proportioned, pared-back cuboid forms that comprise the plan share an urbane carport and sunken courtyard with feature gum. The distinct volumes of the residences are offset from each other, an aspect heightened by contrasting solid-to-void ratios, with the frontage of the 'unit' featuring symmetrically arranged full-height French windows against the planar backdrop of the rear 'block', which is only punctured by a single entrance door. This relationship is reversed to the rear, with more generous glazing provided to the 'block' to capitalise on the available views. *Beddison/Swift House's* material palette of pale brown brick and darkly stained timber unifies the design and harmonises the building within its well-landscaped site. Overall, the effect is serene and understated, attributes that continue into the interior. (Criterion E)

## Description

*Beddison/Swift House* occupies the centre of a large rectangular allotment that falls away from Crown Road, providing it with a roughly similar sized front and rear garden. Its siting responds to both the natural gradient of the allotment and the brief of its first occupants for a dwelling that allowed multigenerational living. The outcome was two individual but interlinked cuboid forms – a single-storey 'unit' to the front of the site, accommodating the Beddisons (a couple) with a two-storey block for the Swifts (husband-and-wife and children) to the rear. The latter took advantage of the natural and contrived incline to reduce its height and presence to the street. The front 'unit' has a narrow side setback from the west boundary, which is largely mirrored by the rear building's relationship to the east boundary.

Views to *Beddison/Swift House* from Crown Road are heavily screened by landscaping, a purposeful aspect of the original design. Accordingly, this description partially based on photographs in the public domain, submitted plans and the original specifications.<sup>1</sup>

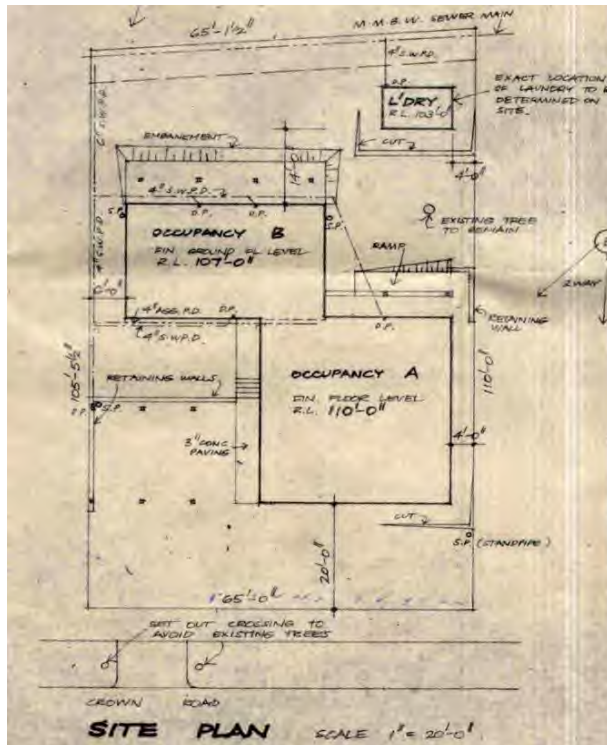
*Beddison/Swift House's* composition is distinctive, presenting as two geometric volumes offset against each other, each contrasted by their solid-to-void ratio as discernible from the street. Such a considered but simplified form was true to type for its main designer, Clerehan:

I was and still am intrigued with living patterns, actual and possible, and the architectonic expression was and is to me only a frame for those patterns. Therefore I never produce intriguing forms.<sup>2</sup>

Both parts of the house have a flat, initially clad in '24-gauge Brownbuilt steel decking', which may remain. The roof of the front unit continues over the carport. White painted fascias serve to accentuate the impression that both parts are 'capped'. Broad eaves with mostly steel-lined soffit are evident to the Beddisons' unit and allow for the strong interplay of light and shadow across the façade. Eaves to Swifts' block are close-fitting, except to the rear elevation. Small skylights (three per occupancy) are original.

<sup>1</sup> Woodards, '5 Crown Road, Ivanhoe, January 2019, [www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-ivanhoe-129746342](http://www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-ivanhoe-129746342); Guilford Bell & Neil Clerehan Architects, *Dual House at 22 Crown Road, Ivanhoe*, Drawing nos 1 and 2, September 1962, City of Banyule, planning archive; and Guilford Bell and Neil Clerehan, *Specification of Materials and Workmanship To Be Used In The Erection Of A Brick Veneer Dual House, Lot 1, Crown Road, Ivan, For Messrs. O.R. Beddison and D. Swift*, September 1962 (City of Banyule, planning archive)

<sup>2</sup> Neil Clerehan, letter to Philip Goad, 10 November 1984 in Philip Goad, *The Modern House in Melbourne 1945 – 1975*, PhD Thesis, University of Melbourne, September 1992, chapter 6, pp62/3



Close-up of original site plan

Occupancy A (single storey, Beddisons) and Occupancy B (two storey, Swifts)

(Source: Guilford Bell & Neil Clerehan Architects, *Dual House at 22 Crown Road, Ivanhoe*, Drawing no 1, September 1962, City of Banyule, planning archive)

The residence was of reinforced concrete construction with veneer walls of pale, earthy/brown coloured 'Jay Besser' bricks (long/thin dimensions) set in a stretcher bond. Mortar was tinted to match the brickwork, bestowing the impression of a singular, cohesive plane to the walls. A 'Nonporite' damp course was also specified. Such a minimal palette of materials and finishes is commensurate with much of Clerehan's work (as well as Bell's).



View to carport with the two-storey Swift block, behind the sunken courtyard, evident to the rear

A shared double carport – both stylish and practical – forms a key component of the house's streetscape presentation, defining the entrance to both parts of *Beddison/Swift House*. 'Fine sawn Oregon' timber was employed for the slender square posts (x6) and hefty double beams (x3). This timber appears to have been stained rather than painted, preserving its intrinsic character. The carport's roof was clad in 22-gauge galvanised steel 'Mondeck' appears to remain. It was left exposed underneath, juxtaposing the metal bays against the timber beams. The floor of the carport is of compacted crushed gravel, which also surfaces the driveway, which terminates with the precast concrete panelled crossover. The post box on the west side of the driveway – a horizontal timber box raised on a circle pole – is also original.

Similar to Clerehan's *Box House* (see Comparative Analysis), the dark timber of the carport's posts and beams, when viewed against the backdrop of the rear block's solid brick wall, provides for a subtle play of line and plane.

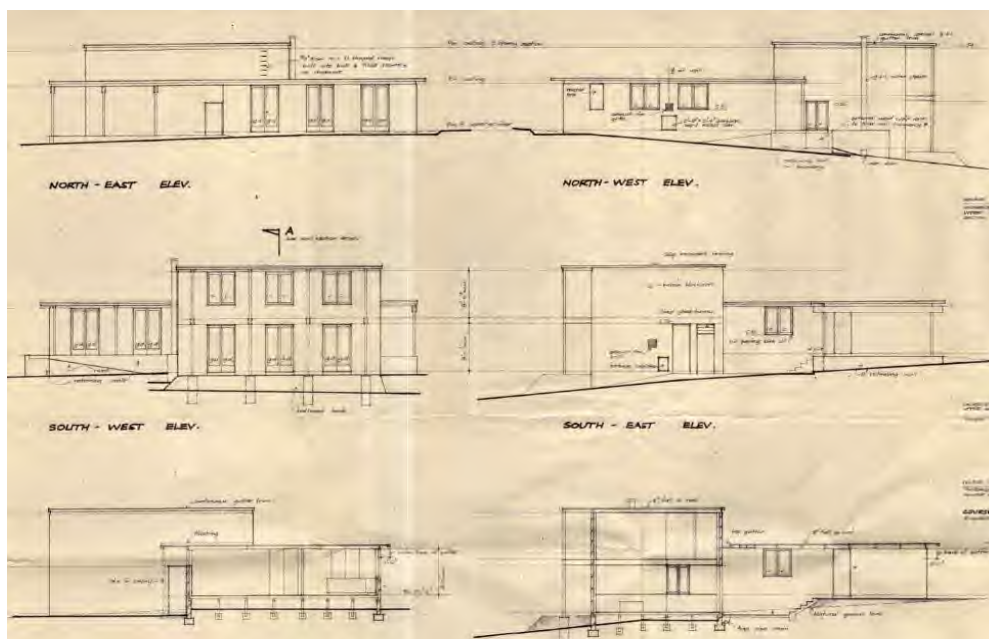
The front unit is accessed from the carport, with the entry a tall solid door (sheeted Mountain Ash plywood, clear finish) set in the east elevation. The rear unit entrance (door obscured) is situated over the compact and pebbled sunken courtyard that separates the Swifts' block from the carport. It is accessed via a short descending staircase and tiled path set against the front wing's east elevation. The projecting eave provides shelter (note timber soffit) to the path.

A mature Lemon-scented gum (*Corymbia citriodora*) defines the courtyard. From the street, this tree looks to be growing through the building's envelope. While not shown on the original plans (others are), it is evident as a juvenile specimen in a Peter Wille photograph, likely dating from the mid-to-late 1960s (see Site-specific), which suggest it was planted at an early stage.

Full height, recessed openings in the form of timber-framed glazed French windows/doors (sills of 'selected jarrah') are utilised to both the front and rear of the occupancies, chiefly in groups of three. There are also three double casement windows to the first-storey of the block's rear elevation. Such fenestration allows for garden views, spatial flow between the inside and outdoor and provides benefit for the dwelling's living spaces. The symmetry of these openings is resolute. Bell reportedly 'insisted' that a glazed French door be used for the street-fronting bathroom of the Beddisons unit so as not to disrupt the balance, despite the issue of privacy.<sup>3</sup> Timber-framed flyscreens are original throughout.

Windows to the side elevations are timber-framed casements with square proportions. Two tall doors were also apparent to the eastern elevation. Some of these elements have been altered or removed (see below, Summary of Modifications).

At the rear of the Beddison unit is a raised porch (brick retaining wall), surmounted by a section of the main roof that is supported by two square timber posts. An L-shaped ramp connects it to the backyard. The roof of the Swifts' block breaks forward of the rear (south) elevation creating a double-height 'verandah'. It comprises four timber posts affixed midway up the wall by bolted horizontal beams, articulating the design's interest in a well-resolved balance and subtle gestures to expressed structure. The small terrace it covered has recently been extended as a timber deck.



Extract of original elevations and sections of *Beddison/Swift House*  
(Source: Guilford Bell & Neil Clerehan Architects, *Dual House* at 22 Crown Road, Ivanhoe, Drawing no 2, September 1962)

<sup>3</sup> Edquist, 'Neil Clerehan: A Melbourne Practice', p38



*Beddison/Swift House* was erected in the grounds of a former garden, and efforts were made to preserve the various trees (original site plan instructions, 'set out crossing to avoid existing trees'). Such specimens were likely considered attractive and useful in maintaining privacy. Accordingly, the pair of mature trees that dominate the front garden – another Lemon-scented gum (north) and what is likely a Prickly-leaved Paperbark (*Melaleuca styhelioides*) (south) – likely precede the dwelling. This landscape buffer has a verdant undergrowth and is mulched to the basalt kerbing of Crown Road. There is no front fence. Rear and side fencing appear to be later additions. In general, both the front and rear garden is landscaped with natives/indigenous plantings and some scattered boulders evident. Such an embrace of the Australian 'bush garden' was an emergent trend over the early 1960s.



Beddisons' unit, filtered through the landscaped front garden – trunk of north Lemon-scented gum apparent left of frame

In the north-west part of the rear garden is a detached single-roomed and flat-roofed laundry room. Its materials mirror that of the primary dwelling, including reinforced concrete floor slab. The laundry is situated at the bottom of an artificial 'cut' (detailed on the original site plan). The site plan also details that an existing tree between the laundry and the rear of the front unit be retained. It is likely the extant specimen, which may be an English Elm (*Ulmus procera*). There is a non-original shed in the south-west corner of the backyard.

*Beddison/Swift House* interior has undergone some recent alterations and additions (circa 2020), which have affected the original internal layout.<sup>4</sup> The latter was characterised by a stripped-back aesthetic and free-flowing, uncluttered space. Key internal elements that appear to remain are hardwood timber floorboards,<sup>5</sup> plain timber skirting, unbroken timber batten lining to some walls, thin cornices with mitred corners, white-painted fibrous plaster walls and ceilings ('all fixings disguised'), mosaic tiling pointed with white cement (kitchens and bathroom), open timber staircase and balustrade, solid full-height timber Mountain Ash doors, and built-in furniture.

The hearth of the original brick fireplace (living room/Swifts' block) appears to have been infilled. Other changes to the two-storey block include the removal of some internal walls, provision of new partition walls, infill of some side elevation openings with matching brick and replacement of one door (south elevation) with a new glazed insert, creation of a new entry (south-west common wall) between the Beddisons' and Swifts' wings (sliding door) with new steps and landing from the single-storey unit (Beddison), and replacement of joinery in kitchen and laundry.

The design of *Beddison/Swift House* is deliberately understated and discrete. Clerehan's underlying goal, consistent throughout his work, was to provide a 'calm backdrop for everyday living'.<sup>6</sup> Bell's design aims were similar. In the wake of the 1950s – Victorian architecture's 'heroic' decade – such qualities stood it apart from mainstream modernism, which stressed the creation of bold visuals and/or structural exhibitionism. *Beddison/Swift House* illustrates a mature application of the International Style, particularly Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's minimalism, reformulated to local conditions; a softened severity and 'highly sophisticated arrangement of unpretentious elements'.<sup>7</sup>

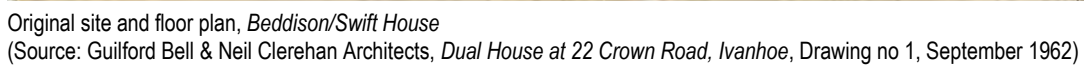
<sup>4</sup> JaneCameronArchitects, 5 Crown Road Ivanhoe (series of plans), permit number P34/2020, provided by the City of Banyule

<sup>5</sup> 'T & G Hardwood floor' 'in long lengths' with 'punched nails' and 'sand finish' – *Specifications*

<sup>6</sup> Goad, 'Foreword', in Harriet Edquist and Richard Black, *The Architecture of Neil Clerehan*, RMIT University Press, 2005, p9

<sup>7</sup> Goad, *The Modern House in Melbourne*, chapter 6, p62





## 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.<sup>8</sup> 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 of the *Birrarung/Yarra* at Melbourne (est. 1835).<sup>9</sup> However, as part of the 'Heidelberg' district in the Parish of Keelbundora, this area passed rapidly into private hands via an auction in Sydney Town in 1838.<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup> 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 mostly undertaken by tenant farmers.<sup>12</sup> This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.<sup>13</sup>

Ivanhoe – its name stemming from Archibald Thom's 'Ivanhoe Estate' – remained a sparsely populated agricultural area until Melbourne's 'Land Boom' in the late 1880s.<sup>14</sup> 'Picturesque' terrain, varied outlooks and the high repute of the broader district drew affluent newcomers. By the turn of the century, 'Beautiful Ivanhoe' was routinely portrayed as a 'fashionable', 'exclusive locality' of 'model homes'.<sup>15</sup> An improved railway connection to Melbourne in 1901 supported further middle-class growth, instigating 'four decades of slow and relatively affluent suburban sprawl' in the vicinity of Ivanhoe, Eaglemont, and Heidelberg train stations.<sup>16</sup>

During the interwar years, suburban Ivanhoe solidified, although its southern and eastern reaches remained primarily locked up by the expansive 'Hartlands', 'Charterisville', and 'Chelsworth' estates.<sup>17</sup> To navigate the complexities that accompanied the subdivision of these areas (sloping land, curving streets, views) in the postwar period and galvanised by the swelling influence of modernism, many of the new, generally affluent proprietors sought the services of an architect.<sup>18</sup> By the early 1960s, distinct enclaves of upmarket, modernist design culture were apparent in the southern reaches of Ivanhoe and Ivanhoe East, with the aesthetic and lifestyle reverberations of the modern movement also shaping infill development in the more established environs of the locale.



View near Heidelberg in Victoria, pen and ink drawing, circa 1858  
(Source: Eugene von Guérard, National Gallery of Victoria)

<sup>8</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

<sup>9</sup> James Boyce, 1835: *The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi

<sup>10</sup> 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 reformatting into a Road District (1860), Shire (1871) and then City (1934). It was amalgamated as the City of Banyule in 1994.

<sup>11</sup> Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13

<sup>12</sup> Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

<sup>13</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, sections 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.5, and 2.3.10

<sup>14</sup> Thom's estate designation was inspired by a novel of the same name by Sir Walter Scott (1819).

<sup>15</sup> Ivanhoe & Alphington Progress Society, *Beautiful Ivanhoe: the suburb of model homes and scenic charm*, Model Studio, 1900, SLV

<sup>16</sup> Ivanhoe Station opened in 1888; however, inefficiencies in the Heidelberg-Melbourne railway line initially bedevilled growth.

<sup>17</sup> Ivanhoe grew from roughly 2,000 residents in 1913 to nearly 8,000 by 1933 (*Victorian Year Books*, Australian Bureau of Statistics).

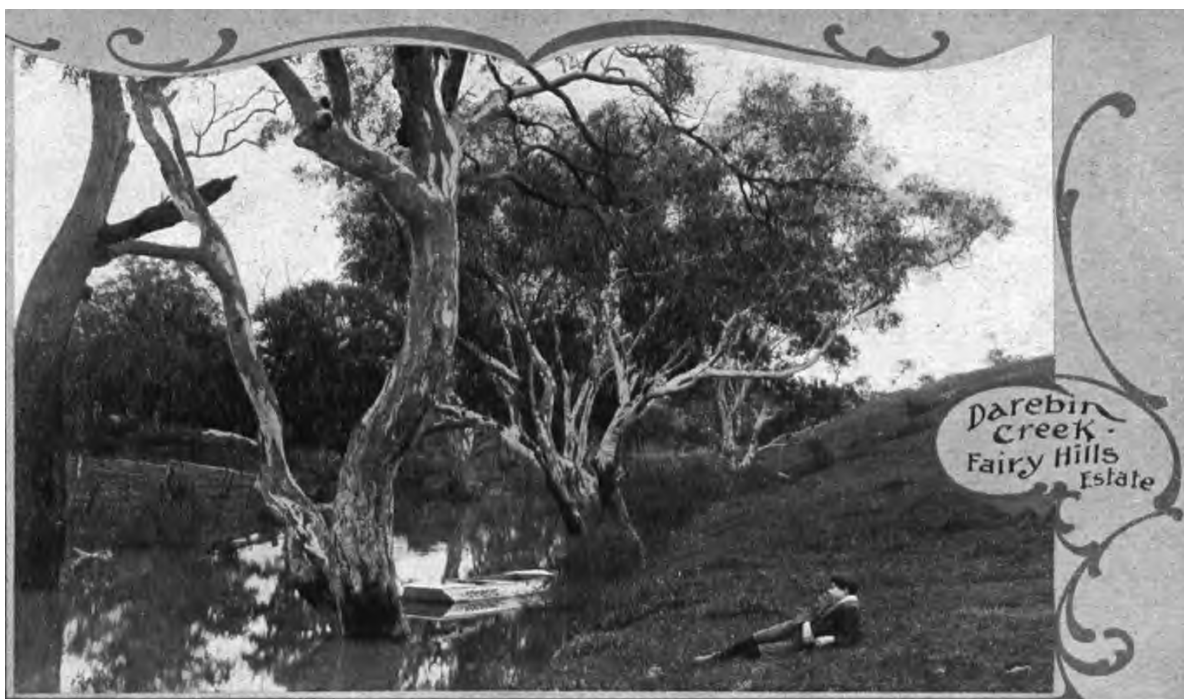
<sup>18</sup> Don Garden, 'Ivanhoe', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008



### Site-specific

The subject land derives from Portion 1 (510 hectares) of the Parish of Keelbundora, purchased (along with portions 2 and 3) by Thomas Walker in 1838. A Sydney-based Scottish banker and philanthrope with an eye for marketable land across the colony, Walker's intention in the Port Philip District was speculative from the start. He commenced subdividing his acquisitions as early as mid-1839, amassing enormous profit.<sup>19</sup>

The western half of Portion 1, which incorporates the subject site, was subdivided into multiple parcels and advertised as the 'Glanville Estate' from October 1839: 'Suburban Farms and Villa Sites ... the fertility and beauty of which are not to be surpassed in that region of Fertile Soil and Beautiful Landscape Scenery'.<sup>20</sup> Around 1856, the Essex-born pastoralist and investor Francis Clark purchased about 22 hectares of the Glanville Estate (loosely, Heidelberg Road to Darebin Creek and the Yarra).<sup>21</sup> He erected a commodious stone residence (near the southwest corner of Elphin Street and Waterdale Road, demolished in 1956), designating this holding the 'Fairy Hills Estate'.<sup>22</sup> The name, referring to the part of Ivanhoe between Darebin Creek and Chelsworth Park, was current throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and remains in popular and official usage.



Photograph of Darebin Creek, which formed the western and southern boundary of the Fairy Hills Estate  
(Source: Ivanhoe and Alphington Progress Society, *Beautiful Ivanhoe: the suburb of model homes and scenic charm*, early 1900s, SLV)

Clark's widow, Henrietta, remained in occupation of the estate's original residence until 1930. At her death, the *Argus* remarked that her life 'recalls days when the district of Fairy Hills was a single estate and not the garden suburb it has since become', noting that her family had been progressively subdividing the property during her lifetime.<sup>23</sup> By the late interwar years, the Fairy Hills locale had become more defined as a housing precinct, including in the vicinity of the subject land, where two houses associated with celebrated artists had arisen – the *McGeorge House* (1911), by leading society architect Harold Desbrowe Annear, at 25 Riverside Road (VHR H2004, HO51) and the *Waller House* (1922) for Napier and Christian Waller at 9-9A Crown Road (VHR H0617, HO22).

As part of the Clark family's subdivision of Fairy Hills Estate, the land west of Riverside Road to Darebin Creek and, roughly, south of Crown Road was excised in 1911.<sup>24</sup> Further subdivision took place. In 1917 Eliza C Clements of 'Fairy Hills Ivanhoe Married Women' purchased just over a quarter of a hectare at the intersection of Crown and Riversdale roads (now 1 and 5

<sup>19</sup> W Joy, 'Walker, Thomas (1804-1886)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1967, available online

<sup>20</sup> 'Sale by Auction: Land at Port Phillip', *Commercial Journal and Advertiser*, 5 October 1839, p4

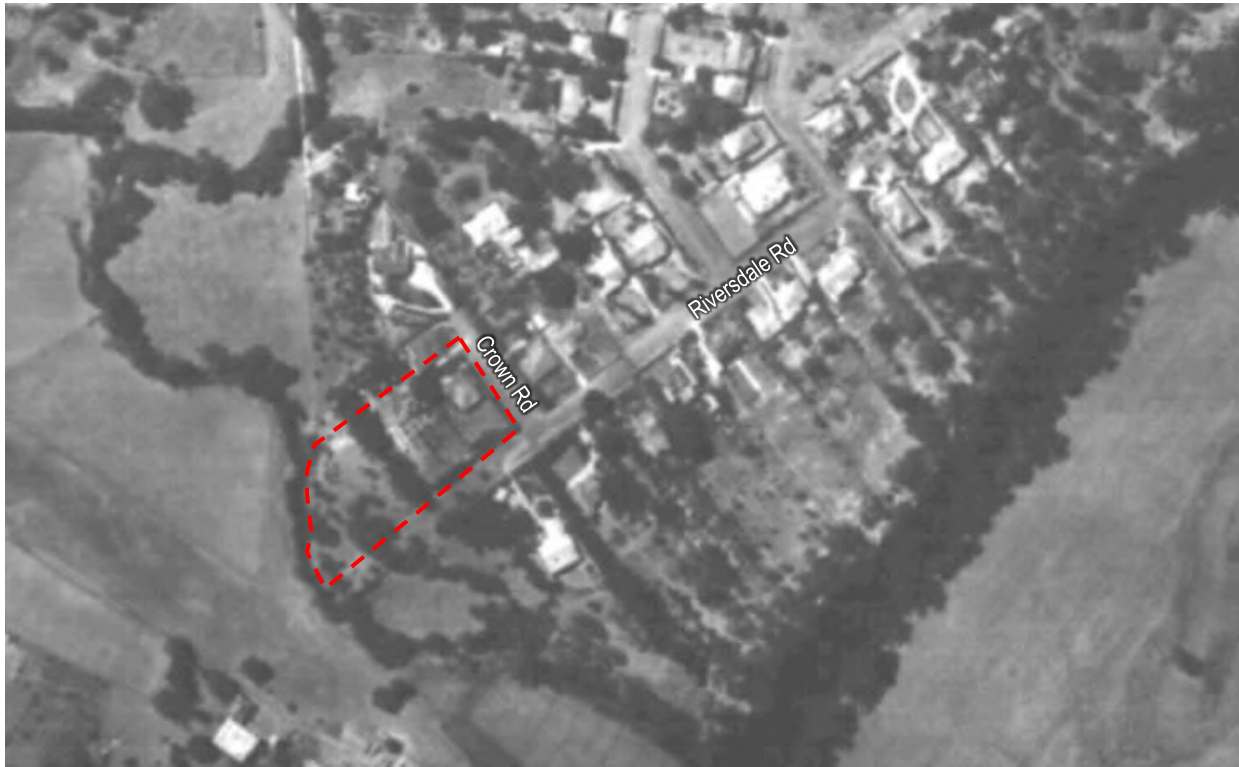
<sup>21</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, p15, pp80-1

<sup>22</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, p81; and Graeme Butler, *Heidelberg Conservation Study: Part 1 – Heidelberg Historic Buildings & Areas Assessment*, November 1985, p25

<sup>23</sup> 'Mrs. Francis Clark', *Argus*, 28 September 1938, p2

<sup>24</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 3475, folio 817

Crown Road, 24 and 25 Riversdale Road).<sup>25</sup> The Clements were living there soon after, at a house set well back from Riversdale Street.<sup>26</sup> The balance of the site appears to have been cultivated as a garden.



1945 aerial photograph of the southern part of Fairy Hills, Ivanhoe with the Clements property, incorporating the subject land, outlined in red (Source: Ringwood AIC, Zone 7, Photo-map 849-a1, The University of Melbourne)

Eliza's death in 1959 triggered a re-subdivision of the property, resulting in the creation of the subject allotment (Lot 1).<sup>27</sup> Around this time, the Clements' house was also demolished, seemingly to facilitate more intensive development.

In January 1963, David and Brenda Ivy Swift and Oliver Rex and Ivy Augusta Beddison were registered as the joint proprietors of Lot 1.<sup>28</sup> Oliver (1897-1968) and Ivy (*nee* Sapel, 1898-1983) had married in 1921. Brenda (1926-?), their daughter, had married David (1917-2012) at the Unitarian Church, East Melbourne in 1948.<sup>29</sup>

Since the early 1930s, Oliver Beddison had directed a firm – variously known as Beddison and Staples, Beddison & Sapel – that manufactured 'small wood ware', with a factory in Fairfield and later Clifton Hill.<sup>30</sup> His operation was one of the first in Victoria to produce timber (Queensland hoop pine) ice cream spoons and sticks, which apparently gained him a sizable market share.<sup>31</sup> Some iteration of this firm (O.R. Beddison Pty Ltd) may have continued into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, directed by Oliver's son (Douglas Rex Beddison) in South Australia.<sup>32</sup>

David was a public servant of Jewish ancestry who served in the Australian Army during the Second World War.<sup>33</sup> He had a lengthy career in the public service, starting in the Victorian Mines Department in 1935 (aged 17) and rising to 'officer in charge' of State Film Centre (1957-79), an innovative public organisation described as a 'film library for the whole community... [a]

<sup>25</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4073, folio 424

<sup>26</sup> *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria*, 1918

<sup>27</sup> LP 56011, Certificate of Title, vol 4073, folio 424

<sup>28</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 8364m folio 894

<sup>29</sup> 'Weddings Celebrated', *Argus*, 13 November 1948, p7

<sup>30</sup> 'Ice-cream Spoons. Outlet for Local Timbers', *Age*, 24 November 1939, p12. From the mid-1940s, Oliver was listed as the co-director of Lignum [Latin for wood] Trading Company Pty Ltd (*Argus*, 15 April 1946, p21)

<sup>31</sup> Tariff Board, *Spoons and Sticks for Ice Cream*, Commonwealth of Australia, 5 February 1940, p3

<sup>32</sup> 'Plywood Sales Officer', *Age*, 14 July 1984, p82

<sup>33</sup> Australian Military Forces, *Service and Casualty Form*, undated, via Ancestry.com

magnificent collection of 16 mm films, rivalling in variety even that of the National Library'.<sup>34</sup> He was the author of many a letter to the editor, particularly in *The Age*, which ranged from matters concerned with television and the ABC to issues of culture and governance.<sup>35</sup> In 1979, David received an Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his public service.<sup>36</sup> Brenda was often described as an 'actress' in electoral rolls, although in what medium is unknown.<sup>37</sup>



David Swift, Chief Executive Officer of the State Film Centre  
(Source: Colin Bennet, 'At The Cinema', *Age*, 15 October 1960, p19)

The Beddisons and Swifts planned to live together at Lot 1 in a 'dual house' – David, Brenda and children to the rear in the two-storey block, with grandparents Oliver and Ivy in the front unit.<sup>38</sup> Evidently, this idea had been in germination prior to the formal acquisition of the land (January 1963), as the plans submitted to the City of Heidelberg by their engaged architectural practice, Bell & Clerehan, were dated September 1962.<sup>39</sup> Before their land acquisition on Crown Road, they appear to have lived at the same address in Griffiths Street, Reservoir.<sup>40</sup>

Construction of *Beddison/Swift House* (initially listed at 3 Crown Road) occurred during 1963, undertaken by C Burnett & Sons, contractors based in Ashburton with costs estimated at £12,943 – a reasonably large sum in the period for a private house.<sup>41</sup> Existing trees along the Crown Road frontage of the site, planted by the Clements' were retained as part of the Beddison/Swift redevelopment.<sup>42</sup> The Swifts remained at the house until at least the early 1980s.<sup>43</sup>

No details of the relationship between the Beddisons/Swifts and the architects, Guilford Bell and Neil Clerehan, have come to light. The Bell & Clerehan partnership had only formed in 1962, something of a forced union due to the 'credit squeeze' of 1961. Conceivably, the public attention garnered by their lauded first joint project, the *Simon House* (33 Daveys Bay Road, Mount Eliza) attracted the Beddisons/Swifts. Equally, as likely, it could have been either Clerehan or Bell's mounting individual reputations as deft designers of elegantly modern liveable houses, which differed from the bulk of dwellings under construction at the time, memorably dismissed by Clerehan in his *Best Australian Houses* (1961):

... the vernacular Australian House of 1960 was a rather pathetic, inadequate answer to any problem it might have set out to solve... On its hardwood frame would hang external weatherboarding, a veneer of brickwork or a skin of asbestos. On its roof (hipped) would lie tiles (in Marseilles pattern of terra cotta or cement pressed to look like terra cotta). On either side of its central hall would be a bedroom and a living room ... All these compartments were contained in a shape which rarely deferred to site, sun, suitability or beauty. It was as simple as a bewildered industry dared offer to customers who abhorred simplicity.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Swift, 'Take our hands from your pockets', *Age*, 13 May 1991, p10 and 'Minister's mistaken', *Age*, 21 October 1981, p12

<sup>35</sup> For instance, 'Unhappy innuendoes about migrants', *Age*, 3 November 1972, p8 and 'Jolly gets the sums right but the human equations wrong', *Age*, 15 April 1987, p12

<sup>36</sup> 'The New Year Honours List', *Canberra Times*, 31 December 1979, p8

<sup>37</sup> Ancestry.com

<sup>38</sup> Edquist, 'Neil Clerehan: A Melbourne Practice', p38

<sup>39</sup> Guilford Bell & Neil Clerehan, *Dual House at 22 Crown Road, Ivanhoe: Messrs O. R. Beddison & D. Swift*, September 1962, Drawing nos 1 and 2, City of Banyule planning archive

<sup>40</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 8364m folio 894

<sup>41</sup> In 1951, the average cost of building a five-roomed house was £3,000. (Robin Boyd, *Australia's Home*, Melbourne University, 1961, p102). Construction details sourced from 'City of Heidelberg Building Permit' (collection of various applications), City of Banyule, planning archive

<sup>42</sup> Edquist, 'Neil Clerehan: A Melbourne Practice', p38

<sup>43</sup> 'Subdivision of Ivanhoe', Electoral Roll, 1980, p57; and Certificate of Title, vol 8365, folio 894

<sup>44</sup> Neil Clerehan, *Best Australian Houses: recent houses built by members of The Royal Australian Institute of Architects*, F W Cheshire, 1961, introduction



Clerehan is credited with being primarily responsible for *Beddison/Swift House* design, with Bell playing a lesser role. Architectural historian Harriet Edquist describes their short-lived office as operating 'more or less as two identifiable practices', responsible for about twelve houses.<sup>45</sup> Clerehan and Bell's union was not congenial. Despite an ostensibly shared desired aesthetic, both held divergent design philosophies and handled clients differently:

Clerehan's concerns with living patterns, the almost objective framing of human habitation, was quite different from Bell's highly formal and aesthetic approach which seemed to restrict habitation to a sort of hermetic 'ritual'.<sup>46</sup>

In 1965, two years after construction, *Beddison/Swift House* was published in the widely read magazine *Australian Home Beautiful* (AHB) in a two-page spread, entitled 'Two Families Share View':

This dual house, at 3 Crown Road., Ivanhoe, was designed by Guilford Bell and Neil Clerehan Pty. Ltd., to house a family and grandparents.

The site sloped to the rear overlook Merri Creek [*misidentified?*] and the Latrobe golf course. The family is Mr and Mrs O. R. Beddison and their children, and the grandparents are Mr and Mrs D. Swift.

As the unit was two-storeyed, the slope was graded to varying levels to minimise the contrast between the rear unit and the single-storeyed front unit occupied by the grandparents. These units were off-set and main rooms placed to the rear to get the view. Both bedrooms and bathrooms of the front flat overlook the garden, so these rooms were given full-height glazed double doors. Toilet and passage of this unit were lit and ventilated by a dome-light, and the kitchen, living and dining rooms open planned.

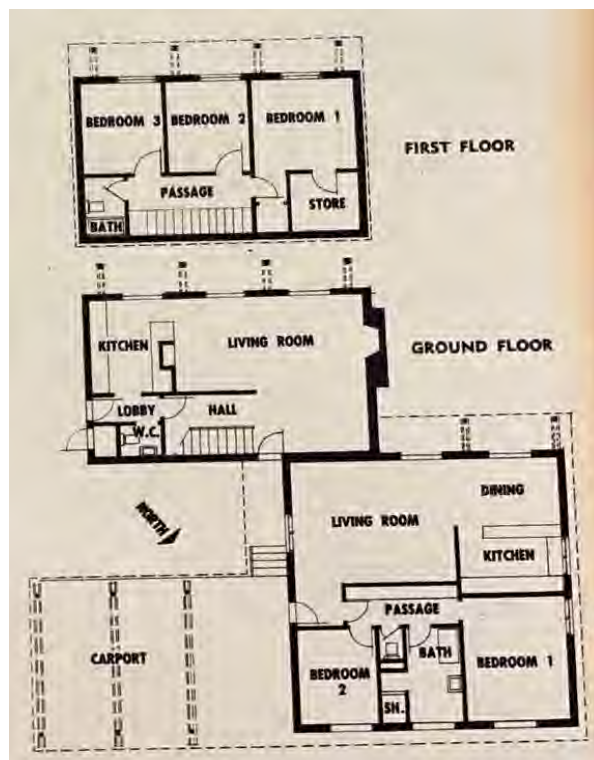
Hall, large living-dining room and kitchen are on the ground floor of the rear unit, and three bedrooms and a store-dressingroom are on the first floor. The store room can convert to an additional shower room later. All necessary pipes and vents have been built in. This storey's hall and dressing room are lit and ventilated by plastic roof domes.

All internal timber is limed natural-finish mountain oak. Wall construction is Besser sandstone veneer. Both units draw hot water and heating from an oil-fired system. There are many built-ins and shelves. Roof is steel decking with fibreglass insulation.

A common soundproofed hatch in the dividing wall between the two units houses the telephones for both units so either phone can be answered from either unit.

Garden paths, and approaches to the terrace at the rear of the front unit have been ramped instead of stepped between the different levels for easy negotiation by Mr and Mrs Swift.<sup>47</sup>

The published floorplan and photographs of *Beddison/Swift House*, extracted from the AHB article, are reproduced below.



'Entry to the rear unit is through the carport and down steps to a lower level. So the architects designed a small courtyard in the space between the carport and the front wall of the unit.'  
(Source: 'Two Families Share View', *AHB*, April 1965, p23)

<sup>45</sup> Edquist, 'Neil Clerehan: A Melbourne Practice', p38; and Philip Goad, 'A Very Private Practice: The Life and Work of Guilford Bell', in Leon van Schaik, ed, *The life work of Guilford bell, architecture 1912-1992*, Bookman Transition Publishing, 1999, p119

<sup>46</sup> Edquist, 'Neil Clerehan: A Melbourne Practice', p37; see also

<sup>47</sup> 'Two Families Share View', *Australian Home Beautiful*, April 1965, pp23-4



Photograph of carport and façade of *Beddison/Swift House* from Crown Road  
Note horizontal timber post box, which is extant, is circled  
(Source: 'Two Families Share View', *AHB*, April 1965, p23)



Photograph of internal front courtyard to carport ceiling  
(Source: 'Two Families Share View', *AHB*, April 1965, p23)



Rear frontage of the two-storey unit from back yard  
(Source: 'Two Families Share View', *AHB*, April 1965, p23)





(Above) Photograph of the Swift kitchen  
(Source: 'Two Families Share View', *AHB*, April 1965, p23)

(Left) Photograph of the Beddison living room, looking towards the kitchen (Source: 'Two Families Share View', *AHB*, April 1965, p23)

The modernist enthusiast Peter Wille (1931-71) also photographed *Beddison/Swift House*, presumably during the 1960s.<sup>48</sup>



Beddison/Swift House from Crown Road  
(Source: Peter Wille, SLV, H91/244/1569)

<sup>48</sup> 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).





Close-up of the entrance of the two-storey block from the carport  
(Source: Peter Wille, SLV, H91.244/1566)



Rear elevation of the Swift's two-storey block – deck since expanded  
(Source: Peter Wille, SLV, H91/244/1567)



Rear of the Beddison's front unit  
(Source: Peter Wille, SLV, H91/244/1565)

### Neil Clerehan (1922-2017)

'One of Melbourne's great architectural figures', Clerehan emerged as a leader of Australia's modern movement during its heyday over the 1950s/1960s.<sup>49</sup> Through his gregariousness, talent for domestic design, sharp architectural and social commentary, and various other roles in education and advocacy, Clerehan played an influential role in shaping postwar architecture, propagating a new 'modern' vision for living. His body of work has been subject to recent major academic study.<sup>50</sup>

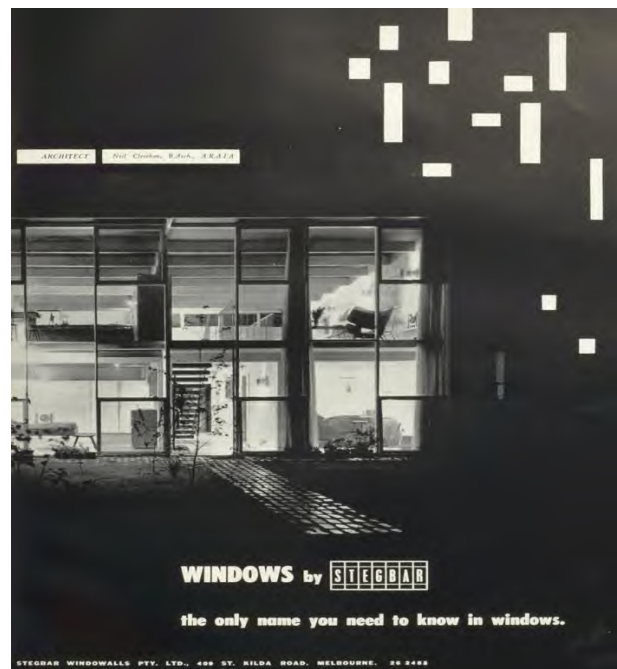
Melbourne born, Clerehan completed his architectural studies at The University of Melbourne in 1950, after war service with the AIF in New Guinea during the Second World War (1942-44). A year before graduating, he commenced solo practice and collaborated with friend Robin Boyd to establish the ground-breaking RVIA Small Homes Service (SHS). Deeply interested in American culture and technology (and "chutzpah"), Clerehan spent 1952 travelling and working in the USA.<sup>51</sup> Upon returning, he resumed designing houses, which remained Clerehan's enduring passion. Through the SHS directorship (succeeding Boyd, between 1953 and 1961), including a weekly column in *The Age*, he cultivated a public profile as a notable architect.<sup>52</sup> In 1955, Clerehan married Sonia Cole, a painter.

After resigning the directorship of the SHS, Clerehan entered into a partnership with another modernist architect, the reserved Guilford Bell (refer to Citation 8, *Purcell House*, for biography). The brief Clerehan & Bell practice (1962-64) produced a small number of important designs, including *Beddison/Swift House*, but creative differences led to an eventual parting of ways.<sup>53</sup>

Clerehan continued to design, whether solo or in partnerships, in a determinedly modernist manner into his 90s.<sup>54</sup> A committed member of the profession, his work was routinely honoured by the fraternity. He was made a Life Fellow of the AIA (1977) and received the President's Prize from the RIA (Victorian Chapter) in 2004. The University of Melbourne bestowed an honorary Doctorate of Architecture upon Clerehan in 2008.<sup>55</sup>



Clerehan (left) and Robin Boyd (right) photographed organising a SHS exhibition, 1953  
(Source: Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd Life*, 1996, p99)



'Stegbar' advertisement, showing Clerehan's first house, slipped into the back end of the book – his work did no feature elsewhere within it (Source: *Best Australian Houses*, F W Chesire, 1961)

<sup>49</sup> Goad, 'Vale Neil Clerehan, 1922-2017', para 1; and Goad, *The Modern House*, Chapter 6, pp61-4

<sup>50</sup> Harriet Edquist, 'Neil Clerehan: A Melbourne Practice', in Edquist and Richard Black, *The Architecture of Neil Clerehan*, RMIT University Press, 2005

<sup>51</sup> Goad, 'Vale Neil Clerehan', para 12

<sup>52</sup> Philip Goad, 'Clerehan, Neil', in Goad and Julie Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p154

<sup>53</sup> Edquist, 'Neil Clerehan: A Melbourne Practice', p41

<sup>54</sup> Goad, 'Vale Neil Clerehan, 1922-2017', para 3

<sup>55</sup> Philip Goad, 'Clerehan, Neil', p155



## 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

Two other designs by Bell & Clerehan were constructed in the municipality:

- *Box House*, 2 Glenard Drive, Eaglemont (part of HO1, identified within the precinct as 'significant') – a single-storey dwelling built in the Griffins'-planned 'Glenard Estate' in 1962 and generally accredited to Clerehan. It has an L-shaped plan based around an internal courtyard, a stepped flat-roof, broad overhanging and boxed eaves, and is constructed of concrete bricks. It features a pared-down aesthetic and highlights an integrated carport supported by four slender pipes with a timber batten ceiling, which confers an ultra-modern character. An important instance of the practice's work but now unsympathetically modified, including the rendering of external walls and alterations to fenestration.



*Box House* – before modifications  
(Source: Mark Strizic, *Cross-Section*, no 142, August 1964)

- *Purcell House*, 17 Hartlands Road, Ivanhoe (recommended for a HO by this Study) – overseen solely by Bell and also constructed in 1963. It has several design similarities with *Beddison/Swift House* but is better understood in the context of Bell's body of work, encapsulating his studied interest in presenting classicised, composed, minimalistic visuals.

Clerehan does not appear to have been undertaken any individual commissions 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'.



*Beddison/Swift House* is on par with Banyule's other accomplished examples of rationalist/'classical' modernism, distinguished by its ability to illustrate Clerehan's particularly self-effacing design approach and aspiration to reform daily 'living patterns'.

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.

## Condition

Good

## 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 (timber floorboards, internal walls with timber battens or plastered, open timber stair)
Tree Controls	Yes (Lemon-scented gum in courtyard and front garden + likely Prickly-leaved Paperback in front garden)
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

## Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



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

## IVANHOE SCOUT HALL

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<b>Address</b>	8A Wallace Street, Ivanhoe
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1939-40
<b>Period</b>	Late Interwar
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Ivanhoe Scout Hall* at 8A Wallace Street, Ivanhoe is significant. It was constructed in 1939-40 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe Scouts to a design from one of its members, Kingston K Sedgfield, an architect for and later partner at Stephenson & Turner. It is currently utilised by the 10<sup>th</sup> Ivanhoe Scouts.

The significant elements are its original rectangular footprint, cross-gabled roof, gabled entry porch, fenestration pattern (excluding non-original window frames) and combination of timber boards (plinth), weatherboard (lower section), and battered sheeting (upper section) to walls.

Later addition elements are not significant.

#### How is it Significant?

*Ivanhoe Scout Hall* is of local historical, representative and social significance to the City of Banyule.

#### Why is it Significant?

*Ivanhoe Scout Hall* is of historical significance as a distinctive marker of scouting in the locality. It was likely the first purpose-built scout hall in the municipality and is the oldest enduring instance of a scout-related building in Banyule. Scouting in Victoria originated in a vigorous British youth movement that proliferated across Australia during the Federation years and has played an

influential role in the lives – both adolescent and adult – of many within the locality. The erection of the substantial hall in the area at the outset of the Second World War, mainly by members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe Scouts (est. 1925), reflects past community activism and illustrates a high point for the organisation. The hall's decidedly 'modern' expression, prepared by its volunteer architect 'King' Sedgfield, preceded the widespread wartime and postwar adoption of a similar pared-down functionalism, especially for community buildings. (Criterion A)

*Ivanhoe Scout Hall* is of representative significance as an early example of 'unpretentious modernism', a design approach that became near-universal in public and private efforts to meet the demand for civic and community facilities in the postwar period. The large size of the hall and its unassuming and functional form reflect this idiom, still in an emergent state at the time of the place's construction. *Ivanhoe Scout Hall* illustrates a more refined image than typically seen (or sought) with later, more standardised scout halls in the municipality through the arrangement of the wall cladding – vertically laid smooth fibre-cement battens with joints concealed by broad strappings above a lower section of weatherboard. The understated but smart visual effect achieved with such basic materials epitomises a key aim of the modern movement. While fabric replacement has recently occurred, along with the removal of the distinctive multi-unit hopper windows, the patterning of the walls to the most visible elevations has been continued, allowing for the overall original presentation of the hall to remain appreciable. (Criterion D)

*Ivanhoe Scout Hall* is of social significance for the sustained attachment demonstrated by local scouts, having served as a focal point for the movement for over 80 years. The legacy of the hall's 'do-it-yourself' construction exemplifies fundamental scouting principles and likely contributes to the contemporary identity of scouts in the area. (Criterion G)

## Description

*Ivanhoe Scout Hall* is situated on a large gently east-west sloping allotment on the north side of an unnamed lane that intersects with Wallace Street. It is bound in the north and east by private residences and to the west by the landscaped recreational environs of Nellie Ibbott Park.<sup>1</sup> The hall runs parallel to the lane and is set close to the northern boundary of the site. There is a gravel car park to the front of the hall with a section of brick pavers to its east. Elsewhere the property is grassed. Various mature species of indigenous/native trees have been planted along the property boundary, which is demarcated by high wire mesh fencing (south and west) or timber palings (north and east). Pedestrian/vehicular entry is provided via double gates from the lane.

The hall is a sizeable structure with a loosely rectangular form comprised of a long single-storey section ('main hall') and two-storey wing (ground floor – 'stage & club lair'; lower ground – 'rover den', 'boys cloak room' and utilities), both with broad gable roofs. Timber bargeboards and a soffit sheathed in fibre-cement sheeting are evident. A small enclosed gabled porch projects from the single-storey wing's east elevation, acting as the main entrance. There is also an original hipped-roof wing attached to the north elevation of the main hall. The skillion-roofed volume to the north-east corner of the hall is a later addition. The roofs are clad in corrugated metal sheeting (likely a replacement). The small 'vent ridge' that ran the roof of the single-storey wing has been lost, although a plain brick chimney remains to the rear roof plane. Metal flues and solar panels (rear roof plane) are non-original.

Excavation activity carried out during construction in the west part of the site enabled the first level of the two-storey wing to match the main hall's ground level. The latter encompasses a raised timber stage at its first storey with additional rooms and facilities to the lower ground floor. Timber stairs to the main hall on the south elevation were later removed and part of the space under the main hall was adapted into a storeroom accessed via a ramp (note timber retaining wall). At the centre of the west elevation is a red brick chimney with soldier course cap. Its external breast is overpainted and has a stepped configuration. There is also another chimney to the northern roof plane that is not visible from the public realm.

In 2021, an array of fabric renewal and external/internal modifications for *Ivanhoe Scout Hall* were undertaken.<sup>2</sup>

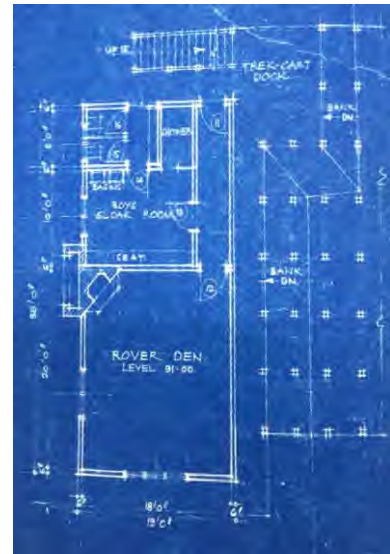
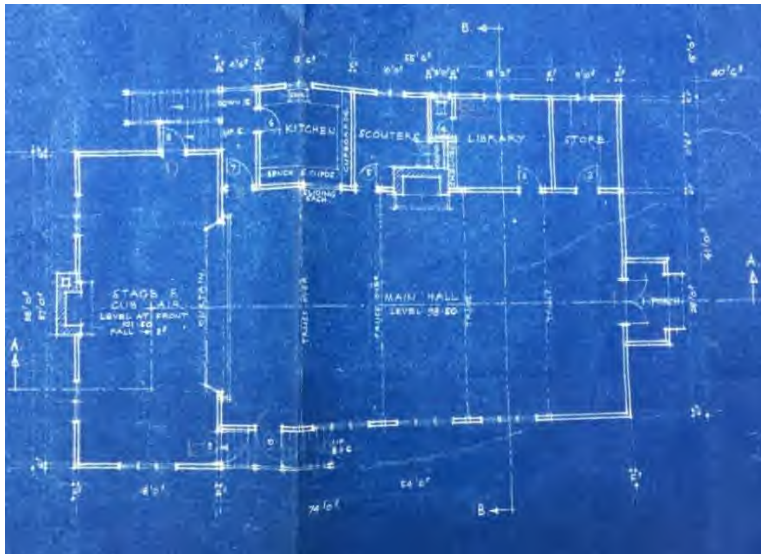
The hall is of battered-framed construction and originally was clad in a combination of painted timber weatherboards (lower part) and fibre-cement battens (remainder) with a plinth of timber boards to the south and north elevations. The sheeting was laid vertically with the overlapping joints covered with wide strapping, creating a flushed appearance. This timber has been replaced by Scyon® Linea weatherboard, while Scyon® Matrix – a lightweight cement composite – has been utilised in place of the cement sheeting. The latter, however, has been laid in a geometric/horizontal pattern comparable to the original. This action,

<sup>1</sup> Nellie Grace Ibbott was a long-term councillor for the City of Heidelberg and held the mayoral office (1943-44), the first woman in Victoria to do so. (Jean Baker, 'Ibbott, Nellie Grace (1889-1970)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1996, available online)

<sup>2</sup> City of Banyule, 8A Wallace Street, *Ivanhoe East – Condition 1 plans*, 08/2/21



along with the continued employment of the weatherboard, retains the hall's overall aesthetic. This new cladding is painted a neutral white, with a dark green utilised for the plinth. The north elevation (the least visible) is clad in Colorbond sheeting. An original small horizontally proportioned hand-painted sign on the south elevation ('2nd Ivanhoe Scout Hall') with scouts insignia has been replaced by a larger sign.



Original ground floor plan (left) and lower ground floor (right), dated August 1939  
(Source: Public Building Files, PROV, VPRS 7882, consignment P0001, unit 1042)



Drawings of original south elevation (left) and east elevation (right)  
(Source: Public Building Files, PROV, VPRS 7882, consignment P0001, unit 1042)

Original windows at *Ivanhoe Scout Hall* are predominantly timber-framed banks comprised of varying units of hoppers with dividing glazing bars (six units to the south elevation, one or two units to the north elevation, and four units to the west elevation). There was also a pair of casements to the lower ground floor (west elevation). These have been replaced with black aluminium-framed slider and fixed windows, albeit of similar proportions with glazing bars that convey something of the previous division. Windows to the upper level of the two-storey wing (x3) and north elevation (x3) have been infilled.

A contemporary metal stair and timber deck with railing have replaced the original timber stair and landing attached to the north elevation, which initially allowed access between the stage and west basement level. The porch entrance has also been widened to allow for the provision of an L-shaped concrete access ramp.

The design of scout halls in Victoria varied widely, from adaptively reused structures to purpose-built, from simple halls to architect-renditions. Nonetheless, most early interwar period scout halls were relatively plain gable-roofed buildings, typically with sparse detailing and clad in timber weatherboards (similar in type to community halls). Over the 1930s, more elaborate halls also appeared; for instance, the crenellated Tudor revival-style premise for *1st Dandenong* (61A Princes Highway, Dandenong, HO49) and some examples of rustic 'log cabin' (*Pakenham Scout Hall*, HO49).

At *Ivanhoe Scout Hall*, the responsible architect, 'King' Sedgfield, adopted a 'modern' design mode for the traditional hall form, emphasised in the clarity of the building's shape and plan, the shedding of applied ornamentation and an unvarnished but elegant use of readily available, low-maintenance materials. This built expression, 'an architectural language of economically lean, functionalist and often aesthetically unpretentious modernism', was utilised extensively during the Second World War by the architects and engineers of the Allied Works Council. Postwar, it evolved into the chief design approach for community buildings, embodying popular and expert associations with social improvement, recreation, and health and hygiene.<sup>3</sup>



View to the west elevation from Nellie Ibbot Park



Facing east from Nellie Ibbot Park

<sup>3</sup> Hannah Lewi, David Nichols, Philip Goad, Julie Willis and Kate Darian-Smith, 'Making the Modern Community', in Lewi and Nichols, eds, *Community: building modern Australia*, UNSW Press, 2010, p3



## 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 of the *Birrarung*/Yarra at Melbourne (est. 1835).<sup>5</sup> However, as part of the 'Heidelberg' district in the Parish of Keelbundora, this area passed rapidly into private hands via an auction in Sydney Town in 1838.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup> 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 mostly undertaken by tenant farmers.<sup>8</sup> This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.<sup>9</sup>

Ivanhoe – its name stemming from Archibald Thom's 'Ivanhoe Estate' – remained a sparsely populated agricultural area until Melbourne's 'Land Boom' in the late 1880s.<sup>10</sup> 'Picturesque' terrain, varied outlooks and the high repute of the broader district drew often well-off newcomers. By the turn of the century, 'Beautiful Ivanhoe' was routinely portrayed as a 'fashionable', 'exclusive locality' of 'model homes'.<sup>11</sup> An improved railway connection to Melbourne in 1901 supported further middle-class growth, instigating 'four decades of slow and relatively affluent suburban sprawl' in the vicinity of Ivanhoe, Eaglemont, and Heidelberg train stations.<sup>12</sup>

During the interwar years, suburban Ivanhoe solidified, although its southern and eastern reaches remained primarily locked up by the expansive 'Hartlands', 'Charterisville', and 'Chelsworth' estates.<sup>13</sup> To navigate the complexities that accompanied the subdivision of these areas (sloping land, curving streets, views) in the postwar period and galvanised by the swelling influence of modernism, many of the new and generally moneyed proprietors sought the services of an architect.<sup>14</sup> By the early 1960s, distinct enclaves of upmarket, modernist design culture were apparent in the southern reaches of Ivanhoe and Ivanhoe East, with the aesthetic and lifestyle reverberations of the modern movement also shaping infill development in the more established environs of the locale.



View near Heidelberg in Victoria, pen and ink drawing, circa 1858  
(Source: Eugene von Guérard, National Gallery of Victoria)

<sup>4</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

<sup>5</sup> James Boyce, 1835: *The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi

<sup>6</sup> 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 reformatting into a Road District (1860), Shire (1871) and then City (1934). It was amalgamated as the City of Banyule in 1994.

<sup>7</sup> Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13

<sup>8</sup> Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

<sup>9</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, sections 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.5, and 2.3.10

<sup>10</sup> Thom's estate designation was inspired by a novel of the same name by Sir Walter Scott (1819).

<sup>11</sup> Ivanhoe & Alphington Progress Society, *Beautiful Ivanhoe: the suburb of model homes and scenic charm*, Model Studio, 1900, SLV

<sup>12</sup> Ivanhoe Station opened in 1888; however, inefficiencies in the Heidelberg-Melbourne railway line initially bedevilled growth.

<sup>13</sup> Ivanhoe grew from roughly 2,000 residents in 1913 to nearly 8,000 by 1933 (*Victorian Year Books*, Australian Bureau of Statistics).

<sup>14</sup> Don Garden, 'Ivanhoe', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008



## Site-specific

The subject land derives from Portion 1 (510 hectares) of the Parish of Keelbundora, purchased (along with portions 2 and 3) by Thomas Walker in 1838. A Sydney-based Scottish banker and philanthrope with an eye for marketable land across the colony, Walker's intention in the Port Phillip District was speculative from the start. He commenced subdividing his acquisitions as early as mid-1839 to enormous profit.<sup>15</sup>

The western half of Portion 1, which incorporates the subject land (Lot 5), was subdivided into multiple parcels and advertised as the 'Glanville Estate' from October 1839: 'Suburban Farms and Villa Sites ... the fertility and beauty of which are not to be surpassed in that region of Fertile Soil and Beautiful Landscape Scenery'.<sup>16</sup> In 1902, most of Lot 5 was subdivided and placed on sale as the 'Ivanhoe Town Estate'.<sup>17</sup> It developed gradually over the Federation and interwar years, chiefly as a residential area, although as depicted in the 1915 MMBW plan,<sup>18</sup> the area also featured three small quarries (possibly municipal), including one adjacent to the subject land (since adapted into the Nellie Ibbott Park).

The existing subject allotment was acquired by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe Scouts in 1939 as the site for a new hall.<sup>19</sup> The Boy Scout movement had been founded in Britain as a youth organisation by Sir Robert Baden-Powell, a British military officer who had achieved international fame for his defence of the town of Mafeking during the Second Boer War. His numerous publications on youth education, particularly *Scouting for Boys* (1908), laid the groundwork for establishing 'The Boys Scout Association' in 1910. Centred around the promotion of practical self-reliance for adolescent males and the cultivation of empire loyalism, the Scouts 'exploded into a world-wide movement' within several years. By late 1908, scout troops were active across Melbourne, including the City of Heidelberg (1<sup>st</sup> Ivanhoe). The 2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe Scouts had been next established in the area in 1925.

A key member of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe Scouts at the time was the architect 'King' Sedgfield. He prepared the design of the scout hall, which spanned six months between 1939 and 1940. The timing was fortunate, as civil building essentially ceased in December 1941 as the strain of war intensified and rationing of materials was introduced. Sedgfield appears to have completed this work independent of his long-term employer, the architectural practice Stephenson & Turner.<sup>20</sup> Contractors Bill and Norman Fox, whose sons were part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe Scouts, undertook the construction with the assistance of a volunteer labour force: '

There were many working bees when boys, old scouts and fathers provided labour which was predominantly unskilled and, with more skill, mothers and daughters provided refreshment for the workers.<sup>21</sup>

In the lead up to the hall's official opening in April 1940, *The Age* promoted the event, framing it as a local triumph:

### COMMUNITY EFFORT AT IVANHOE

One of the finest scout halls in the metropolitan area will be opened at Wallace-street, Ivanhoe, next Saturday by Mr. H. E. Cohen [popular military officer and politician]. The new hall, which will cost £1200, is the result of eleven years work on the part of the group committee of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe troop. In recent months, during the erection of the building, scores of scouts and their fathers have taken part in excavating and laying the foundations, and more recently in lining, painting and fitting up the building and making paths in the ground... The building has a main hall measuring 55 feet by 28 feet, a store, a court of honour room, to be dedicated to the memory of a past member of the troop, the late Reginald Crawford, a scouters' office, kitchen, meeting place for wolf clubs on the stage, and a rover den under the stage.<sup>22</sup>

The opening ceremony for the hall (20 April 1940) was well-attended:

War or no war, the opening was something to celebrate – sister troops marching to drums behind troop flags, visiting packs, CEBS in their distinctive forage caps, scouting "brass", church and civic dignitaries and parents and friends in their best clothes, which mean the obligatory hat for everyone.<sup>23</sup>

Besides scout troop meetings and events, the new hall is known to have hosted a range of uses over the postwar period, from monthly dances and district socials to exhibitions, working bees and meetings.<sup>24</sup> Such diversity of uses appears to remain, with the hall now accommodating the 10<sup>th</sup> Ivanhoe Scout Group.

<sup>15</sup> W Joy, 'Walker, Thomas (1804-1886)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1967, available online

<sup>16</sup> 'Sale by Auction: Land at Port Phillip', *Commercial Journal and Advertiser*, 5 October 1839, p4

<sup>17</sup> 'Ivanhoe Town Estate', *Herald*, 2 October 1901, p4; and *Ivanhoe town estate*, Bruford & Roxburg, 1902, SLV

<sup>18</sup> Refer to MMBW detail plan, Heidelberg, no 2463, dated 1915, SLV, available online

<sup>19</sup> Richard Brooks (compiled), *2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe: some impressions of the first 63 years*, 1989, p1

<sup>20</sup> The title block of the original drawings state: 'Kingston K Sedgfield, Architect, 150 Marshall Street, Ivanhoe' (Public Building Files, PROV, VPRS 7882, consignment P0001, unit 1042)

<sup>21</sup> Brooks, *2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe: some impressions of the first 63 years*, p26

<sup>22</sup> 'Boy Scouts', *Age*, 16 April 1940, p4

<sup>23</sup> Brooks, *2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe: some impressions of the first 63 years*, p26

<sup>24</sup> Sedgfield, 'A Brief History of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe Group', Appendix 1 in Brooks, *2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe: some impressions of the first 63 years*, p100



Hall under construction, 1939  
Note youthful age of the 'labourers'  
(Source: Brooks, 2<sup>nd</sup> *Ivanhoe*, p35)



Timber frame, awaiting cladding, 1939  
(Source: Brooks, 2<sup>nd</sup> *Ivanhoe*, p35)



Partly clad scout hall, 1939  
(Source: Brooks, 2<sup>nd</sup> *Ivanhoe*, p35)





Scout hall, south elevation, circa 1988  
(Source: Brooks, 2<sup>nd</sup> *Ivanhoe*, p88)



Scout hall, south and west elevations, circa 1988  
(Source: Brooks, 2<sup>nd</sup> *Ivanhoe*, p88)





1945 aerial photograph, 2<sup>nd</sup> Scout Hall identified by the red arrow  
(Source: Ringwood AIC, Photo-Map 849-AIA, Zone 7, The University of Melbourne)

### Kingston Knight Sedgfield (1910-96)

Born in Ivanhoe, Kingston Knight Sedgfield (1910-96) was an early teenage participant with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe Scouts and played ongoing leadership roles, including preparing a brief history of the group in 1950.<sup>25</sup> Known as 'King' Sedgfield locally, he was an employee of Stephenson & Meldrum (Stephenson & Turner in Victoria from 1937) – a prolific and progressive architectural office ("the colossus" of Australian architecture<sup>26</sup>). Where he rose from a draftsman to partner by at least 1950.<sup>27</sup> Sedgfield was highlighted within one of the office's celebratory publications as one of several men ('and one woman') who 'began and ended their careers as partners in the loyal service of the firm'.<sup>28</sup> The nature of Sedgfield role within Stephenson & Turner's 'complex team of designers, project managers and business people' is not known, nor is the extent of his private design work. It has been noted that he may have designed other scout facilities in New South Wales.<sup>29</sup>



Partner portrait of Sedgfield, circa 1970  
(Source: Stephenson & Turner 1920-1970, Melbourne, 1970, np)

<sup>25</sup> Ancestry.com.au; and Brooks, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ivanhoe: some impressions of the first 63 years, p1

<sup>26</sup> Rowan Wilken in Philip Goad, Wilen & Julie Willis, eds, *Australian modern: the architecture of Stephenson & Turner*, Melbourne University Publications, 2004, p3

<sup>27</sup> Australian Military Forces, *Attestation Form for Persons Voluntarily Enlisted in the Militia Forces*, National Archives of Australia, B4747 (states Sedgfield's employment status in 1929); and John Shaw, *Sir Arthur Stephenson, Australian Architect*, 1987 (photograph of partners in 1950 and the early 1960s, both including Sedgfield)

<sup>28</sup> Shaw, *Sir Arthur Stephenson, Australian Architect*, p133

<sup>29</sup> Wilken, *Australian modern: the architecture of Stephenson & Turner*, p6; and community supplied information via the *Banyule Heritage Place Nomination Form*, 2020

## Thematic Context

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

- Theme 6: Community and cultural life
- Theme 7: Recreation and sport

## Comparative Analysis

Two other halls in the municipality that were utilised by the scouts are subject are included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay for Banyule, although one is no longer extant:

- *1st Eaglemont Scout Hall*, 20 Irvine Road, Ivanhoe (part of HO168, albeit unspecified) – a smaller gable-roofed and timber-framed hall clad in painted corrugated metal sheeting, situated on the edge of Chelsworth Park. Originally, constructed around 1940 at the Simpson Army Barracks (Watsonia) as a prefabricated 'P' Series army hut. It was relocated to the current location in 1958 and fitted out/repurposed as a scout hall two years later.
- *Sea Scout Hall*, 2 Norman Street, Ivanhoe (HO189) – an elongated weatherboard hall with a gabled roof constructed in circa 1917, initially for a local rifle club. Modified in 1930 and partially rebuilt (1951) subsequently. In 2015, the building was demolished due to fire damage.

There are several scout halls in the municipality that are not subject to a heritage overlay.<sup>30</sup> The majority of these were purpose-built over the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, remain relatively intact, and present as rationalised, utilitarian halls – some sizeable – with standardised elements, including low-pitched gabled roofs, concrete or red brick walls (many overpainted/graffitied) and clerestory windows. All are situated within park or reserve settings, some belonging to small clusters of community buildings. Broadly, while these buildings reflect the growth and continued vigour of the scout movement across the district, they are not distinctive designs like the *Ivanhoe Scout Hall*, particularly within their period of origin. Furthermore, the construction of the late 20<sup>th</sup>-century halls does not appear to reflect the same extent of direct participation by the local scout troop as the *Ivanhoe Scout Hall*.

## Intactness

Despite fabric replacement and the removal of the hopper windows, *Ivanhoe Scout Hall* remains reasonably intact and interpretable as to its original aesthetic.

## 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	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

<sup>30</sup> For instance: *Bundoora Scouts*, 20 Noorong Avenue, Bundoora; *Banyule District Scouts*, Turnham Avenue, Rosanna; *Heidelberg Scout Group*, 31 Outhwaite Road, Heidelberg Heights; *1st Ivanhoe Sea Scouts*, 49 Hawker Street, Ivanhoe; *Viewbank Scout Group*, 96 Rutherford Road, Viewbank; *Rosanna Scout Group*, north-east of St James Road and Manton Street, Heidelberg; 30 McNamara Street, Macleod; *Watsonia Scout Group*, AK Line Reserve, Watsonia; *1st Lower Plenty Scout Group*, corner of Maskell Crescent and Para Road (Alma Play Park playground), Lower Plenty; and *Montmorency*, Petrie Park; and *Greenhills Scout Centre*, 37 St Helena Road, Greensborough.

## Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



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



## WILLIS HOUSE

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<b>Address</b>	10 Gruyere Crescent, Ivanhoe East
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1950
<b>Period</b>	Postwar
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Willis House* at 10 Gruyere Crescent, Ivanhoe East is significant. The area remained essentially rural well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the site derives from the Charteris Estate subdivision of 1939, which was mostly developed after WWII. The extant house was constructed in 1950 as a family home for and likely by Albert Alexander Willis, to a design by the architect Robin Boyd, then in solo practice as well as directing the Small Homes Service. Albert and his wife, Rosalind, a singer, remained in residence into at least the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The significant elements are its cuboid form, including painted brick walls with extensive section of grille ('hit and miss') brickwork to the lower level of the façade, screened entry, stained timber boards to the entry canopy, large timber-framed windows, and timber front door. The small laundry block to the rear is also original and significant.

The cream-brick garage with concrete lintel, associated wall and timber pedestrian entry to the rear boundary along Gruyere Lane and cypress trees to the front west boundary both likely date to the late 1950s. These elements contribute to the significance of *Willis House*, as do key landscaping elements in the front gardens, such as the lava rocks – to both low retaining walls and garden bed edging – and random stone paving.

## How is it Significant?

*Willis House* is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

## Why is it Significant?

*Willis House* is of historical significance as an early postwar design by Robin Boyd, one of postwar Australia's foremost architect and design commentators. Its 1950 construction in the southern reaches of Ivanhoe East foreshadowed the emergence of this locale – which had remained sparsely developed farmland into the postwar period – as a notable concentration of architect-designed modernist residences over the mid-to-late part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The circumstances of *Willis House*'s construction demonstrate the high cost and/or difficulty to procure labour in the years immediately following the Second World War as it was likely constructed by its owner Albert Alexander Willis, a (former) Master Builder who at the time of purchase of the land in 1948 was employed as a leather merchant. (Criterion A)

*Willis House* is of aesthetic significance as a fine, earliest modernist house in the municipality. An array of its elements, such as its cuboid form, near-flat roof, partly screened entry, unusually extensive areas of glazing (near fully glazed band to the main level), restrained articulation and lack of decoration, represent a dramatic break with the mass of pre-war suburban housing characterised by pitched roof forms and elaborately detailed exteriors. The design also takes considered advantage of its site and location – a prerequisite of good modernist design – in that, while south-facing, there are large windows with minimal framing divisions to the front living areas that capture fine views of the river valley opposite. (Criterion E)

## Description

The *Willis House* is located in the central part of Gruyere Crescent, a gravel road that defines the southern edge of the residential part of Ivanhoe East. The house is located at the southern end of an elongated block, which overlooks the *Birrung/Yarra River* near Burke Road. The parcel of land has an area of about 808m<sup>2</sup> but is narrower at the north end, where it backs onto Gruyere Lane (about 13 metres as compared to about 19 metres at the southern end). The land also slopes about 5 metres across the length of the site (about 51 metres).

*Willis House* is widely visible and is set back about 10 metres from the front boundary, which is defined by a low, loosely configured wall of lava rocks. Much of the front yard is a lawn with a eucalypt to the east end within a garden bed primarily consisting of agapanthus, similarly edged with lava rocks. There is a part concrete driveway with a central section of crazy paving to the west end (likely Castlemaine slate or the like, lain in an irregular formation) adjacent to a row of five established cypresses. A similar stone has been employed to the garden bed in front of the house and the adjacent stairs and edge of the lawn area.





The house's overall footprint (including the front porch and rear patio) is rectangular, but the internal plan is T-shaped.<sup>1</sup> Due to the slope, there is a partial basement/lower level with a garage (roller door), workshop, and storerooms that has an extensive grille ('hit and miss' brickwork). The latter is a common feature of Robin Boyd's work, and other architects during the postwar period, though rarely utilised in such an extensive and prominent manner as in this instance. Three piers are visible behind the screen.

The form of the house is essentially cuboid with a near flat or low skillion roof. The roof is clad in metal sheeting behind a wide timber fascia with a squat chimney at the east end. It projects over the entrance to form a tapered canopy, with a soffit lined in stained timber boards. The walls are brick and painted white, as are the timber-framed openings, though the original wall finish not known. The brickwork was possibly bagged, a finish which Boyd commonly employed during the early 1950s (for instance, at the nearby *Stone House*, HO110). The entry stairs are concealed behind a wall that extends out from the gridded section.

The main upper-level front wall of *Willis House* is almost entirely glazed. The extent to which would have been noteworthy at the time of construction. Under the influence of postwar modernism, there was a general preference with contemporary planning to have a relatively blank façade, primarily as a means of creating privacy. The employment, at this stage, of such large panes of glass (that is, comprising few glazing bars) was less typical for a private residence. In this case, Boyd combined these elements to provide unimpeded views of the Yarra corridor, creating a picture window of the landscape while achieving some privacy with the screened entry wall for the stair. The fact that Gruyere Crescent is (now at least) a no-through road also likely factored into his decision-making. The visible part of the entry above the screen wall consists of a painted timber board door with sidelights.

While not evident from the public domain, there are four small square windows along the west elevation and a door to the east side. The rear/north wall is mostly glazed in a similar manner to the façade.



Front, showing extent of concrete paving, and areas of random stone/crazy paving

The floor plan has bedrooms along the western side with living areas to the east end, opening onto a rear patio. The central fireplace, with cut corner, has a curved rear wall and hearth clad in bricks. Walls and ceilings are lined with plaster sheeting,

<sup>1</sup> '10 Gruyere Crescent, Ivanhoe East', realestate.com.au, August 2015, [www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-ivanhoe+east-120309157](http://www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-ivanhoe+east-120309157)



though there are likely original stained timber elements, including partition walls and cabinetry and/or joinery in some areas. The kitchen cabinetry likely dates to the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A separate laundry block is located in the rear yard near the eastern boundary. It is designed in a similar mode to the house and to the south side features a large, fixed window with a band of louvres.

Extending most of the rear boundary (Gruyere Lane) length is an original cream brick wall, which has a concrete lintel over the double-width garage door and a timber board pedestrian door. To the east is a section of metal sheeting, set back from another skillion roof structure.



Gruyere Lane  
(Source: Google Street View)



*Willis House* is an early example of a modernist house defined by its flat/low pitched roof form, which represented a distinct break with the typical suburban norm of a gabled and or hipped roof. Other key aspects of the postwar modern movement illustrated by the house is its conscious response to the site conditions, such as solar access, privacy and views.

Around 1950, Boyd employed some varied or compartmentalised footprints before exploring a more regimented and modular approach to planning under the sway of the prevalent International Style. The inclusion of an unusually large window without/minimal divisions is reminiscent of the Wood House at 12-14 Tannock Street, North Balwyn (1949-50), which was extended twice by Boyd in 1959 and 1971.

## 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.<sup>2</sup> 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 (est. 1835) downstream of the *Birrarung/Yarra* at Melbourne.<sup>3</sup> However, as part of the 'Heidelberg' district in the Parish of Keelbundora, this area passed rapidly into private hands via an auction in Sydney Town in 1838.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup> 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 mostly undertaken by tenant farmers.<sup>6</sup> This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.<sup>7</sup>

Ivanhoe – its name stemming from Archibald Thom's 'Ivanhoe Estate' – remained a sparsely populated agricultural area until Melbourne's 'Land Boom' in the late 1880s.<sup>8</sup> 'Picturesque' terrain, varied outlooks and the high repute of the broader district drew often well-off newcomers. By the turn of the century, 'Beautiful Ivanhoe' was routinely portrayed as a 'fashionable', 'exclusive locality' of 'model homes'.<sup>9</sup> An improved railway connection to Melbourne in 1901 supported further middle-class growth, instigating 'four decades of slow and relatively affluent suburban sprawl' in the vicinity of Ivanhoe, Eaglemont, and Heidelberg train stations.<sup>10</sup>

During the interwar years, suburban Ivanhoe solidified, although its southern and eastern reaches remained primarily locked up by the expansive 'Hartlands', 'Charterisville', and 'Chelsworth' estates.<sup>11</sup> To navigate the complexities that accompanied the subdivision of these areas (sloping land, curving streets, views) in the postwar period and galvanised by the swelling influence of modernism, many of the new and generally moneyed proprietors sought the services of an architect.<sup>12</sup> By the early 1960s, distinct enclaves of upmarket, modernist design culture were apparent in the southern reaches of Ivanhoe and Ivanhoe East, with the aesthetic and lifestyle reverberations of the modern movement also shaping infill development in the more established environs of the locale.



View near Heidelberg in Victoria, pen and ink drawing, circa 1858  
(Source: Eugene von Guérard, National Gallery of Victoria)

<sup>2</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

<sup>3</sup> James Boyce, 1835: *The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13

<sup>6</sup> Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

<sup>7</sup> 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

<sup>8</sup> Thom's estate designation was inspired by a novel of the same name by Sir Walter Scott (1819).

<sup>9</sup> Ivanhoe & Alphington Progress Society, *Beautiful Ivanhoe: the suburb of model homes and scenic charm*, Model Studio, 1900, SLV

<sup>10</sup> Ivanhoe Station opened in 1888; however, inefficiencies in the Heidelberg-Melbourne railway line initially bedevilled growth.

<sup>11</sup> Ivanhoe grew from roughly 2,000 residents in 1913 to nearly 8,000 by 1933 (*Victorian Year Books*, Australian Bureau of Statistics).

<sup>12</sup> Don Garden, 'Ivanhoe', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008

## Site-specific

The subject allotment derives from Portion 2 of the Parish of Keelbundora, a roughly 420-hectare holding purchased (along with portions 1 and 3) by Thomas Walker in 1838. A Sydney-based Scottish banker and philanthrope with an eye for marketable land across the colony, Walker's intention in the Port Philip District was speculative from the start. He commenced subdividing his acquisitions as early as mid-1839 to enormous profit.<sup>13</sup>

In the resulting sales, Portion 2 was carved up into multiple large estates. The subject land formed part of a roughly 33-hectare farm purchased by one of the first surveyors of the district, William Wedge Darke, and known as 'Waverly'. Darke appears to have developed this property rapidly, for at its sale in December 1839, it was noted as cleared, fenced, and under cultivation with a weatherboard residence.<sup>14</sup> Ultimately, Waverly was incorporated into Captain Sylvester John Brown's (the original spelling was 'Brown', the 'e' was added later by his son) considerable 'Hartlands' estate. Brown was a onetime shipmaster in the East India Company who had made a small fortune in Sydney through whaling and trade.<sup>15</sup> (He was also the father of multifarious Thomas Alexander Browne, celebrated during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as the novelist 'Rolfe Boldrewood'.) He made Hartlands his familial seat in 1840, cultivating the flats and socialising with the area's gentry.<sup>16</sup>

However, within a few years, the colonial economy's worsening conditions forced the foreclosure of Hartlands – the stress of which shattered Brown Snr. A fortunate marriage between his daughter and a relative of Walker (the mortgage holder) enabled the debt to be cleared through the partial sale of the estate in 1853 (namely, the western portion, establishing Maltravers Road) and the 'Brownes of Hartlands' were able to reoccupy the remainder of the traduced estate.<sup>17</sup> They remained there until the mid-1860s, departing in the wake of their residence's destruction by arson, after which the holding was leased agriculturally.<sup>18</sup>

The infamous 'Land Boom' syndicate, the Trustees, Executors & Agency Company, acquired most of the southeast segment of Portion 2 in 1889, including a large section of the former Hartlands estate, instigating intensive subdivision but sluggish development.<sup>19</sup>

By June 1928, a holding consisting of about 6 hectares had been acquired by the Trustees Executors & Agency Company and the viticulturist, François Robert de Castella, then an occupant of *Chartersville*.<sup>20</sup> This property included all the land between Burke Road North (west), Gruyere Crescent (south), The Boulevard (east), and McArthur Road (north). It was advertised as the 'Charteris Estate' and split into two subdivisions. A few lots gradually sold from September. The subject property formed part of the larger section.<sup>21</sup> At this time, according to a contemporary aerial photograph, much of Burke Road North had yet to be laid out and the area between Lower Heidelberg Road and the Yarra presented as cleared farmland.<sup>22</sup>

The subject allotment (no 10) was one of 40 home sites offered for sale in March 1939. The location was noted as the 'finest hill on the river boulevard'.<sup>23</sup> A description of the sale follows:

Good prices were obtained at the auction sale of 40 allotments in the Charteris Estate, East Ivanhoe ... About 600 persons attended .... The estate is bounded by the Boulevard, on the north side of the Yarra River, opposite Burke road bridge, and has an extensive outlook over Camberwell and North Balwyn.<sup>24</sup>

All 40 lots were sold at auction.<sup>25</sup> In May 1939, the subject land was transferred to Ernest William Capuano, an engineer and (company) director of Elizabeth Street.<sup>26</sup> Around this time, the City of Heidelberg had issued a by-law allowing for the construction of brick veneer houses (previously frowned upon) in the area provided the floor area exceeded the prescribed

<sup>13</sup> W Joy, 'Walker, Thomas (1804-1886)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1967, available online

<sup>14</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and its People*, p34

<sup>15</sup> He was also the father of multifarious Thomas Alexander Browne, celebrated during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as the novelist 'Rolfe Boldrewood'.

<sup>16</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and its People*, pp31-2

<sup>17</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and its People*, pp41-2

<sup>18</sup> 'Incendiarism', *Australasian*, 15 April 1865, p6

<sup>19</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 2142, folio 233

<sup>20</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 5435, folio 947

<sup>21</sup> LP12704. The SLV has several holdings relating to the Charteris Estate, most of which are not available on-line. The name of the estate was being used by 1916 for sales of land west of Burke Road North.

<sup>22</sup> Landata, Project no 131, Run 17, Frame 3328, December 1931

<sup>23</sup> Age, 11 March 1939, p3

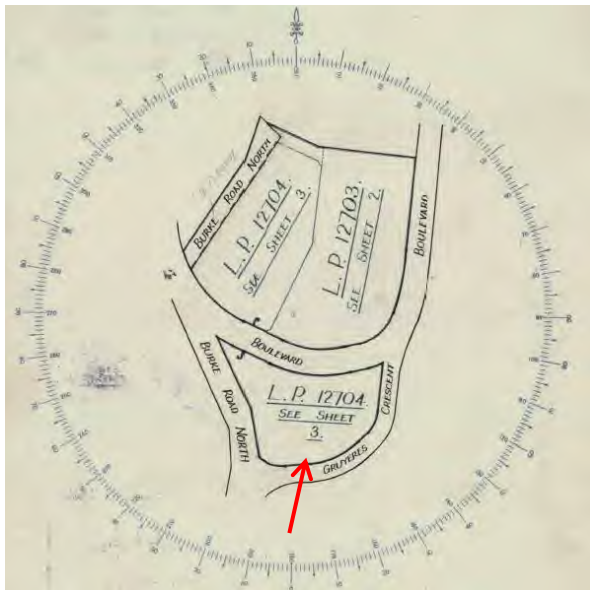
<sup>24</sup> 'East Ivanhoe Sale', *Argus*, 27 March 1939, p2

<sup>25</sup> 'The Week in Real Estate', *Herald*, 29 March 1939, p22

<sup>26</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 6302, folio 247

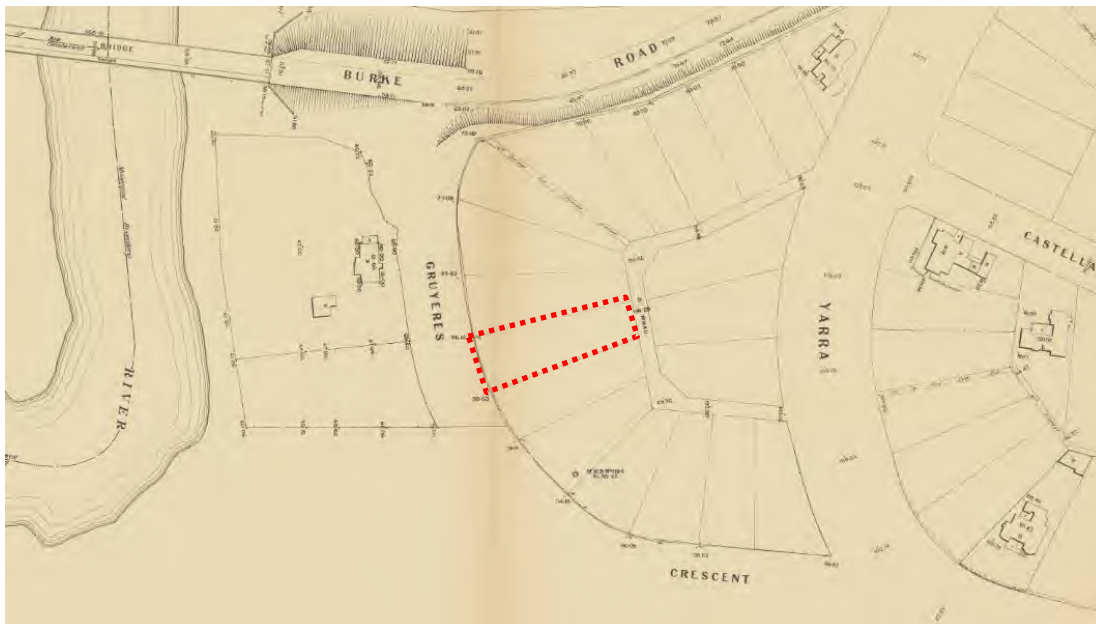


minimum by 15 per cent.<sup>27</sup> However, the official declaration of war in September and the virtual cessation of private building from December 1940, together with postwar restrictions and rationing, appear to have delayed development at the property.



Charteris Estate subdivision, 1928, showing the two distinct parts  
Approximate location of Willis House is indicated by the red arrow  
(Source: Certificate of Title, vol 5435, folio 947)

A 1941 MMBW plan shows that no construction had occurred along Gruyere Crescent, which in reality had not even been established (see 1945 aerial photograph below), although a few lots to the north had been developed. Construction in Gruyere Crescent only started in earnest during the late 1940s, possibly buoyed by the provision of sewerage in Ivanhoe East in mid-1949.<sup>28</sup>



MMBW detail plan 4825, dated 1941  
Subject allotment outlined in dashed red – north is to right of frame  
(Source: SLV)

<sup>27</sup> 'Brick Veneer Houses', *Recorder* (Port Pirie, SA), 6 June 1940, p4

<sup>28</sup> *Argus*, 13 July 1949, p20



1945 aerial photograph, showing approximate location of subject site  
(Source: Ringwood AIC, Zone 7, Photo-map 849-a1, The University of Melbourne)

In November 1948, the title was transferred to Albert Alexander Willis of Dickens Street, Elwood, then a married leather merchant.<sup>29</sup> Willis had been born in 1909 in Clifton Hill. He had served in the Militia Forces from 1926 to 1934, enlisting in the Citizen Air Force of the RAAF in October 1942. At that time, he described himself as a 'Master Builder':

with six years practical experience in the construction of all types of domestic structures from timber framed dwellings to three storey brick residences including the preparation of plans and specifications.<sup>30</sup>

Willis was awarded the Pacific Star for his service in 1945. His wife, Rosalind, was a singer who had studied at the Sydney Conservatorium. References to her activities were frequently noted in the 'Society' sections of the daily newspapers.

The *Willis House* was constructed in 1950.<sup>31</sup> The residence was an early commission for the eminent architect Robin Boyd,<sup>32</sup> then in his early thirties and in solo practice while also running the RVIA Small Homes Service which provided a wide range of inexpensive architect-designed plans. It seems likely that *Willis House* was designed during 1949 as Boyd spent much of 1950 travelling in Europe with his wife.<sup>33</sup>

No drawings or other documentation relating to this project has been unearthed.<sup>34</sup> This lack makes it probable that *Willis House* was neither documented to working drawings nor supervised by Boyd. This circumstance may have arisen as Willis – a former/current (unclear) contractor – likely undertook the build himself. Owner-builders were widespread in the postwar years, as professional builders were expensive and difficult to procure.

<sup>29</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 6302, folio 247. Willis had married Rosalind Mary Spriggs in Balmain (Sydney) in 1932 in what appears to have been a military ceremony. One contemporary description ran: 'an arch of swords was formed by fellow-officers as the bride and groom left the church'. ('Arch of Steel', *Sun* (Sydney), 24 December 1932, p7)

<sup>30</sup> NAA, series A9300 (RAAF Officers Personnel Files, 1921-1948), barcode 5241738, Service Number – 119623

<sup>31</sup> Valuation record provided by the City of Banyule.

<sup>32</sup> This claim was made in the 2015 sale notice. Correspondence with the Robin Boyd Foundation, 10 March 2021. An inspection by noted authorities on Boyd – Tony Lee and Phillip Goad – at the time of the sale confirmed it was likely.

<sup>33</sup> Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd: A Life*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1995, pp108-111

<sup>34</sup> Banyule Council have no drawings, etc. No record of this house is evident in the *Grounds, Romberg and Boyd collection*, MS 133363, [SLV] or is held by the Robin Boyd Foundation (Correspondence with RBF, 10 March 2021)



Albert Alexander Willis  
(Source: NAA, series A9300)



Miss Rosalind Spriggs  
(Source: *Sydney Mail*, 18 January 1933, p20)

Neither Alexander or Rosalind Willis was listed at the subject address in the Victorian electoral rolls until 1955 or in the *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria* until at least 1960.<sup>35</sup> However, the extant footprint of *Willis House* is evident in a 1954 aerial photograph, along with the laundry block, although the garage to the rear lane appears absent. The residence's primary roof shows a dark colouring, suggesting it was surfaced with 'Malthoid' (bituminous felt), a material Boyd utilised extensively in the absence of steel sheeting that could clad flat/low-pitched roofs. Malthoid became notorious for its failure under Melbourne's intense UV radiation. This aerial photograph also depicts several other completed houses in Gruyere Crescent. Most of these remain but are of a markedly different ilk to the Willis House, illustrating more conventional and common cream-brick veneer designs with pitched roofs.



1954 aerial photograph  
*Willis House* is indicated by the red arrow  
Note the unformed nature of Gruyere Crescent  
(Source: Landata, Project no 174, Run 15, Frame 75)

<sup>35</sup> Victorian electoral roll, Division of Batman, Subdivision of Ivanhoe. Neither Albert or Mary Willis were listed along Gruyere Crescent in 1952 or 1953. The 1954 edition was not available at the SLV. *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria*, various editions.



The garage to Gruyere Lane was likely built during the latter part of the 1950s as suggest by the cream brick palette. Similarly, the cypress trees to the front west boundary are also not evident on the 1954 aerial but as well-established specimens, were likely planted soon after. No other major changes are known to have been undertaken at the *Willis House*.

The residence appears to have been envisioned as the permanent postwar family home for Albert and Rosalind, after raising their two children at the site, remained in occupation until at least 1990.<sup>36</sup>

### Robin Boyd (1919-71)

Robin Gerard Penleigh Boyd was one of Australia's pre-eminent architects, cultural critics and public educators. His prominence and influence were such that he was one of the few architects to have become a household during and after the postwar period, attaining a broad reputation – rare for his profession – as a public intellectual. His life and work have been subject to comprehensive academic review.<sup>37</sup>

Born into the famous Melbourne artistic family, Boyd's father Penleigh was a highly regarded landscape painter who designed and built the family home, *The Robins*, in North Warrandyte in 1913. His mother Edith Susan (*née* Anderson) was also an accomplished artist, especially at drawing.<sup>38</sup>

After Boyd's father's death in 1923, the family moved to a flat in Toorak then a brick bungalow in East Malvern from where he undertook his secondary school education. He studied architecture at Melbourne Technical College (now RMIT) and the University of Melbourne before being articled to the leading practice of A & K Henderson. Boyd's burgeoning interest in modernism often put him at loggerheads with the conservative forces in the profession, especially through his nascent critiquing activities in *Smudges*. Boyd worked as an assistant for (Sir) Roy Grounds during the late 1930s.

In 1941, Boyd married Patricia (*née* Madder) and served in Queensland and Papua New Guinea during the Second World War. Subsequently, he began solo practice and entered into a short-lived, unofficial partnership with Kevin Petherbridge and Francis Bell as Associated Architects. Between 1947 and 1953, he became the founding director of the pioneering and inventive RVIA Small Homes Service, which provided contemporary architectural outcomes to the public at an affordable price. The services support by the *Age* newspaper provided Boyd with a popular weekly column and, over hundreds of pithy but pointed articles, he projected his vision of urban design, taste and 'modern' living into the public discourse.<sup>39</sup> At this time, Boyd designed his first house in Camberwell in 1947 and published the first of several provocative books, *Victorian Modern*. Other publications now regarded as classics include *Australia's Home* (1952) and *The Australian Ugliness* (1960).

In 1953, Boyd formed the partnership of a generation – Grounds, Romberg & Boyd – with Roy Burman Grounds and Swiss-trained émigré architect Frederick Romberg, though they tended to work separately. This resolutely modernist practice dissolved in 1962 with the bitter wrangle over the National Gallery of Victoria and Cultural Centre commission, which was taken by Grounds. Romberg & Boyd continued until Boyd's sudden death.<sup>40</sup> His awards and honours were numerous.

Boyd's celebrated architectural output was prodigious and was almost exclusively residential. Several of his houses are seminal modernist works and he explored a range of ideas about enclosure with them. He is famed for the singularity of many of his designs, including his second home in Toorak of 1957, which has been purchased as museum/design foundation.

### 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

<sup>36</sup> Albert and Rosalind became joint proprietors in 1963 (Certificate of Title, vol 6302, folio 247). After Rosalind's death in 1989, Albert appears to have remained at the site (Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Registration no. 17003/1989, [ancestry.com.au](http://ancestry.com.au)).

<sup>37</sup> The literature on Boyd is extensive – Serle, *Robin Boyd: A Life* is the definitive biography; see also 'Robin Boyd: Special Issue', *Transition*, no 38, 1992; and Goad, 'Boyd, Robin', in Goad and Julie Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp100-2

<sup>38</sup> Marjorie J Tipping, 'Boyd, Theodore Penleigh (1890–1923)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1979, available online

<sup>39</sup> Neil Clerehan, 'Boyd, Robin Gerard (1919–1971)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1993, available online

<sup>40</sup> Philip Goad, 'Grounds, Romberg & Boyd', *Melbourne Architecture*, 1999, pp250-1

## Comparative Analysis

Four houses designed by Boyd are currently included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in Banyule. Three of these heritage places date to the mid-1950s when he was part of the practice of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd (HO110, HO148, HO160). The other, *Featherston House* (HO65), was constructed in 1968 and represented a different phase of his output.

*Willis House* pre-dates the mid-1950s group by about four years and is representative of Boyd's postwar work as a solo practitioner. Boyd's other known projects in the municipality are shop/supermarket at 73 Haig Street, West Heidelberg (1954, since demolished) and *Burgess House*, Ivanhoe (1965), which alterations have severely compromised.

The following HOs are broadly comparable to *Willis House*:

- *Victor & Peggy Stone House*, 22 Mount Eagle Road, Ivanhoe, 1954 (HO110) – obscured from the street with a garden designed by Ellis Stones, this two-storey house is also located on a sloping site. Much of the façade is blank with a combined entry canopy and carport. The brickwork was bagged and there were brise-soleil (sunscreens) to the large rear window wall, which took in the views to the east.
- *Holford House*, 14 Hardy Terrace, Ivanhoe, 1955 (HO148) – also located on a steep slope, *Holford House* explored a combination of key ideas or formats he explored at this time, encompassing a parasol roof with a U-shaped pod beneath about a central courtyard. This house similarly has a carport to the front and incorporates breeze block grille/screens into the bagged brick walls.
- *Joseph Simpson House*, 35 Douglas Street, Rosanna 1958 (HO160) – located on a tapering corner site and partly obscured, it similarly has an elongated form with salmon brick walls to the most visible parts of the site and is largely glazed otherwise. The beams of the roof framing are less prominent, with a fascia across their ends and a panel to the upper part of the wall so while the walls are tall, they are not full height and have a different unit configuration.
- *Featherston House*, 22 The Boulevard, Ivanhoe (HO65) – designed by Robin Boyd in 1968 for Grant and Mary Featherstone, notable industrial and furniture designers, it received a posthumous citation in the RAIA (Victoria) awards of 1972. This iconic house of tan brick with reinforced concrete floors is defined by a series of elevated platforms to a large 'garden room' featuring a full, double-height window wall to the rear. From the street, it has an unassuming presence, with a garage effectively screening it.

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'.

Only one example – *Woodburn House*, 1/11 Hughes Street, Montmorency (HO159) – predates the *Willis House*. It designed in 1948 by architecture student William Woodburn in mudbrick on a concrete raft slab (an early example thereof) and was praised for its approach to the materials shortages by Boyd. It has a flat roof with large banks of windows.

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.

## Intactness

Highly 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 (bagged brickwork)
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

**Extent of Heritage Overlay**

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



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



## PURCELL HOUSE

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<b>Address</b>	17 Hartlands Road, Ivanhoe East
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1963
<b>Period</b>	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Purcell House* at 17 Hartlands Road, Ivanhoe is significant to the City of Banyule. It was designed as a family home for Noel Brian Purcell and Margaret Therese Purcell in 1962 by Guilford Bell, then in partnership with Neil Clerehan (Bell & Clerehan). The house, carport and eastern boundary wall were constructed in 1963. At this time, Gordon Ford designed and laid out the front garden. Bell later designed the rear courtyard, including pool and changeroom, and east elevation canopy above the entrance when in solo practice in 1971.

The elements of significance are the H-shaped plan, the west-facing internal courtyard, flat roof and steel decking cladding, boxed eaves, timber-lined soffit, brick chimney, skylights, box gutters and concealed downpipes, walls of unpainted Monier Besser concrete blocks, timber pergola, all timber-framed external openings (sliding doors, fixed glazing), entrance door and cantilevered canopy, white painted/vine-covered brick wall to the east perimeter, and rear carport.

The original layout is generally significant, as are some internal finishes and elements – specifically mountain ash ceilings and walls of exposed concrete blocks or vertically laid timber boarding, and a coverable fireplace in the living room.

Also significant is the layout of the bush style front garden – namely, the arrangement of lawn, front and side boundary plantings, rockery situated forward of the dwelling's façade, and side-situated gravelled driveway. Some specific landscape elements are significant, particularly individual or grouped weathered boulders and the Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*), flanked by Lemon-

scented gums (*Corymbia citriodora*) situated to the front boundary. The pair of Lemon-scented gums to the west boundary of the front garden are contributory to the setting.

The rear courtyard, including swimming pool, paving, enclosing timber screen, and change room, are complementary to *Purcell House*.

Changes instigated by designers other than Bell are not significant, including contemporary additions to the 1971 changeroom at the rear of the site.

## How is it Significant?

*Purcell House* is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

## Why is it Significant?

*Purcell House* is of historical significance as a noteworthy residential design by the architect Guilford Bell, the elusive, pre-eminent practitioner of an urbane 'classical' modernism over the second half of the 20th century in Australia. While the commission of the clients, Noel and Margaret Purcell, for a family home was modest, the precisely resolved design that Bell produced was important in the arc of his career – showcasing Bell's then-ongoing commitment to domestic privacy, anonymous street frontages and repose. With its courtyards, bespoke landscaping, double carport, and the later addition of a swimming pool, the well-appointed house reflects the relative prosperity of the 1960s and the new lifestyle possibilities enabled by engagement with avant-garde design. At a broader scale, *Purcell House* is illustrative of the consolidation of Ivanhoe East over the 1960s as a focal point for the modern architecture in the municipality. (Criterion A)

*Purcell House* is of aesthetic significance as a remarkably intact and cohesive embodiment of the personalised design approach of the designer, Guilford Bell. Its elegant visual and rigidly formal plan demonstrate his distinctive integration of classical principles with a minimalist/modern sensibility, the visual outcome of which situated Bell well outside mainstream modernism in the early 1960s (and subsequently). An array of unusual attributes – the monumental character of the house, its sense of retreat and employment of a perimeter wall and courtyards – signal Bell's atypical source material, particularly his passion for traditional Middle Eastern architecture; while the classicised symmetry and restrained material palette of *Purcell House* also hint at colonial and neo-Georgian interests in purity and decorum. Geometric walls provide a backdrop for the bold bush-style garden and the interplay of line and plane. The considered interior illuminates Bell's belief in total design and the importance of refined spatial composition. The employment of modular dimensions for all openings at *Purcell House* is also quintessential Bell, fusing the indoors and outdoors. *Purcell House* is the only instance of Bell's essentially solo work in the municipality and, in any context, evocative of his *parti*. (Criterion E)

## Description

*Purcell House* is a single-storey building situated approximately at the centre of its elongated and deep rectangular allotment, which slopes markedly east-to-west. In combination, its sizable setback and the screening role played by existing vegetation obscures views to the residence from the public realm. Such 'hiding' of the residence from the street was an intentional facet of Guilford Bell's original design. Accordingly, this description is partially based on contemporary and historic photographs and original architectural drawings.<sup>1</sup>

The house, constructed in 1963, has a H-shaped plan composed of two parallel and slim wings arranged around a west-facing courtyard.<sup>2</sup> Another courtyard, also designed by Bell, was provided to the rear of the *Purcell House* in 1971.<sup>3</sup> Internally, the three wings feature discrete zoning, with the front containing dining and lounge room, the middle the kitchen and family, and the rear bedrooms. Bell had experimented with the 'H-shaped courtyard typology' over the late 1950s on the Mornington Peninsula, that stemmed from his profound interest in ancient Middle Eastern architecture. In the wake of *Purcell House*, it became increasingly central to Bell's approach. He viewed the H-shaped plan as advantageous, particularly for suburban and urban contexts,

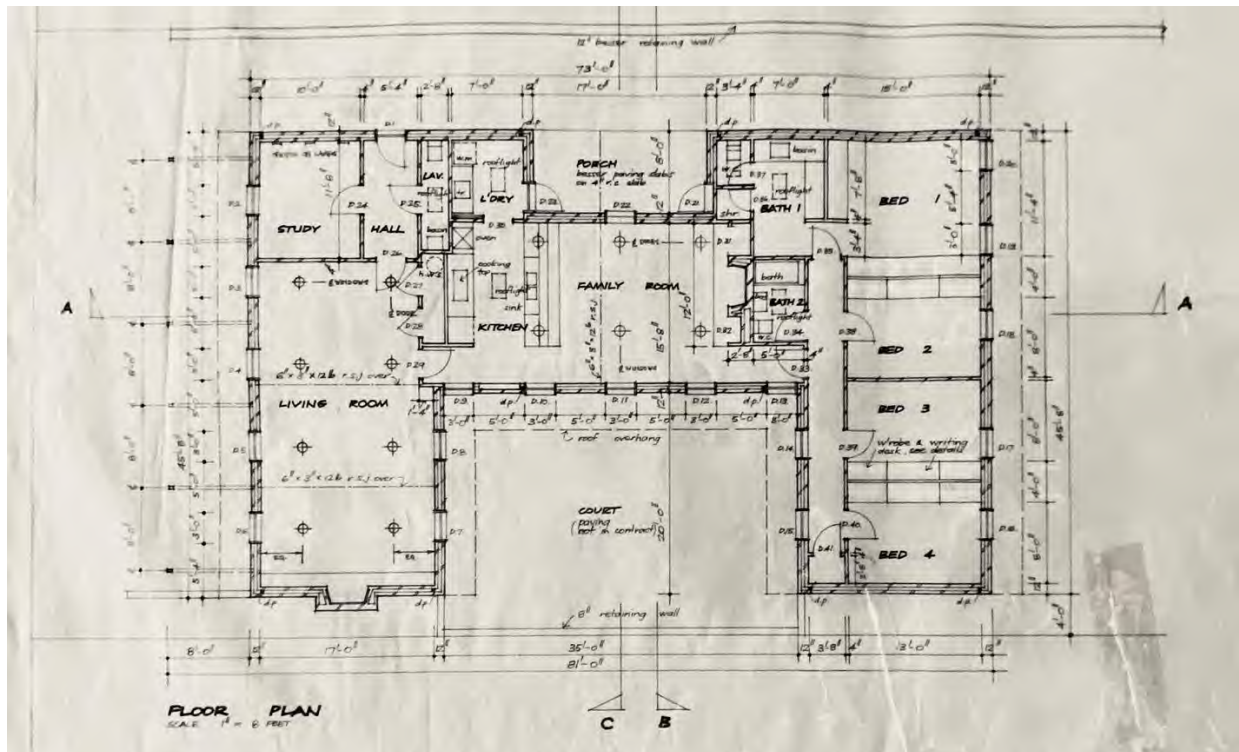
<sup>1</sup> '17 Hartlands Road, Ivanhoe East', *realestateview*, September 2005, [www.realestateview.com.au/real-estate/17-hartlands-road-ivanhoe-east-vic/property-details-sold-residential-630117/](http://www.realestateview.com.au/real-estate/17-hartlands-road-ivanhoe-east-vic/property-details-sold-residential-630117/); and various drawings, *Purcell House*, *Collection of architectural drawings by Guilford Bell*, SLV, YLTAD 111

<sup>2</sup> Guilford Bell & Neil Clerehan Pty Ltd Architects, 'House at Lot 187 Hartlands Road East Ivanhoe, for Mr & Mrs Noel Purcell + 'New Carport', October 1963, drawing nos 1 and 2 – *Collection of architectural drawings by Guilford Bell*, SLV, YLTAD 111

<sup>3</sup> Guilford Bell, 'Additions to House at 17 Hartlands Road, East Ivanhoe for Mr & Mrs Noel Purcell', drawing nos 1 and 2, October 1971 – *Collection of architectural drawings by Guilford Bell*, SLV, YLTAD 111



enabling a high degree of concealment/privacy while also facilitating view framing, including from within the dwelling (allowing surrounding landscaping – via slot openings – to become an internal decorative element).<sup>4</sup>



Original (1962) floorplan of *Purcell House* – north (Hartlands Road) is left of frame

(Source: Guilford Bell & Neil Clerehan Pty Ltd Architects, 'House at Lot 187 Hartlands Road, East Ivanhoe, for Mr & Mrs Noel Purcell', Working Drawings, October 1962, Drawing 1 – *Purcell House*, Collection of architectural drawings by Guilford Bell, SLV, YLTAD 111)

At *Purcell House*, horizontality is stressed in the form of the three connected wings; a Wrightian gesture pronounced in Bell's work over the 1950s. However, unlike Wright's preference for dynamic asymmetry, Bell pursued fixed planes that emphasised balance and regularity.

*Purcell House* has a flat roof, clad in 'Brownbult' steel decking, which appears to remain. Eaves to the front (north), courtyard and east elevation are wide and boxed with timber-lined soffits. Six original compact skylights are evident to the roof of the middle wing, corresponding with internal service rooms. There is a squat and geometric brick chimney to the front part of the west elevation. Box gutters connected to downpipes concealed in the walls are present to the side elevations.

The building is constructed of unpainted Monier Besser concrete blocks (light-sandstone colour) in stretcher bond on a reinforced concrete slab. The internal floor is flat throughout.

The north elevation, facing the street, is defined by six slender, evenly placed Oregon timber posts that project at right angles over a paved deck.

In 1993, the westernmost beam was infilled with horizontal timber slats as a privacy measure following the development of the neighbouring allotment.<sup>5</sup>

An integral component of *Purcell House* and hallmark of Bell's approach is the embracement of modular fenestration. Every opening at the design shares the same dimensions – that of a thin, timber-framed (Jarrah sills) floor-to-ceiling window or door

<sup>4</sup> Anne T Pettus and Garth Paterson, 'Guilford Bell's Landscapes: Controlled Nature' in Leon van Schaik, ed, *The life work of Guilford Bell, architecture 1912-1992*, Bookman Transition Publishing, 1999, p153

<sup>5</sup> This alteration was designed in the wake of Bell's death and undertaken by his professional partner, Graham Fisher. (Guilford Bell & Graham Fisher Architects, 'New Timber Screen & Fence at 17 Hartlands Road east Ivanhoe for Mr & Mrs Purcell, drawing no A1a, June 1993, Collection of architectural drawings by Guilford Bell, SLV, YLTAD 111)



('windows that were doors and never windows').<sup>6</sup> These openings are either fixed or operate as a sliding door. These openings are arranged symmetrically to front, rear and internal courtyard walls.



Close-up of north elevation, circa 2005

(Source: National Trust of Australia (VIC), *Classification Report: Purcell House*, B7 351)

The east elevation is treated differently and is only punctured by three doors. A small cantilevered ('hovering') canopy to the front portion of the east elevation, added by Bell in 1971, marks the main entrance.<sup>7</sup> Its door, original of solid timber, was later replaced with a glazed door to allow light penetration in the hallway.<sup>8</sup> Back from the entrance/canopy is a recessed patio, including a sliding door to the laundry and family room.

Opposite the east elevation is a three-metre-high brick perimeter wall, painted white and covered in *Ficus pumila* (climbing fig), an original design component required for privacy from the adjacent property. It extends slightly forward of the building line and continues through a gate towards the rear double carport. The latter was designed during October 1963, probably as a late-stage addition during construction of the primary dwelling. The carport – which is not visible from street – was drawn as a lightweight beam and post structure with a skillion roof. The twelve posts were identified as 'Redgum'.<sup>9</sup>

The internal courtyard is surfaced in concrete pavers and edged with garden beds. A timber screen and trellis – provided by Fisher in 1993 – runs its western boundary.

The three bedrooms of the south (rear) elevation face and open out onto a second paved courtyard that features a lengthwise and rectangular swimming pool. The latter element, designed by Bell as part of his 1971 modifications, is situated nearly in line with the house's western side and separated from the driveway and rear of the property by a high timber screen of horizontal timber slats. As part of this new work, he also attached a small change room to the west side of the carport situated in the southeast corner of the property. The former appears to have been enlarged later (not by Bell).

<sup>6</sup> Bell disliked conventional windows to such an extent that he includes none in his post-1960 houses. (Philip Goad, 'Bell, Guilford', in Goad and Julie Willis, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University, 2012, p77)

<sup>7</sup> Bell, 'Additions to House at 17 Hartlands Road, East Ivanhoe for Mr & Mrs Noel Purcell'

<sup>8</sup> Pettus and Paterson, 'Guilford Bell's Landscapes: Controlled Nature', p151

<sup>9</sup> Bell & Clerehan, 'House at Lot 187 Hartlands Road, East Ivanhoe, For Mr & Mrs Noel Purcell', October 1963, 'New Carport' – *Purcell House, Collection of architectural drawings by Guilford Bell*, SLV, YLTAD 111



South (rear) elevation, circa 2005

(Source: National Trust of Australia (VIC), *Classification Report: Purcell House*, B7 351)

Bell's internal planning appears to remain essentially unchanged at *Purcell House*. He typically shied away from the open plan, preferring the spatial/circulatory experiences brought about by discrete zoning, entrance halls ('ritualised entry'), corridors, and closed doors, an approach reflected in *Purcell House*.

The existing meticulous and minimalistic finishes and detailing of the house were key to Bell's design philosophy. The main internal elements include the employment of mountain ash for ceilings, joinery/cabinetry, and vertically laid boarding to the interior of the west wall of the bridging wing. Most internal walls were of exposed concrete blocks. In 'wet areas' white mosaic tiles were utilised. Original floorboards in the front and rear wings likely remain but have been carpeted. The pavers (geometric pattern) in the kitchen and family room are also original. White laminate was used for kitchen and bathroom surfaces (unclear if surviving).

Built-in furniture – the height of fashion in the early 1960s – at *Purcell House* include fitted cupboards, shelves, benches, study desks and wardrobes, most with elegant brass handles and pins. These were all designed by Bell. Other elements, such as concealed toilet cisterns/lighting and coverable fireplace (living room), testify to Bell's desire to hide service aspects wherever possible.

Bell was in his early fifties when he designed *Purcell House*, maturing as a designer of highly resolved discrete houses, but at the tail end of a productive but challenging partnership with Neil Clerehan.<sup>10</sup> Visible then at the subject building is the main architectural concepts (*partis*) that Bell went on to re-interpret/perfect over his long career. These range from the continuation of the H-plan/courtyards to an interest in creating 'bastions of privacy',<sup>11</sup> accomplished in this instance by a deep setback and screening vegetation (unlike at other designs, where Bell often utilised blank walls set straight to the street). Recognisable also is Bell's highly considered manipulation of 'open' and 'closed' spaces – the interplay of full-length slot glimpse/views to the encompassing landscaping – and commitment to 'total design'. In Bell's mind, the orchestration of the latter was the only means of cultivating the sublime/serene living experiences he sought to provide for clients.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Philip Goad, 'A Very Private Practice: The Life and Work of Guilford Bell', in Leon van Schaik, ed, *The life work of Guilford bell, architecture 1912-1992*, Bookman Transition Publishing, 1999, p115

<sup>11</sup> Goad, 'Bell, Guilford', p77

<sup>12</sup> Allan Powell, 'Guilford Bell: The Sensibility', in Leon van Schaik, ed, *The life work of Guilford bell, architecture 1912-1992*, Bookman Transition Publishing, 1999, p88



Living room, c2005 – fireplace is identified by the red arrow  
(Source: National Trust of Australia (VIC), *Classification Report: Purcell House*, B7 351)



Kitchen and family room, c2005 – laminate surface in foreground  
(Source: National Trust of Australia (VIC), *Classification Report: Purcell House*, B7 351)



Bedroom 4, circa 2005  
(Source: National Trust of Australia (VIC), *Classification Report: Purcell House*, B7 351)

Underlying such personalised design principles was Bell's idiosyncratic melding of classical principles with tenets of the modern movement, an aesthetic that placed him beyond the main currents of postwar and late 20<sup>th</sup>-century modernism.<sup>13</sup> His work was further distinguished by his view that the accomplishment of visual beauty was of overriding importance. Such practises and objectives made his designs 'somewhat alien in their reserve',<sup>14</sup> and earned him the epithet (sometimes dismissive) of Melbourne's 'supreme architect of manners' during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>15</sup> Bell's characterisation of this individualised design mode is telling:

<sup>13</sup> Goad, 'A Very Private Practice: The Life and Work of Guilford Bell', pp130-1

<sup>14</sup> Goad, 'A Very Private Practice: The Life and Work of Guilford Bell', p113

<sup>15</sup> Philip James Goad, *The Modern House in Melbourne 1945 – 1975*, PhD Thesis, Department of Architecture and Building University of Melbourne, September 1992, chapter 6, p64



I aim to create architecture that is humanist, in that it recognises the fundamental importance of man; Classical, in that it recognises his need for order; essentially functional. It seeks to provide environments in which the person is always the predominant feature in climates of severity, designed to enhance and encourage self awareness.<sup>16</sup>

Bell drew from an array of source material, including an abiding interest in traditional Middle Eastern and Japanese architecture and, subtly articulated, colonial and neo-Georgian notions of order and repose.<sup>17</sup> Often cited is Frank Lloyd Wright's site responsiveness and tightly controlled entry sequences, the refined minimalism of Mies van Rohe and Philip Johnson, and sculptured freestanding composure of the Mexican modernist Luis Barragan. Domestically, the interest of (Sir) Roy Ground – who Bell, atypically, considered a colleague – in reserved and tranquil exteriors may also be evident.<sup>18</sup>

The front garden was designed and constructed by Gordon Ford in the native/bush style in which he was an early advocate and innovator. Ford's landscape approach, the crafting of a naturalistic setting (albeit artificial in this case), was central to the *Purcell House's* carefully honed sense of place. Bell routinely embraced native/indigenous planting as complements to his modern houses and employed them in a 'screening' manner.<sup>19</sup>

The general ethos and format of Ford's front garden design remain interpretable. Original landscape elements include the lawn area and mature trees, particularly the Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*) flanked by Lemon-scented gums (*Corymbia citriodora*) situated to the front boundary and the rockery of weathered boulders situated in front of the façade, which accommodates various shrubs, grasses, and small trees, and side garden beds. There are also two Lemon-scented gums planted to the west boundary. The eastern gravelled driveway is another prominent feature. The small timber letterbox is also likely original. Side timber paling fences are likely later additions.



View to front garden, facing south west – right of the drive way is the Lemon-scented gum and Spotted Gum

<sup>16</sup> Attributed to Bell in Bill MacMahon, ed, *The Architecture of East Australia*, Axel Menges, 2001, p70

<sup>17</sup> Goad, *Modern Melbourne*, chapter 6, pp72-3

<sup>18</sup> Conrad Hamann, 'In Stillness at the Centre: Guilford Bell's Two Mainstreams', in Leon van Schaik, ed, *The life work of Guilford bell, architecture 1912-1992*, Bookman Transition Publishing, 1999, p40

<sup>19</sup> Pettus and Paterson, 'Guilford Bell's Landscapes: Controlled Nature', p154

## 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.<sup>20</sup> 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 (est. 1835) downstream of the *Birrarung*/Yarra at Melbourne.<sup>21</sup> However, as part of the 'Heidelberg' district in the Parish of Keelbundora, this area passed rapidly into private hands via an auction in Sydney Town in 1838.<sup>22</sup>

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.<sup>23</sup> 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 mostly undertaken by tenant farmers.<sup>24</sup> This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.<sup>25</sup>

Ivanhoe – its name stemming from Archibald Thom's 'Ivanhoe Estate' – remained a sparsely populated agricultural area until Melbourne's 'Land Boom' in the late 1880s.<sup>26</sup> 'Picturesque' terrain, varied outlooks and the high repute of the broader district drew often well-off newcomers. By the turn of the century, 'Beautiful Ivanhoe' was routinely portrayed as a 'fashionable', 'exclusive locality' of 'model homes'.<sup>27</sup> An improved railway connection to Melbourne in 1901 supported further middle-class growth, instigating 'four decades of slow and relatively affluent suburban sprawl' in the vicinity of Ivanhoe, Eaglemont, and Heidelberg train stations.<sup>28</sup>

During the interwar years, suburban Ivanhoe solidified, although its southern and eastern reaches remained primarily locked up by the expansive 'Hartlands', 'Charterisville', and 'Chelsworth' estates.<sup>29</sup> To navigate the complexities that accompanied the subdivision of these areas (sloping land, curving streets, views) in the postwar period and galvanised by the swelling influence of modernism, many of the new and generally moneyed proprietors sought the services of an architect.<sup>30</sup> By the early 1960s, distinct enclaves of upmarket, modernist design culture were apparent in the southern reaches of Ivanhoe and Ivanhoe East, with the aesthetic and lifestyle reverberations of the modern movement also shaping infill development in the more established environs of the locale.



View near Heidelberg in Victoria, pen and ink drawing, circa 1858

(Source: Eugene von Guérard, National Gallery of Victoria)

<sup>20</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

<sup>21</sup> James Boyce, 1835: *The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi

<sup>22</sup> 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 reformatting into a Road District (1860), Shire (1871) and then City (1934). It was amalgamated as the City of Banyule in 1994.

<sup>23</sup> Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13

<sup>24</sup> Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

<sup>25</sup> 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

<sup>26</sup> Thom's estate designation was inspired by a novel of the same name by Sir Walter Scott (1819).

<sup>27</sup> Ivanhoe & Alphington Progress Society, *Beautiful Ivanhoe: the suburb of model homes and scenic charm*, Model Studio, 1900, SLV

<sup>28</sup> Ivanhoe Station opened in 1888; however, inefficiencies in the Heidelberg-Melbourne railway line initially bedevilled growth.

<sup>29</sup> Ivanhoe grew from roughly 2,000 residents in 1913 to nearly 8,000 by 1933 (*Victorian Year Books*, Australian Bureau of Statistics).

<sup>30</sup> Don Garden, 'Ivanhoe', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008

## Site-specific

The subject land derives from Portion 2 of the Parish of Keelbundora, a roughly 420-hectare holding purchased (along with portions 1 and 3) by Thomas Walker in 1838. A Sydney-based Scottish banker and philanthrope with an eye for marketable land across the colony, Walker's intention in the Port Philip District was speculative from the start. He commenced subdividing his acquisitions as early as mid-1839 to enormous profit.<sup>31</sup>

A 126-hectare property, acquired by Captain Sylvester John Brown (the original spelling was 'Brown', the 'e' was added later by his son, the famed novelist 'Rolf Boldrewood') and named 'Hartlands' incorporated the subject property. Brown, a onetime shipmaster in the East India Company, who had made a small fortune in Sydney in whaling and trade, set up Hartlands as his familial seat around 1840. From a commodious weatherboard homestead overlooking the *Birrung/Yarra*, the Browns cultivated the flats and socialised with Heidelberg's gentry.<sup>32</sup>

The idyll was brief. Worsening economic conditions forced the foreclosure of Hartlands – the stress of which shattered Brown Snr. However, a fortunate marriage between his daughter and a relative of Walker (still the mortgage holder) enabled the clearing of the debt through a partial sale of the estate in 1853, and the 'Brownes of Hartlands' returned.<sup>33</sup> They remained in occupation until the mid-1860s, departing after their residence was destroyed by arson.<sup>34</sup> Hartlands was leased for farming until the mid-1880s, when it was offered for sale as one lot:

It is admirably adapted to subdivisional purposes, the position being unequalled in the district, which is undoubtedly the most charming and picturesque suburb around Melbourne. It is only seven miles from the MELBOURNE POST-OFFICE. Tenders for the completion of the railway from Alphington to Heidelberg are shortly to be called for, and when the line is completed the value of the land in this delightful locality must necessarily increase enormously. The views to be obtained from this noble estate are TRULY MAGNIFICENT, and must be seen to be appreciated.<sup>35</sup>

The chief buyer was the Trustees, Executors, and Agency Company (TEA), acquiring roughly 65 hectares of Hartlands in 1889.<sup>36</sup> This holding stretched southeast from Lower Heidelberg Road to The Boulevard, bounded by Warnclyffe Road in the west. The arrival of bleaker economic conditions in the early 1890s saw little sales activity at the estate, which continued to accommodate agricultural uses, including a horse stud in the early 1900s.<sup>37</sup> In 1916, the renowned viticulturist, François Robert de Castella, then in residence at *Chartersville* (HO15 + VHR H1140), became a joint proprietor with TEA.<sup>38</sup> His presence triggered the progressive subdivision of much of the locality that became known as Ivanhoe East over the postwar period.

The south side of Hartlands Road (established as part of the TEA/de Castella subdivision) comprised one of the later releases sold in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>39</sup> The subject allotment (no 187) was transferred in 1944 to George T Fillmore, a storeman from Parkville, and passed undeveloped through multiple hands. In June 1961, it was acquired by a solicitor, Noel Brian Purcell (1933-2021) and his wife Margaret Therese Purcell, then nearby residents of a conventional hipped roof cream-brick residence at 3 Withers Street.<sup>40</sup>

In the early 1960s, Philip Purcell approached Neil Clerehan, the well-known recently departed director of the RVIA Small Homes Service seeking an introduction to Guilford Bell, whose work he had become familiar with through design publications (possibly the *Simon House* in Mount Eliza). Whether Purcell knew or not, Clerehan was in an architectural partnership with Bell, so an introduction was readily arranged, followed by a commission for Bell & Clerehan to prepare a modest, cost-effective family home at the Purcell's Hartlands Road property.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>31</sup> W Joy, 'Walker, Thomas (1804-1886)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1967, available online

<sup>32</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and its People*, pp31-2

<sup>33</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People*, pp41-2

<sup>34</sup> 'Incendiarism', *Australasian*, 15 April 1865, p6

<sup>35</sup> 'Advertising', *Argus*, 20 February 1886, p2

<sup>36</sup> TEA (1879-1983) was Australia's first trustee company. (Certificate of Title, vol 2142, folio 233)

<sup>37</sup> 'The Champion Trotting Stallion Almont', *Leader*, 5 September 1903, p16

<sup>38</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 2142, folio 233

<sup>39</sup> TEA and de Castella were registered as the joint proprietors of the irregular holding (lots 140 to 191) bound by Hartlands Road (north), Burke Road North (east), McArthur Road (south/west) in September 1940. (Certificate of Title, vol 6413, folio 567)

<sup>40</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 8087, folio 522 – Noel's parents Philip and Caroline Purcell had acquired the allotment in June 1955 before selling it two years later. ('Noel Brian Purcell', *Age*, 13 February 2021)

<sup>41</sup> National Trust of Australia (Victoria) [NT], *Classification Report: Purcell House*, B7 351 – this information appears to stem from an interview with Noel Purcell



The Bell & Clerehan partnership had formed in 1962, something of a forced union due to the 'credit squeeze' of the previous year. Architectural historian Harriet Edquist describes their short-lived office as operating 'more or less as two identifiable practices', responsible for about twelve houses.<sup>42</sup> Clerehan and Bell's union was not congenial. Despite an ostensibly shared desired aesthetic, both held divergent design philosophies and handled clients differently:

Clerehan's concerns with living patterns, the almost objective framing of human habitation, was quite different from Bell's highly formal and aesthetic approach which seemed to restrict habitation to a sort of hermetic 'ritual'.<sup>43</sup>



1954 aerial photograph

Showing undeveloped and seemingly treeless subject allotment (outlined in dashed red)

(Source: Landata, Project no 174, Run 15, Frame 75)

In line with this assessment, Purcell's interactions with the practice appear to have been predominantly with Bell, who was the primary (if not only) designer of the resulting *Purcell House*. Both architect and client characterised the process and their 'rapport' as harmonious.<sup>44</sup> Imaginably, though, such concord rested on the Purcells – like many of Bell's clients – being prepared to follow his design direction.<sup>45</sup>

The design of *Purcell House* was resolved over 1962. Bell initially proposed a square form for the residence, punctured by a central courtyard; however, it was deemed too small in light of the Purcell's growing family. By October, the extant H-shaped plan had been drawn up.<sup>46</sup> As was to become customary for Bell, his design reach was total, even extending to specifying the selection of furniture (dining and coffee table, upholstered seating in lounge and 'Danish' dining chairs).<sup>47</sup>

Construction of *Purcell House* occurred over 1962. The Purcell family remained in occupation until late 2005.<sup>48</sup>

Bell nearly always prepared his own landscape plans and strategy, placing great emphasis on harmonising site and design. However, in tackling *Purcell House*'s decidedly suburban context – a rarity for Bell – he sought outside expertise. Gordon Ford (1918-99), a local of Eltham, then in the vanguard of the bush/native style garden movement, was engaged to design and construct the front garden.<sup>49</sup>

While *Purcell House* coalesced in a sensitive professional context – the fraying of the Bell/Clerehan collaboration – the design proved influential for Bell. Its classicised yet clear modern aesthetic was an expression Bell pursued doggedly moving forward.

<sup>42</sup> Edquist, 'Neil Clerehan: A Melbourne Practice', p38; and Philip Goad, 'A Very Private Practice: The Life and Work of Guilford Bell', in Leon van Schaik, ed, *The life work of Guilford bell, architecture 1912-1992*, Bookman Transition Publishing, 1999, p119

<sup>43</sup> Edquist, 'Neil Clerehan: A Melbourne Practice', p37; see also

<sup>44</sup> NT, *Classification Report: Purcell House*

<sup>45</sup> Goad, 'A Very Private Practice', p122

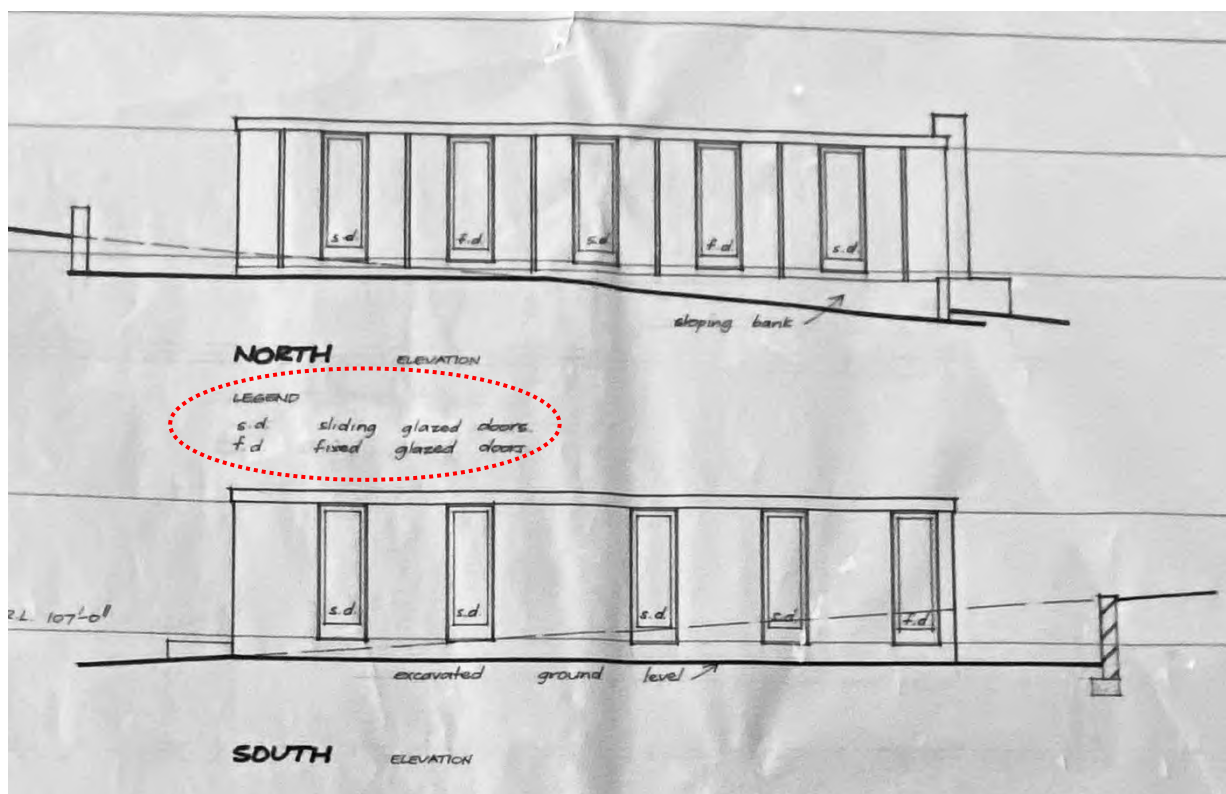
<sup>46</sup> NT, *Classification Report: Purcell House*

<sup>47</sup> NT, *Classification Report: Purcell House*

<sup>48</sup> NT, *Classification Report: Purcell House*

<sup>49</sup> Pettus and Paterson, 'Guilford Bell's Landscapes: Controlled Nature', p154

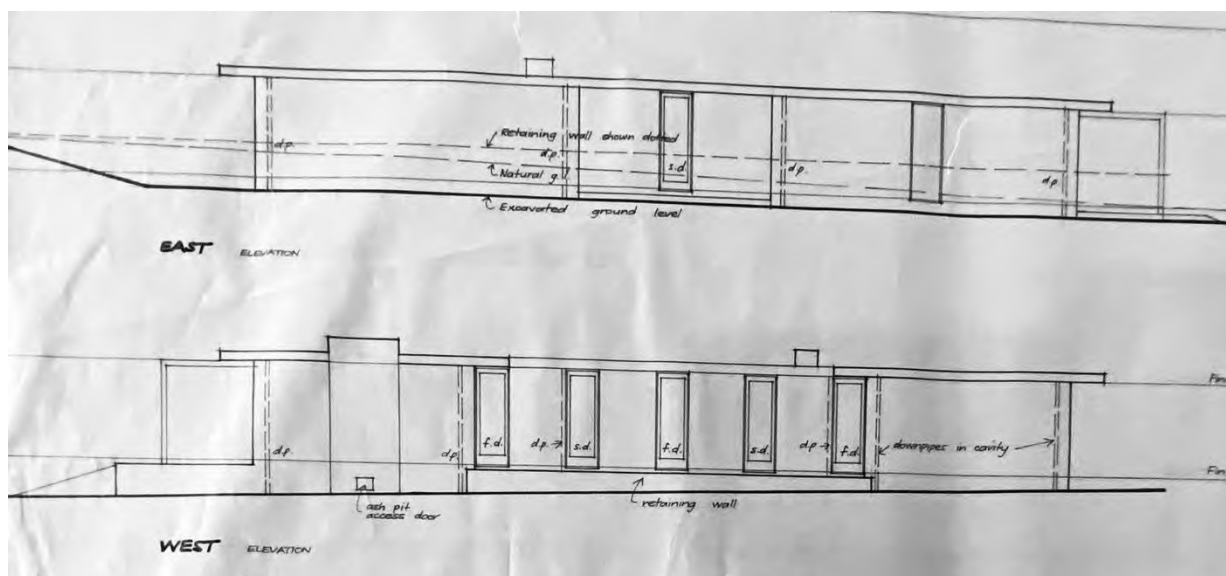
His later architectural partner, Graham Fisher, recalled Bell's lasting personal satisfaction with the design.<sup>50</sup>



Extract from Working Drawings for *Purcell House*, dated October 1962

Showing front (north) and rear (south) elevations

(Source: Guilford Bell & Neil Clerehan Architects, 'House at Lot 187 Hartlands Road East Ivanhoe, for Mr & Mrs Noel Purcell', Drawing no 1 – Collection of architectural drawings by Guilford Bell, SLV, YLTAD 111)



Extract from Working Drawings for *Purcell House*, dated October 1962

Showing east and west elevations

(Source: Guilford Bell & Neil Clerehan Architects, 'House at Lot 187 Hartlands Road East Ivanhoe, for Mr & Mrs Noel Purcell', Drawing no 1 – Collection of architectural drawings by Guilford Bell, SLV, YLTAD 111)

<sup>50</sup>

NT, *Classification Report: Purcell House*



*Purcell House, sketch of courtyard*

(Source: *Collection of architectural drawings by Guilford Bell*, SLV, YLTAD 111)

Such an architect's rendering of contemporary living, like *Purcell House*, was a far departure from the majority of residential construction occurring in Melbourne at the time. A reality touched on by the highbrow Robin Boyd, writing in the early 1960s, when he dismissed the prevalence of 'commonplace workday design':

We must remember that more than the half the buildings under construction today have not been favoured with the attention of a professional architect. Moreover, about half of what remains has been designed in a rather casual way by architects who are no better than they ought to be. Thus most buildings follow some routine pattern or are based loosely on a magazine illustration presented by a determined client ... The small proportion that remains may be called serious architecture ...<sup>51</sup>

*Purcell House* does not appear to have drawn any published contemporary commentary. However, it did attract the lens of Peter Wille (1931-71), a 'modern' enthusiast who traversed Melbourne photographing – in his view – notable examples of the modern movement.<sup>52</sup>



*Purcell House – north elevation from front lawn, showing rockery*

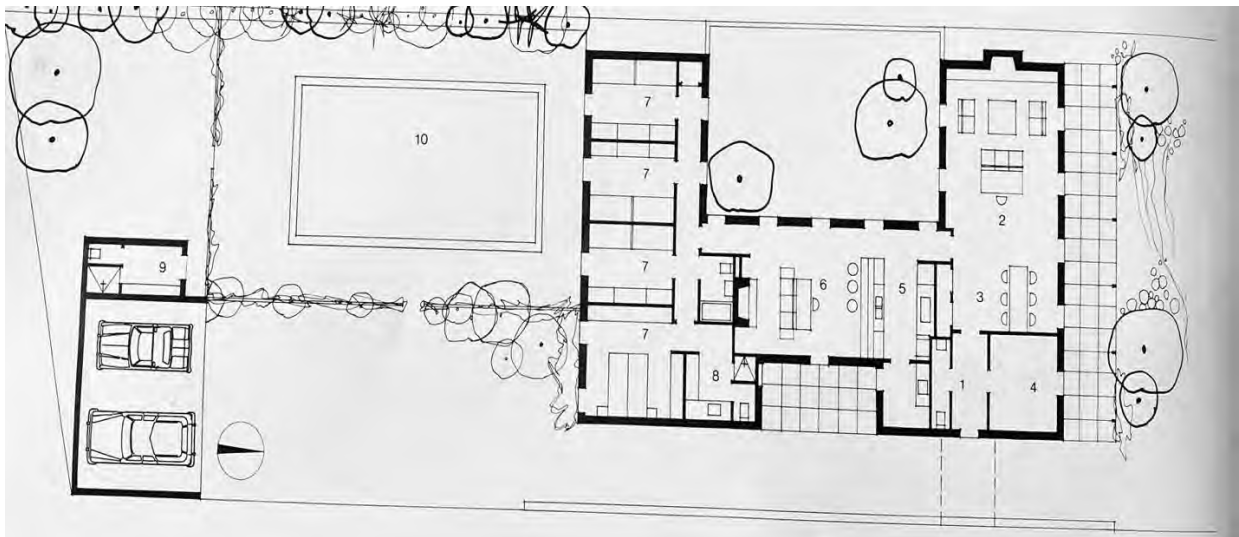
(Source: Peter Wille, 1960s, SLV, H91.244/4290)

<sup>51</sup> Robin Boyd, *The new architecture*, Longmans, 1963, pp3-4

<sup>52</sup> 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).



In 1971, Bell – then in solo practice – designed a swimming pool and changing facilities for the rear of the property. The pool, initially proposed to be arranged horizontally across the site, was ultimately installed lengthwise.<sup>53</sup>



*Purcell House* plan by early 1980s, following the Bell-designed addition of a pool and changeroom  
 '1 Hall, 2 Living, 3 Dining, 4 Study, 5 Kitchen, 6 Family, 7 Bedroom, 8 Dressing, 9 Change, 10 Swimming pool'  
 (Source: Bell, 1952-1980 *Architecture of Guilford Bell*, 1982, p30)

*Purcell House* was one of the designs highlighted by Bell in his book, 1952-1980 *Architecture of Guilford Bell* (1982):

This was designed as a family house, arranged so that it is possible for family life to proceed uninterrupted when visitors are being entertained. This was achieved by placing the kitchen and large family room between the living-dining wing and the bedroom wing. All bedrooms look onto a swimming pool in an enclosed garden. The building of 240 square metres is of unpainted beige-coloured concrete blocks. Floors are reinforced concrete and the flat roof is steel deck. The house is set well back from the street and the front is screened by native trees and plants.<sup>54</sup>



Façade (Source: Bell, 1952-1980 *Architecture of Guilford Bell*, 1982, p30)

<sup>53</sup> Guilford Bell, 'Additions to House at 17 Hartlands Road, East Ivanhoe for Mr & Mrs Noel Purcell', drawing nos 1 and 2, October 1971 – *Collection of architectural drawings by Guilford Bell*, SLV, YLTAD 111

<sup>54</sup> Guilford Bell (and Joseph Burke), 1952-1980 *Architecture of Guilford Bell*, Proteus Publishing, 1982, p30



Living room

(Source: Bell, 1952-1980 *Architecture of Guilford Bell*, 1982, p30)

Shortly after Bell's death, in 1993, his partner Graham Fisher – who continued the office – designed a timber screen for the west side of the courtyard and pergola, enclosing it in response to contemporary development on the adjacent block (no 19).<sup>55</sup>

### Guilford Marsh Bell (1912-92)

[He] never sought professional acclamation. He had little contact with his peers or the organised profession. He was virtually unknown to the younger generation of architects although his classical, symmetrical buildings struck a chord with the reawakening interest in Neo-Classicism in the 1980s. Like so many long term artists he had the mixed blessing of being re-evaluated later in his career by a new generation with new values.<sup>56</sup>

Compared to many of his peers, Bell's enigmatic life and body of work have been subject to a relatively high degree of study and review.<sup>57</sup> The collective portrayal, as put by Norman Day, is of 'no ordinary architect'.<sup>58</sup> The up-market and mainly domestic body of work produced by Bell over the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, which traversed the eastern seaboard of Australia, from foreshore to dry plains, is generally considered singular in its design mode; the individual cannon of one of the nation's 'longest practising, most uncompromising hard-edge modernists'.<sup>59</sup>

Born into a patrician pastoral family in the southern tablelands of Queensland, Bell's formative life was privileged.<sup>60</sup> He boarded at The King's School in Sydney and was later articulated to the Brisbane architect Lange L Powell. After gaining his diploma in architecture from the Brisbane Central Technical College (1935), Bell spent an influential decade in England, studying at London University and working under the strict neo-classicist (Sir) Albert E Richardson – gaining an appreciation for order, symmetry and

<sup>55</sup> Guildford Bell & Graham Fisher Architects, 'New Timber Screen & Fence at 17 Hartlands Road east Ivanhoe for Mr & Mrs Purcell, drawing no A1a, June 1993, *Collection of architectural drawings by Guilford Bell*, SLV, YLTAD 111

<sup>56</sup> Neil Clerehan, 'Guilford Marsh Bell, OBE, FRAIA, 1912-1992', *Transition*, vol 38, 1992, p245

<sup>57</sup> Bell, 1952-1980 *architecture of Guilford Bell*; Philip James Goad, *The Modern House in Melbourne 1945 – 1975*, PhD Thesis, Department of Architecture and Building University of Melbourne, September 1992; Leon van Schaik, ed, *The life work of Guilford bell, architecture 1912-1992*, Bookman Transition Publishing, 1999; Goad, 'Bell, Guilford', in Goad and Willis, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*; and Goad, 'Bell, Guilford Marsh (1912-1992)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 2020, available online

<sup>58</sup> Norman Day, 'Guilford Bell — cover to cover', *Age*, 5 October 1982, p24

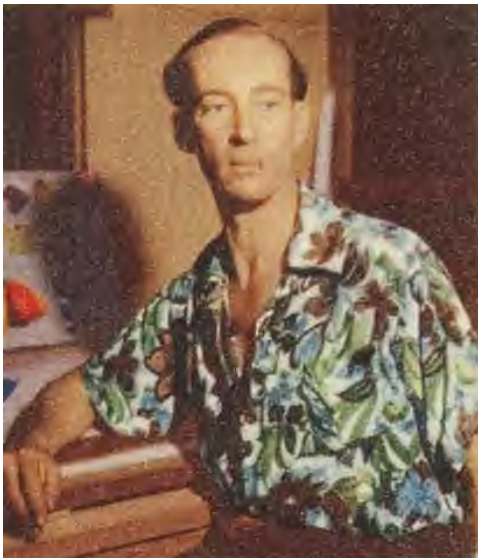
<sup>59</sup> Clerehan, 'Guilford Marsh Bell ...', p246

<sup>60</sup> Goad, *The Modern House in Melbourne 1945 – 1975*, chapter 6, p64,

meticulous detailing, but largely rejecting his teacher's historicism.<sup>61</sup> Bell also accompanied two archaeological expeditions to Syria (1938) with Sir Max Mallowan - the husband of the English crime write (Dame) Agatha Christie (his first commission was the renovation of their Georgian house in Devon, 1938) – establishing a lifelong interest in vernacular and ancient Middle Eastern architecture. While in England, Bell passed the examination of the prestigious Royal Institute of British Architects (1939). Returning to Australia at the outbreak of the Second World War, Bell enlisted in the RAAF in 1943 and was employed as an architect in Darwin and works officer in the Netherlands East Indies (Indonesia).

On discharge in 1946, Bell reconnected with a former employer (from briefly before the war), Ansett Transport Industries, overseeing the design and construction of a tourist resort at Hayman Island on the Great Barrier Reef (1949-52). Such an opportunity, rare in the austerity conditions of postwar Australia, exposed Bell to a base of cosmopolitan and wealthy potential clients. He set up a solo practice in Melbourne in 1952, commencing an unwavering commitment to the production of discrete and urbane houses or spreading but balanced homesteads.<sup>62</sup> A striking exception was the boldly symmetrical five-storey Feltex House (1957-59, since demolished). He continued to design until his death, either independently or in partnership (Bell & Clerehan, 1961-64 and Guilford Bell and Graham Fisher Architects, 1983-92, ongoing as Bell Fisher Architects).

In the late 1950s, Bell met his life partner, Denis Kelynack. He was elected a fellow of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in 1962 and awarded an Order of the British Empire in 1982. From the mid-1960s, Bell had purposefully withdrawn from professional view. His reluctance to engage with architecture circles and discourses, combined with a 'blue-chip' clientele, conferred a quality of elusiveness, even mystical quality, upon Bell's person and work, but also curtailed any broader influence on public attitudes towards design.<sup>63</sup>



Guilford Bell, photographed in late thirties on the Hayman Island  
(Source: *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 7 October 1950, p38)

## 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:

<sup>61</sup> Joseph Burke, in his forward to *1952-1980 architecture of Guilford Bell* described Bell, 'He has a profound love of the classical. A classical artist seeks to attain an impersonal style of perfection and total order. At the same time he retains a personal style or character of his own' (p11).

<sup>62</sup> Bell's signature residences include *Windagal*, Point Piper, NSW (1956 – since demolished); *Flinders House*, Flinders (1958); *Bardas House*, South Yarra (1958, since demolished); *Simon House*, Mount Eliza (1963, substantially altered); *Russell Drysdale*, Boudi National park Farm, Killcare Heights, NSW (1965, *House*); *Fairfax Pavilion*, Bowral, NSW (1969 – Retford Park Mansion, local heritage item); *Seccull House*, Brighton (1972, recently recommended for inclusion on the VHR as a registered place, March 2021); *Willy House*, Toorak (1972); and *Grant House*, Officer (1986 – Cardinia Shire, HO130). Relatively few Bell designs are affected by HOs and about a quarter of his houses are believed to have been demolished.

<sup>63</sup> Goad, *Modern Melbourne*, p74 (chapter 6); and Norman Day, *Heroic Melbourne Architecture of the 1950s*, RMIT Publication, 1995, p17



## • 6.4 Post-War Residential Development

### Comparative Analysis

Two other designs by Bell & Clerehan were constructed in the municipality:

- *Box House*, 2 Glenard Drive, Eaglemont (part of HO1, identified within the precinct as 'significant') – a single-storey dwelling built in the Griffins'-planned 'Glenard Estate' in 1962 and generally accredited to Clerehan. It has an L-shaped plan based around an internal courtyard, a stepped flat-roof, broad overhanging and boxed eaves, and is constructed of concrete bricks. It features a pared-down aesthetic and highlights an integrated carport supported by four slender pipes with a timber batten ceiling, which confers an ultra-modern character. An important instance of the practice's work but now unsympathetically modified, including the rendering of external walls and alterations to fenestration.



*Box House* – before modifications (Source: Mark Strizic, *Cross-Section*, no 142, August 1964)

- *Beddison/Swift House*, 5 Crown Road, Ivanhoe (recommended for a HO by this Study) – a multigenerational cuboid and brick residence designed by Bell & Clerehan and built in 1963. Clerehan was the primary designer, although Bell is understood to have insisted on utilising floor-to-ceiling windows throughout the frontage and may have influenced its perfect symmetry.

*Box House* and *Beddison/Swift House* are the other principal examples of rationalist/'classical' modernism in Banyule. However, both are subtly more expressive of Clerehan's low-key design mode and penchant for stylish carports. *Purcell House*, the only design in Banyule in which Bell's hand was dominant (if not entirely unaccompanied), is a complete encapsulation of what became his remarkably consistent, formalised design approach. Viewed more widely in his oeuvre, it is one of the few Bell residences from his mature, increasing complex phase (after 1960) that incorporates a front garden or had a suburban setting.

An array of architect-designed modernist houses are included on the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in 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'.

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.

### Intactness

Highly intact

### Previous Assessment

- Context, *Banyule Heritage Review*, March 2012, p39 – 'researched but not recommended [for a HO]' (NB – Context were not aware that Guilford Bell was the designer)
- National Trust (VIC), File Number B7351, nominated for State heritage listing

- 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
Internal Alteration Controls	Yes (general floorplan, mountain ash ceilings, walls of exposed concrete blocks or vertically laid boarding, and coverable fireplace)
Tree Controls	Yes (Lemon-scented and Spotted gums, front garden)
Outbuildings and/or fences	Yes (original carport)

### Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



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



## YANN HOUSE

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<b>Address</b>	21 Keam Street, Ivanhoe East
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1960-63
<b>Period</b>	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Yann House* at 21 Keam Street, Ivanhoe East is significant. It was constructed between 1960 and 1963 for the Yann family. The design appears to have been a collaborative effort between Geoffrey Woodfall and Garside and Genser Architects.

The significant elements are its original gabled roofed form, chimney, tan/orange brickwork, dark-painted timber fascia and pergola, cantilevered balcony with weatherboard balustrade, screened entry stair, planter box walls, piers, undercroft (concrete floor and plaster ceiling), and timber-framed window banks. The driveway, 'volcanic rock' retaining walls, and terraced character of the front garden complements the overall aesthetic.

Later addition elements at the rear are not significant.

#### How is it Significant?

*Yann House* is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

#### Why is it Significant?

*Yann House* is of historical significance as a compelling instance of neo-Wrightian organic regionalism in the early 1960s. This approach evolved as a striking variant of Melbourne's modern movement, reflecting the aspiration of a relatively small group of architects to develop a regionalised, more humanist version of modernism related closely to local landscapes. The design seems



to have been undertaken as a collaboration between Geoffrey Woodfall, a noted practitioner of the organic/regional mode, and the lesser-known practice of Garside and Genser. Viewed in the context of Woodfall's wider work, his influence (or responsibility) for the design of *Yann House* is clear. As an upmarket and sizable example of an architect-designed 'modern' house – one distinct from the mass of residences produced at the time – *Yann House* is important in illustrating the development of Ivanhoe East as an affluent suburban enclave and focal point for modernism in the municipality. It is the only known instance of Woodfall's work in the municipality. (Criterion A)

*Yann House* is of aesthetic significance as a generally intact and expressive example of the organic/regional approach adopted by Geoffrey Woodfall, especially his considered reformulation of Wright's Usonian projects in a local setting. The streetscape presence of the dwelling, raised-up and slung across the sloping site, and foregrounded by a generous garden, is prominent. Such an embrace of the street is less typical of the idiom, which often adopts more secluded public postures. The restraint of the design – a Woodfall hallmark – is relieved by introducing movement into the frontage through subtle planar shifts and projections, counterpoised by the robust brickwork. The interplay of the 'floating' cantilevered balcony with the yawning carport beneath, taken in after the eye sweeps up the tapered driveway, is conspicuous. A limited 'earthy' material palette ties *Yann House* to the site and underscores its cohesiveness. Alongside Wright's influence, conveyed by brick massing, the merger of site and dwelling, and sheltered entry sequence, are other design elements – the low gable roof and pared-down character of the design – that reflect the ability of Woodfall to contain the organic excesses of the American master and explore regional sources in a 'modern' manner. (Criterion E)

## Description

*Yann House* is elevated above street level, parallel to the contour, at the centre of a large wedge-shaped allotment that steps gently down east to west. In siting the residence, its designers – Geoffrey Woodfall and Garside and Genser Architects – responded to the property's tapered shape as well as the availability of likely scenic views to the river and across.

The dwelling is well set back from Keam Street, providing space for an ample front garden, mainly composed of terraced lawn areas and planting beds. The vegetation is mature and obscures the lower half of *Yann House*. An oblique and inclined driveway with turning bay, surfaced in coarse aggregate and edged with smooth concrete divides the front garden. It is a conspicuous component, as are the flanking mid-height purplish/brown 'volcanic rock' retaining walls. These elements curve upon meeting the street, splitting into a pair of stepped retaining walls, which run the property boundary, similar to many properties in the area.



The 'Working Drawings' (reproduced in Site-Specific) record the natural fall of the land and directions for some excavation activity (possibly cut and fill) to enable a lower ground floor for the single-storey *Yann House*. This plan details the former as containing an undercroft 'car port' with a separated 'workshop' behind. In response to the change of landfall, the dwelling's ground floor has an internal split-level plan. Overall, the effect is a building set in the landscape, rather than above or apart.

The original footprint is square with a projecting wing (south-east) covered by a gabled roof of two different low pitches with sturdy timber fascia. It appears to be now clad in corrugated metal sheeting (initially 'Brownbuilt' metal tray roofing'). A squat and broad-brick chimney defines the apex of the primary roof. The eaves overhang is prominent to the façade, oversailing the front wall to align with either the intersecting, raised planter box walls or to cover the balcony. In the case of the latter (described in the Working Drawings as a 'terrace'), the dressed Oregon timber 'members' (rafters) were left exposed and open in the manner of a pergola. They are now covered with clear polycarbonate sheeting or the like. Soffits appear to be lined with timber boards or battens.



To the rear of *Yann House*, as depicted in the Working Drawings, the roof flies out to create a narrow verandah, supported at either end by a brick post (north) and projecting wall with casement window (south). The verandah deck incorporates in-ground stairs that provided access to the lower-ground floor. A moderately sized skillion-roofed addition has since been attached to part of this elevation (west). Its level of intactness is not known.

When built, the balcony featured a return along the north elevation of *Yann House*, the back part of which was partially enclosed with brick and weatherboard. Initially, the existing north-east pier marked a change in level, which signalled the start of the short-enclosed gallery. Above this return, the exposed timber rafters continued to the ridgeline, albeit perpendicular to the street. This aspect of the design has been lost by the enclosure of the return balcony with timber-framed glazed doors (set slightly back from the original 'window wall' to the terrace) and the moderate northern extension of the brick gallery wall. The primary front roof plane has also been lengthened accordingly to cover the new living space. The parallel pergola rafters were taken across the exposed northern end of the balcony. While altered, the balcony – with its original broad weatherboard balustrade – remains a demarcated and distinctive element/space in *Yann House's* design.

The house is constructed of lightly variegated tan/orange bricks in stretcher bond with struck pointing on a concrete slab. This brickwork underlies *Yann House's* robust massing and form, while its earthy-hued palette assists in tying it to the landscape. While characteristic of many neo-Wrightian designers in 1960s Melbourne, the expression of mass via brickwork, particularly piers and planter box walls (integrating nature into the design), was a recurrent theme for Woodfall. The contemporary Wille photographs (see Site-Specific) show that roof timber elements were painted the extant dark brown, while the balcony balustrade was lighter in colour (paint or stain). It has since been overpainted dark brown.

*Yann House's* frontage has a pronounced horizontal emphasis and is volumetrically well-resolved, composed of various interlocking and projecting planes – the undercroft, planter box walls, the balcony and window banks. This interplay confers a sense of movement into the façade, a counterpoint to the solidity of its brickwork. Further dynamism is fostered by the pronounced cantilever of the balcony above the undercroft, a divergence that endows an impression of floating/weightlessness



into the front. The contrast created between the deep, shadowed double undercroft carport with its fibrous plaster rectangular panelled ceiling is also purposeful. Such an unadorned planar emphasis, although articulated by shifts and voids, is indicative of the trend in architect-designed houses of the early 1960s towards increasingly 'blank' presentations within the streetscape. A short L-shaped stair leads from the driveway to the raised and recessed porch entrance, 'surrounded' by the thickset brick planter box walls. The steps appear to be clad in terrazzo or the like. The door is not visible from the public domain but was specified in the Working Drawings as a central 'Flush Panelled Door', bordered by fixed glazed panels. The designers' orchestration of a sense of enclosure and shelter/privacy within the arrival sequence at *Yann House*, juxtaposed by the relative openness of the internal space, recall a favoured Wrightian effect.

Two banks of timber-framed windows puncture the frontage. To the balcony, an alternating pattern of floor-to-ceiling fixed windows and glazed doors are evident. To the forward room, the windows have been formed into a square window bay, aligning the internal space with the porch's landing. It has side casement windows, with a pair of the latter to the front flanked by fixed glazing. Other original openings include casements to the south elevations and, in the back part of the lower ground floor, a long bank of fixed and awning sashes.<sup>1</sup>

Internally, the drawings illustrate an interest in spatial flow and zoned living spaces with daytime activities grouped to the north of the foyer and bedrooms to the south. Flat ceilings are specified in the Working Drawings; other internal finishes are not, other than a reference to 'selected stonework' to a feature wall and the hearth-style fireplace in the living room. The intactness of the interior is not known.

*Yann House* is classifiable as an example of what architectural historian Philip Goad describes as the 'Wrightian survival'.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

Woodfall classed his practice as 'organic' rather than 'Wrightian', although the difference is far from precise, with both stressing the harmonious integration of site, occupant and structure.<sup>4</sup> In general, his reformulation of Wrightian principles eschewed its more decorative flourishes, arguably engaging more with the simplified 'Usonian Houses'. Examples of which sought to merge structure and land, incorporated car parking beneath the building and featured 'floating' weatherboard balconies and cantilevered pergola roofs (for instance, the *Lewis House* in Libertyville, Illinois, 1939).<sup>5</sup>

The diversity of source material should not be underestimated, however. Woodfall's attachment to spreading low gable roof forms and humble materials, while present in some of Wright's work, may stem as much from the Australian homestead form and is also present in some of the Griffins' houses.<sup>6</sup> At the time, Woodfall was one of a minority of Melbourne architects who were actively seeking to develop an authentic regionalised interpretation of the modern movement.<sup>7</sup> Collectively, this array of attributes – visible at *Yann House* – reinforces the likelihood that Woodfall was the dominant hand in its design.

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 enthrallment 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.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The 'hit and miss' brickwork apparent in the south elevation of the Working Drawings appear to be a remnant of a former design phase as they are not detailed elsewhere in the known plans.

<sup>2</sup> Philip J Goad, *The modern house in Melbourne, 1945-1975*, PhD thesis, Faculty of Architecture Building & Planning, University of Melbourne, 1992, Chapter 6, pp31-32

<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Geoffrey Woodfall, 21 August 2006, in Alex Haw Gie Njoo, *Organic Architecture: Its Origin, Development and Impact on Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century Melbourne Architecture*, thesis, RMIT University, School of Architecture and Design, 2008, p112

<sup>5</sup> Stuart King, 'Intersecting identities in Geoffrey Woodfall's Woolnorth Homestead, 1969-70', *RMIT Design Archives Journal*, vol 10, no 1, 2020, p36

<sup>6</sup> At the end of the decade, Woodfall was responsible for two celebrated contemporary gabled homesteads – *Old Penola Estate Homestead*, South Australia (1968) and *Woolnorth Homestead*, Tasmanian (1969).

<sup>7</sup> Philip Goad, 'Regionalism', in Goad and Julie Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p589

<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> 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 (est. 1835) downstream of the *Birrarung/Yarra* at Melbourne.<sup>10</sup> However, as part of the 'Heidelberg' district in the Parish of Keelbundora, this area passed rapidly into private hands via an auction in Sydney Town in 1838.<sup>11</sup>

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.<sup>12</sup> 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 mostly undertaken by tenant farmers.<sup>13</sup> This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.<sup>14</sup>

Ivanhoe – its name stemming from Archibald Thom's 'Ivanhoe Estate' – remained a sparsely populated agricultural area until Melbourne's 'Land Boom' in the late 1880s.<sup>15</sup> 'Picturesque' terrain, varied outlooks and the high repute of the broader district drew often well-off newcomers. By the turn of the century, 'Beautiful Ivanhoe' was routinely portrayed as a 'fashionable', 'exclusive locality' of 'model homes'.<sup>16</sup> An improved railway connection to Melbourne in 1901 supported further middle-class growth, instigating 'four decades of slow and relatively affluent suburban sprawl' in the vicinity of Ivanhoe, Eaglemont, and Heidelberg train stations.<sup>17</sup>

During the interwar years, suburban Ivanhoe solidified, although its southern and eastern reaches remained primarily locked up by the expansive 'Hartlands', 'Charterisville', and 'Chelsworth' estates.<sup>18</sup> To navigate the complexities that accompanied the subdivision of these areas (sloping land, curving streets, views) in the postwar period and galvanised by the swelling influence of modernism, many of the new and generally moneyed proprietors sought the services of an architect.<sup>19</sup> By the early 1960s, distinct enclaves of upmarket, modernist design culture were apparent in the southern reaches of Ivanhoe and Ivanhoe East, with the aesthetic and lifestyle reverberations of the modern movement also shaping infill development in the more established environs of the locale.



View near Heidelberg in Victoria, pen and ink drawing, circa 1858  
(Source: Eugene von Guérard, National Gallery of Victoria)

<sup>9</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

<sup>10</sup> James Boyce, 1835: *The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13

<sup>13</sup> Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

<sup>14</sup> 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

<sup>15</sup> Thom's estate designation was inspired by a novel of the same name by Sir Walter Scott (1819).

<sup>16</sup> Ivanhoe & Alphington Progress Society, *Beautiful Ivanhoe: the suburb of model homes and scenic charm*, Model Studio, 1900, SLV

<sup>17</sup> Ivanhoe Station opened in 1888; however, inefficiencies in the Heidelberg-Melbourne railway line initially bedevilled growth.

<sup>18</sup> Ivanhoe grew from roughly 2,000 residents in 1913 to nearly 8,000 by 1933 (*Victorian Year Books*, Australian Bureau of Statistics).

<sup>19</sup> Don Garden, 'Ivanhoe', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008

### Site-specific

The subject allotment derives from Portion 2 of the Parish of Keelbundora, a roughly 420-hectare holding purchased (along with portions 1 and 3) by Thomas Walker in 1838. A Sydney-based Scottish banker and philanthrope with an eye for marketable land across the colony, Walker's intention in the Port Philip District was speculative from the start. He commenced subdividing his acquisitions as early as mid-1839 to enormous profit.<sup>20</sup>

In the resulting sales, Portion 2 was carved up into multiple large estates. The subject land formed part of 'Hartlands', a 126-hectare property acquired by Captain Sylvester John Brown (circa 1790-1864 – the original spelling was 'Brown', the 'e' was added later by his son) a onetime shipmaster in the East India Company who had made a small fortune in Sydney through whaling and trade. (He was also the father of multifarious Thomas Alexander Browne, celebrated during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as the novelist 'Rolfe Boldrewood'.) Motivated by the economic prospects of Port Philip, Brown Snr brought additional land within the Hoddle Grid and at Toorak and along Darebin Creek (near Northcote). Around 1840, he made Hartlands the familial seat. From a commodious weatherboard homestead complex overlooking the river, the Browns cultivated the flats and socialised with the area's gentry.<sup>21</sup>

However, within a few years, the colonial economy's worsening conditions forced the foreclosure of Hartlands – the stress of which shattered Brown Snr. A fortunate marriage between his daughter and a relative of Walker (the mortgage holder) enabled the debt to be cleared through the partial sale of Hartlands in 1853 (namely, the western portion, establishing Maltravers Road) and the 'Brownes of Hartlands' reoccupied the remainder of the traduced estate.<sup>22</sup> They remained there until the mid-1860s, departing in the wake of their residence's destruction by arson, after which the holding was leased agriculturally.<sup>23</sup>

From 1903, large parcels of Hartlands were excised for sale and subdivision.<sup>24</sup> The final transaction, in 1921, encompassed the core of the estate – approximately 30 hectares of sloping and cleared land between Lower Heidelberg Road and The Boulevard, including the subject property. This procurement was made by one of the nation's most recognised real estate agents and Catholic lay leaders, Thomas Michael Burke.<sup>25</sup> His 'Hartlands Estate' subdivision featured memorably named curvilinear roads,<sup>26</sup> presenting as a diluted version of the nearby Mount Eagle (1914) and Glenard estates (1916), both avant-garde Garden Suburb designs by Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin. The specific planner for the Hartlands Estate is unknown.<sup>27</sup> Initial sales of the offered lots continued into the mid-1930s and the building of residential homes was scant and sporadic until the postwar years.



Photograph extracted from a subdivision promotion for the Glenard Estate in 1916 with the Hartlands estate captured left of frame (Source: *Sale brochure for Glenard Estate, Mount Eagle, Victoria*, Eric Milton Nicholls collection, NLA, Bib ID 3701541)

<sup>20</sup> W Joy, 'Walker, Thomas (1804-1886)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1967, available online

<sup>21</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and its People*, pp31-2

<sup>22</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People*, pp41-2

<sup>23</sup> 'Incendiarism', *Australasian*, 15 April 1865, p6

<sup>24</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 1844, folio 676

<sup>25</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4480, folio 831; and Tony Hannan, 'Burke, Thomas Mitchell (1870-1949)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1979, available online

<sup>26</sup> Streeton, McCubbin, Longstaff, and Mackennel were all Australian artists, while Kean Street was the namesake of a prominent local farmer and town planning advocate, Peter Kean, the developer behind the Mount Eagle and Glenard estates.

<sup>27</sup> In interwar Melbourne, beyond the Griffins, breaking with the typical gridiron subdivision was the calling card of the progressive surveyor, Saxil Tuxen (1855-1975).

The subject land comprised part of a three-lot purchase (161-63) on the north side of Keam Street by Lenore H Ryan in 1921.<sup>28</sup> A covenant was attached to the sale, stipulating residential use and the provision of one tiled or slate-roofed building per lot. It also forbade any 'paling or close iron fence ... [to] be erected or suffered upon the said land.'<sup>29</sup> This small holding passed through multiple hands over the ensuing decades without any construction activity, a development pattern reflected throughout the broader locale.<sup>30</sup>



1954 aerial photograph of the Hartlands Estate, still in the process of consolidating  
The vacant subject site is indicated by the red arrow  
(Source: Landata, Project no 174, Run 15, Frame 75)

In 1956, Victor Drolz Yann (1924-2009) and Ivy Elizabeth Yann (*née* Medlycott), both of Preston, acquired lot 162 and a thin slice of lot 163 – creating the existing subject property.<sup>31</sup> The purchase included access to a right of way at the rear of the site that linked to Lower Heidelberg Road. It appears to have since been incorporated into surrounding property. Victor was a professional engineer, establishing 'Yann Engineering' in 1960 (still family-owned and operational).<sup>32</sup>

Construction of *Yann House* occurred between 1960, the date of the first known set of plans, and 1963, when the Victorian electoral roll records Victor and Ivy in residence at '21 Kearm St'.<sup>33</sup> They were still listed as the occupants into the 1980s.<sup>34</sup>

To design the family residence, the Yanns engaged 'Garside & Genser Architects' as well as Geoffrey Woodfall. The nature of the relationship between these parties is undetermined. The drawings for *Yann House*, which are catalogued in the 'Geoffrey Woodfall Archive' (RMIT) and dated March and August 1960 (see below), identify Garside & Genser Architects in the 'header' of the title block, with Woodfall specified as the drawer.

At the time, Woodfall (still relatively early in his career) was in a loose partnership with fellow architect Linton Reynolds, although they worked chiefly independently of each other. The Woodfall Archive also holds a 1958 set of plans for a Garside & Genser hotel project in Tally Ho. Multiple scenarios are conceivable, including collaboration or some type of sub-consultant arrangement (perhaps with the imaginably larger Garside & Genser office overseeing the administration of the contract and construction). However, the broad similarities between *Yann House* and Woodfall's oeuvre – together with the presence of the plans in the archive of the latter – imply that he played a central design role.

<sup>28</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4480, folio 010

<sup>29</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4480, folio 010

<sup>30</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 6204, folio 682.

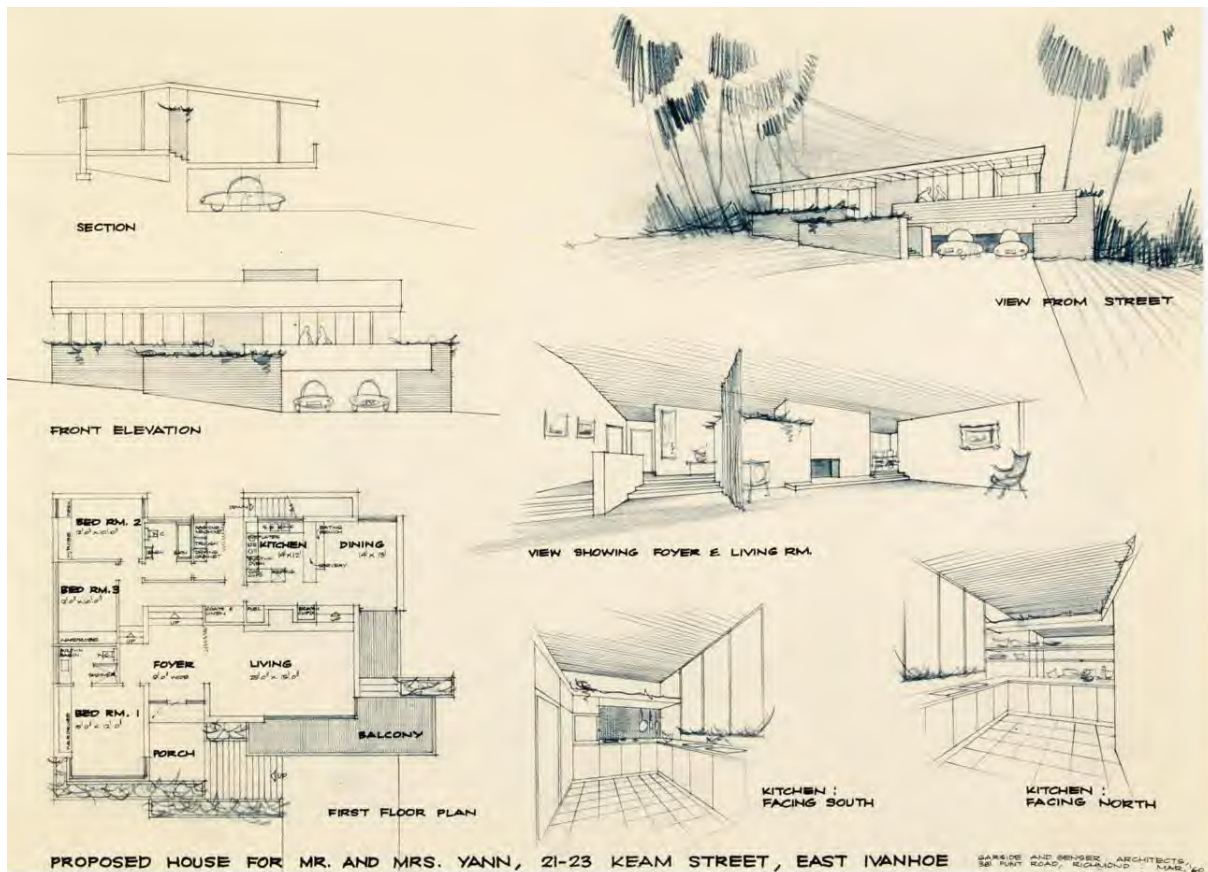
<sup>31</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 8123, folio 733

<sup>32</sup> *Yann Engineering Pty Ltd*, <https://www.yann.com.au/>, accessed 18 February 2021

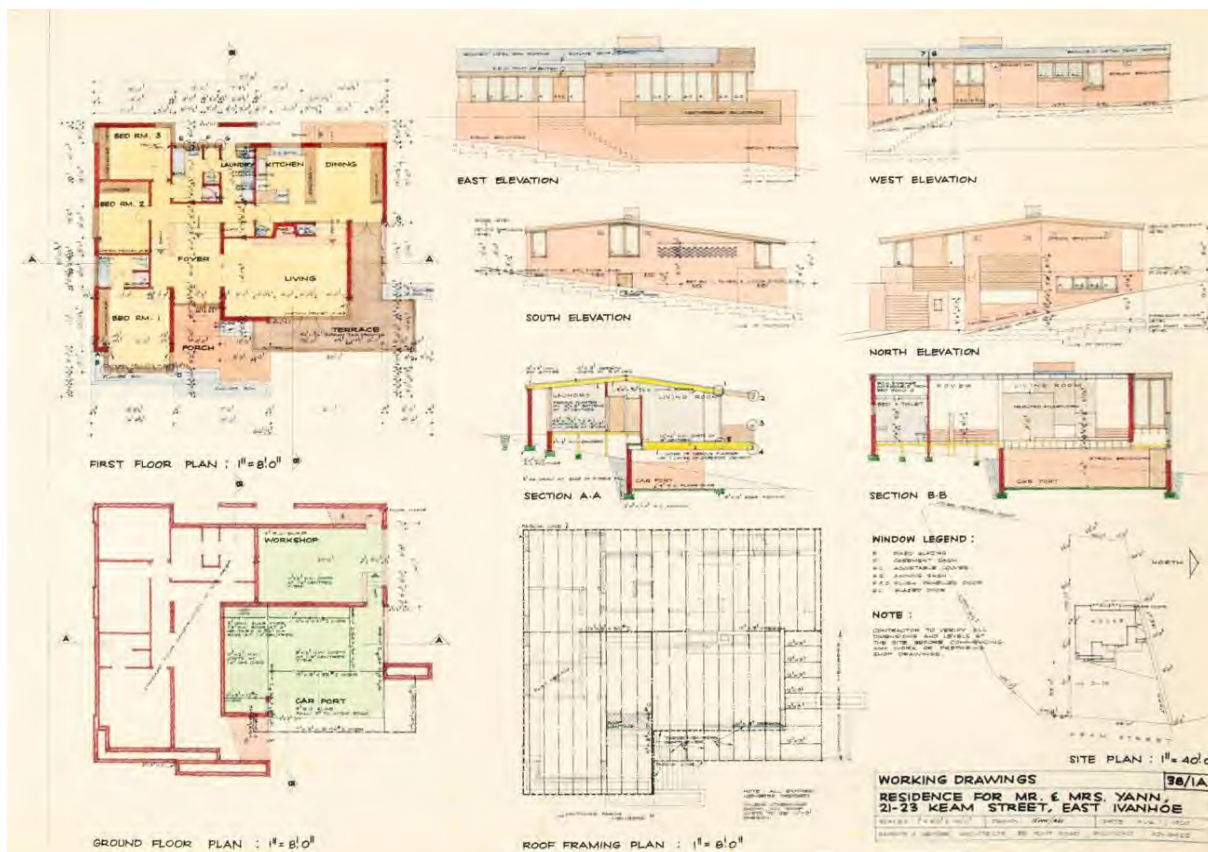
<sup>33</sup> 1963 Victorian electoral roll, Division of Batman, Subdivision of Ivanhoe, p108 (via Ancestry.com). The address is not listed in *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria* until the 1970 edition with 'Yann VD' record occupation (the *Directory* was not produced between 1966 and 1969).

<sup>34</sup> Victorian electoral toral Rolls, Batman Ward, Ivanhoe, 1980, p65





Presentation drawings for Yann House, dated March 1960 (Source: Geoffrey Woodfall Archive, RMIT, Box 83)



Working Drawings, dated August 1960 (Source: 'Geoffrey Woodfall Archive', RMIT, Box 83)

*Yann House* does not appear to have drawn any published architectural commentary in the 1960s. Yet, the residence was of enough note to draw the modernist enthusiast Peter Wille (1931-71).<sup>35</sup> He photographed the building on at least two occasions, before and after the retaining walls in the front garden had been laid.



*Yann House* during landscaping work, early 1960s

(Source: Peter Wille, '21 Kearn St, E. Ivanhoe G. Woodfall, 1962', SLV, H91.244/5017)



*Yann House* post-landscaping works, early 1960s

(Source: Peter Wille, '21 Kearn St, E. Ivanhoe G. Woodfall, 1962', SLV, H91.244/5017)

<sup>35</sup>

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).





(Left) Yann House, note original balcony return

(Right) Detail of front entrance stair

(Source: left and right – Peter Wille, '21 Keam St, E. Ivanhoe G. Woodfall, 1962', courtesy of SLV, H91/244/5017)

A sewerage plan for the *Yann House* for the installation of the swimming pool, dated 1972-73, makes this element a relatively early addition to the site.<sup>36</sup>

#### **Geoffrey Rolfe Woodfall (1931-2016)**

From the late 1950s, Woodfall surfaced as a leading practitioner of an organic/Wrightian regionalist discourse in late 20<sup>th</sup>-century Victoria. His architectural work – with some distinguished exceptions, such as his vernacular homestead interpretations – was predominantly suburban. Over the 1960s and 1970s, his houses were frequently commented upon in the architectural and popular press and awarded. Woodfall's architectural work remains well-recognised with the contemporary design community and has been the subject of some academic study.<sup>37</sup>

Melbourne-born, Woodfall started work as a draftsman for N & N Shopfitters in 1947 at sixteen. The following year he commenced architectural studies at the Royal Melbourne Technical College (now RMIT University).<sup>38</sup> Over the 1950s, mostly while studying, Woodfall gained experience drafting for several well-known architects and firms, including A.S & R.A. Eggleston, Kevin Borland, Don Hendry Fulton, Peter Jorgensen, and Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell. He graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Melbourne in 1956, part of a postwar stream influenced by Professor Brian Lewis's remodelled curriculum, provocative tutors and the ideological fervour of a splintering modern movement.

Woodfall had entered into an informal partnership with Basil Walker (1954-56) while still at university, followed by a loose association with Linton Reynolds (1958-62), after which he embarked on his successful solo private practice that continued into the 2000s.<sup>39</sup>

#### **Garside and Genser Architects (late 20<sup>th</sup> century)**

Little has come to light about the office of Garside and Genser Architects; however, the architect and later well-known Melbourne property developer, Albert Genser, was evidently a key figure. In the late 1960s, the practice reformed as 'Genser, Shepherd and Associates'. Their most critically acclaimed work was *Hickey House* at 34 Warringah Crescent, Eltham – a dwelling with a distinctive 'cut out' form, constructed mainly of radiata pine boarding, for the artist Dale Hickey. It won *The Age*/RAIA 'House of

<sup>36</sup> Yarra Valley Water, *Sewerage Plan*, Lithographic no. 2601

<sup>37</sup> Goad, *The modern house in Melbourne, 1945-1975*, Chapter 6; Winsome Callister, 'Woodfall, Geoffrey' in Philip Goad and Julie Willis, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p773; and King, 'Intersecting identities in Geoffrey Woodfall's Woolnorth Homestead, 1969-70'

<sup>38</sup> Woodfall later designed a new factory for N & N Shopfitters at Notting Hill in 1963, after their first was 'burnt out'. (*Cross Section*, issue no 134, December 1963)

<sup>39</sup> Partnership dates derive from the *Geoffrey Woodfall Archive*, RMIT, inventory



the Year' in 1972.<sup>40</sup> Genser Shepherd and Associates was regularly associated in the press with large-scale residential and commercial developments and remained active into the 1990s.<sup>41</sup>

## Thematic Context

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

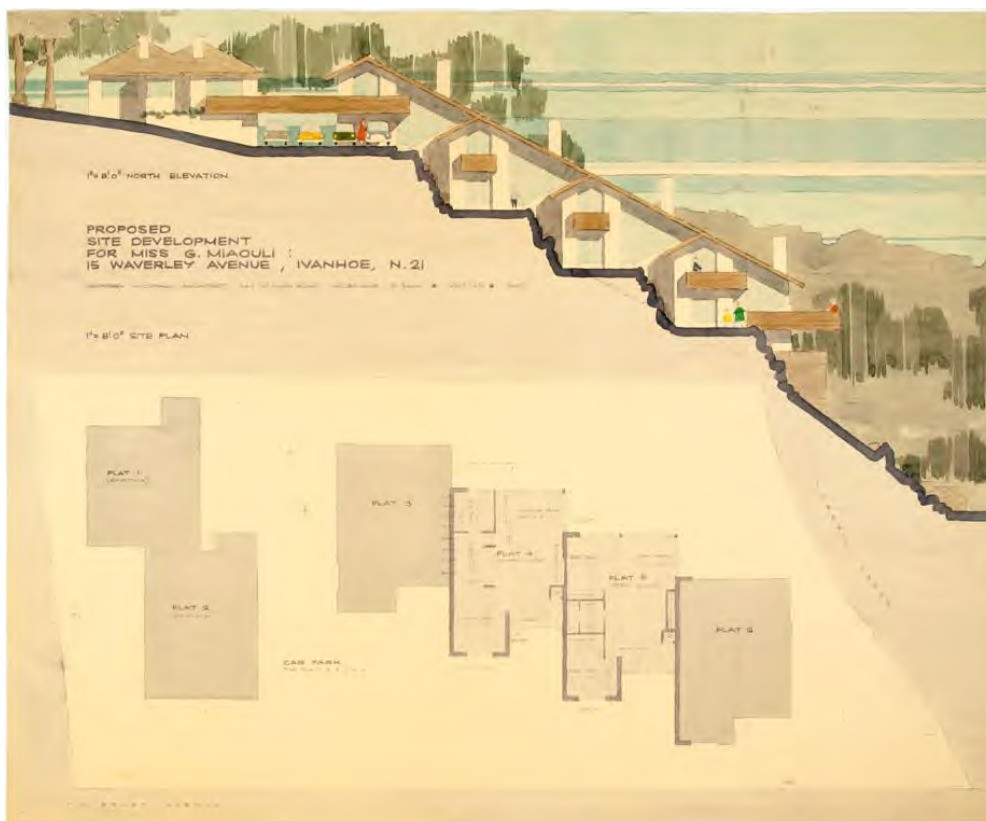
- Theme 5: Suburban development

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

- 6.4 Post-War Residential Development

## Comparative Analysis

The comprehensive Woodfall Archive details only a handful of residential and commercial projects undertaken in Banyule. Most of these appear to have been concept designs that were never realised or have since been replaced.<sup>42</sup> *Yann House* is the only known extant building in the municipality with which Woodfall has been involved.



Concept drawings for a townhouse development between Waverly Avenue and Darebin Creek (Ivanhoe), dated 1965 – seemingly never built (Source: Geoffrey Woodfall Archive, RMIT, Box 86)

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

<sup>40</sup> 'Hickey House', *Age*, 27 November 1972, p17. Vasilios Tsismelis is attributed as the designer of *Hickey House* (Doug Evans, Huan Chen Borland, Conrad Hamann, eds, *Kevin Borland: architecture from the heart*, RMIT Architecture, 2006, p74)

<sup>41</sup> Paul Robinson, 'Trust fights tower plan near church', *Age*, 20 August 1982, p5

<sup>42</sup> Geoffrey Woodfall Archive, RMIT, Box 84 (alterations for *Tayton house*, Heidelberg, 1957 + *Prudential Investments*, shop, Rosanna, 1960); Box 86 (*Miaouli house*, Ivanhoe, 1965); and Box 96 (*Collins Development*, Heidelberg, 1972)

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 *Yann House* are faintly detectable in some of these designs, only three others are 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.
- *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 to a design by noted organic architect, Charles Duncan.<sup>43</sup> It was later the recipient of the RIAA Victoria Architecture Medal (1965) and consists of a series of overlapping volumes with stepped flat roofs and extensive window walls.
- *Elliston Precinct* (HO92) in Rosanna – a residential development by the innovative company Merchant Builders, initiated in 1969. Four notable architectural architects/practices were engaged (Charles Duncan, Daryl Jackson and Evan Walker, David McGlashan and Neil Everist, and Graeme Gunn) to prepare multiple designs with Ellis Stone responsible for integrating the subdivision with a contrived bushland landscape. Several houses by these architects were constructed in the southern section of the estate (Bachli Court to Von Ninda Crescent). These houses are generally modestly scaled and nestled in Stone's landscaping with a palette of brown or tan brick, flat or skillion roofs, and stained finish to the timberwork (facias, windows, etc.). In 1971 Merchant Builders sold the remaining parts of the estate for speculative development.

While corresponding with the above, particularly regarding its material/colour palette, *Yann House* is distinguished by its extracting restraint and ability to represent the regional design interest of its noted designer, Woodfall.

## 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 (walls of brick and timber elements)
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or fences	Yes ('volcanic rock' retaining walls)

<sup>43</sup> Cross-Section, The University of Melbourne Department of Architecture, issue no 142, 1 August 1964, np

## Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



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



## CRITTENDEN HOUSE

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<b>Address</b>	30 Longstaff Street, Ivanhoe East
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1961
<b>Period</b>	Postwar/late 20 <sup>th</sup> -century
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Crittenden House* at 30 Longstaff Street, Ivanhoe East is significant. It was designed in 1961 by David Chancellor of the architectural practice Chancellor & Patrick for Jack Maxwell Crittenden, the director of a chain of high-end grocery/liquor stores in Melbourne, and his wife Mavis Oswin Crittenden (*née* Morgan).

The significant elements are the house and attached carport with their gable roofs, clad in slate, wide soffits with stained timber to the outer part, walls of salmon brick and contrasting area of render (north elevation), and painted timber-framed windows. Retaining walls of basalt to the rear parts of the site are also significant.

The swimming pool (1964) situated in the north part of the grounds is a contributory element to *Crittenden House*.

#### How is it Significant?

*Crittenden House* is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

#### Why is it Significant?

*Crittenden House* is of historical significance as one of several substantial modernist houses in this part of Ivanhoe East, where there is a high preponderance of postwar architect-designed dwellings, especially concentrated in an enclave primarily east of

Burke Road North. Land in this part of the suburb was relatively expensive and so attracted a well-heeled demographic, while the challenging topography of many sites demanded the services of an inventive architect. Leading designers were responsible for many houses in the area, although *Crittenden House* may be the only one in the municipality undertaken by the acclaimed architectural practice of Chancellor & Patrick. It dates from a phase in their career when their 'classic' or most-recognisable work was produced and evolved from the celebrated *Freiberg House* in Kew (1958-60). (Criterion A)

*Crittenden House* is of architectural significance as a remarkably intact and distinctive design dating from the end of the postwar period. The interplay of massing, often monumental, primarily brick with cantilevered concrete elements, under prominent gable roofs are recognisable elements of Chancellor & Patrick's oeuvre. The complex roof is clad in slate, has an unusual box gutter detail, includes a clerestory, and has wide soffits, which are part timber-lined. The banks of windows are timber-framed; however, framing has been avoided to the corner, amplifying the fineness of the detailing. The most dramatic intersection of forms and planes is at the carport, whose roof seems to balance precariously on a broad brick pier. (Criterion E)

## Description

*Crittenden House* is located at the southwest end of a large triangular site, whose area is 1,337m<sup>2</sup>. The corner site equally addresses both Longstaff Street and Streeton Crescent and slopes steeply to the north by some 7 metres. The residence is visible to both streets, more so to Longstaff Street as there is a planted edge, which includes various shrubs and a few tall eucalypts, to Streeton Crescent. There is also a retaining stone wall to Streeton Crescent. There is no fence to the front/Longstaff street; however, the largely blank wall provides the requisite level of privacy. The long front garden includes a central area of lawn defined by garden beds with various plants, shrubs and some trees. The timber letterbox is not original. A high ti-tree fence conceals a service yard in the southwest corner.



The house has a stepped, elongated plan with a shorter central-northern wing (effectively a squat T-shaped footprint). The two long elevations, north and south (Longstaff Street), have very different character due to the specific site conditions – an exposed, irregular corner allotment with a steep slope. Orientated to the north but located at the southern end with a largely blank wall to Longstaff Street. The carport is a prominent element of the front elevation whose roof hinges on a broad brick pier separating it from the main entrance, which is recessed and somewhat concealed, a common approach at this time. Two painted steel poles support the carport roof, which abuts the return of the ti-tree fence. The path to the entry is mainly surfaced with salmon bricks.



The broad, low-pitched gable roofs are clad in slate with square chimney (with grille-like brickwork to the side faces) to the ridge above the carport. The carport roof extends upwards to form a clerestory to the north side of the building. To the front at least (and probably to the rear, based on aerial photographs), there are no eaves gutters as the latter are recessed behind an outer band of slate, which overhangs a timber fascia (painted or stained). The detailing to the deep soffits varies, consisting of an outer band of stained, slatted timber boards with an inner section of white sheeting, which is continuous with the adjacent ceilings of the interior.



Carport and entry – Longstaff Street



East wing - Streeton Crescent



Junction of east and north wings - Streeton Crescent



North elevation, central part with cantilevered deck – Streeton Cres

The walls, consisting principally of staggered planes of brickwork to the front (Longstaff Street) though interposed with broad piers/pylon sections, are variegated salmon/orange brick in stretcher bond. The largest or most prominent pylon is that to the junction of the east and north wings. To the visible part of the rear (north-east part), the projecting/cantilevered sections have a rendered finish (presumably over a concrete substrate), including the north wing's cantilevered deck. The west end, not visible from the public domain, has brick walls extending upwards to form planter boxes to a broad terrace with some balustrading sections.<sup>1</sup>

The diverse character of each long/primary elevation relates to the fenestration pattern. While banks of timber-framed windows are employed across the building, there are narrow highlights (comprised of alternating openable/awning and fixed panes) to the front/Longstaff Street elevation, where they are located immediately below the eaves of the east wing. Elsewhere to this side, there are no windows. There is no timber framing element (muntin/glazing bar) to the corner windows, where the glass is mitred, a detail developed by the Austrian/American architect Richard Neutra.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> With sections not visible from the public domain, there has been a reliance on historic photographs – see Peter Wille and Commercial Photographic Co in Site-Specific.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Goad, 'Modern House in Melbourne 1945-1975', PhD Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1992, chapter 5, p96



The elongated plan has resulted in corridors being located along the south/front elevation with living areas clustered to the north and west and bedrooms to the east. There are ancillary rooms to the part lower level.

The time of construction of this house (1961) was a highly productive period for Chancellor & Patrick.<sup>3</sup> An iconic example of their output – the Freiberg house in Kew – featured on the cover of a seminal contemporary architectural publication, *Best Australian Houses*, in the same year.<sup>4</sup> The practice's design language, evolving over the 1950s, had consolidated in the next decade, becoming distinguished by an 'emphasis on the extension of the building out into the landscape'.<sup>5</sup> This principle is highly evident at *Crittenden House*, with the central deck of the north wing thrusting forwards over the garden. Their palette during the 1960s shifted to a mostly 'natural' array of materials evident at the subject place by way of the use of slate and brick flooring employed internally to the corridors. Slate was only employed as roof cladding on a few of their projects, with one of the earliest examples being Chancellor's own house in Box Hill (no 11) during 1957, where brick was also employed to the entry area floors.<sup>6</sup>

Chancellor & Patrick were probably the architectural practice in Melbourne most indebted to the 'organic architecture' espoused by Frank Lloyd Wright, where the emphasis was given linking the building with landscape. They were part of a coterie of like-minded architects practising in Melbourne during the 1950s and 1960s, including Charles Duncan, David Godsell, and Geoffrey Woodfull. Some examples of their work survive in the municipality. Among the most recognisable elements of this Wrightian organic approach was a textural use of materials – especially brick, timber, stone – in conjunction with tile-clad gable or hipped roofs and massive fireplaces.<sup>7</sup> *Crittenden House* is a prime example of this influence, though in a way made distinctively their own.

William Head was responsible the original landscape at *Crittenden House*, but it is not clear what remains of his original scheme. There are no available landscape drawings, although early photographs document some of the plantings, including eucalypts and coniferous trees along the Streeton Crescent boundary. Of these, the extant tall eucalyptus near the stair in the retaining wall is likely original. Agapanthus currently defined this street edge but are not evident in early images. Other distinctive elements of the planting were those to the planter boxes to the rear deck at the west end of the site; however, these areas are not visible from the public domain. These planter boxes are among many elements, are reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie-style residences, such as the *Robie House* (1909, Chicago, USA).



1985 photograph of *Crittenden House* from Streeton Crescent, facing west  
(Source: courtesy of Graeme Butler)

<sup>3</sup> W Callister, *Anchoring Identity – the Architecture of Chancellor and Patrick 1950-1970*, vol. 1, p198. Between 1958 and 1962, the practice received commissions for over 80 new houses.

<sup>4</sup> Neil Clerehan (editor), *Best Australian houses: recent houses built by members of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects*, Melbourne 1961

<sup>5</sup> W Callister, *Anchoring Identity – the Architecture of Chancellor and Patrick 1950-1970*, vol. 1, p198; vol 2, figure 298. A photograph taken by David Chancellor shows a brick floor to one of the passageways.

<sup>6</sup> W Callister, *Anchoring Identity – the Architecture of Chancellor and Patrick 1950-1970*, vol 2, figures 184-189

<sup>7</sup> P Goad, 'Modern House in Melbourne 1945-1975', pp6/30-34

## 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.<sup>8</sup> 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 (est. 1835) downstream of the *Birrarung/Yarra* at Melbourne.<sup>9</sup> However, as part of the 'Heidelberg' district in the Parish of Keelbundora, this area passed rapidly into private hands via an auction in Sydney Town in 1838.<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup> 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 mostly undertaken by tenant farmers.<sup>12</sup> This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.<sup>13</sup>

Ivanhoe – its name stemming from Archibald Thom's 'Ivanhoe Estate' – remained a sparsely populated agricultural area until Melbourne's 'Land Boom' in the late 1880s.<sup>14</sup> 'Picturesque' terrain, varied outlooks and the high repute of the broader district drew often well-off newcomers. By the turn of the century, 'Beautiful Ivanhoe' was routinely portrayed as a 'fashionable', 'exclusive locality' of 'model homes'.<sup>15</sup> An improved railway connection to Melbourne in 1901 supported further middle-class growth, instigating 'four decades of slow and relatively affluent suburban sprawl' in the vicinity of Ivanhoe, Eaglemont, and Heidelberg train stations.<sup>16</sup>

During the interwar years, suburban Ivanhoe solidified, although its southern and eastern reaches remained primarily locked up by the expansive 'Hartlands', 'Charterisville', and 'Chelsworth' estates.<sup>17</sup> To navigate the complexities that accompanied the subdivision of these areas (sloping land, curving streets, views) in the postwar period and galvanised by the swelling influence of modernism, many of the new and generally moneyed proprietors sought the services of an architect.<sup>18</sup> By the early 1960s, distinct enclaves of upmarket, modernist design culture were apparent in the southern reaches of Ivanhoe and Ivanhoe East, with the aesthetic and lifestyle reverberations of the modern movement also shaping infill development in the more established environs of the locale.



View near Heidelberg in Victoria, pen and ink drawing, circa 1858  
(Source: Eugene von Guérard, National Gallery of Victoria)

<sup>8</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

<sup>9</sup> James Boyce, 1835: *The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13

<sup>12</sup> Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

<sup>13</sup> 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

<sup>14</sup> Thom's estate designation was inspired by a novel of the same name by Sir Walter Scott (1819).

<sup>15</sup> Ivanhoe & Alphington Progress Society, *Beautiful Ivanhoe: the suburb of model homes and scenic charm*, Model Studio, 1900, SLV

<sup>16</sup> Ivanhoe Station opened in 1888; however, inefficiencies in the Heidelberg-Melbourne railway line initially bedevilled growth.

<sup>17</sup> Ivanhoe grew from roughly 2,000 residents in 1913 to nearly 8,000 by 1933 (*Victorian Year Books*, Australian Bureau of Statistics).

<sup>18</sup> Don Garden, 'Ivanhoe', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008

### Site-specific

The subject allotment derives from Portion 2 of the Parish of Keelbundora, a roughly 420-hectare holding purchased (along with portions 1 and 3) by Thomas Walker in 1838. A Sydney-based Scottish banker and philanthrope with an eye for marketable land across the colony, Walker's intention in the Port Philip District was speculative from the start. He commenced subdividing his acquisitions as early as mid-1839 to enormous profit.<sup>19</sup>

A 126-hectare property, acquired by Captain Sylvester John Brown (the original spelling was 'Brown', the 'e' was added later by his son, the famed novelist 'Rolfe Boldrewood') and named 'Hartlands' incorporated the subject property. Brown, a onetime shipmaster in the East India Company, who had made a small fortune in Sydney in whaling and trade, set up Hartlands as his familial seat around 1840. From a commodious weatherboard homestead overlooking the *Birrung/Yarra*, the Browns cultivated the flats and socialised with Heidelberg's gentry.<sup>20</sup>

The idyll was brief. Worsening economic conditions forced the foreclosure of Hartlands – the stress of which shattered Brown Snr. However, a fortunate marriage between his daughter and a relative of Walker (still the mortgage holder) enabled the clearing of the debt through a partial sale of the estate in 1853, and the 'Brownes of Hartlands' returned.<sup>21</sup> They remained in occupation until the mid-1860s, departing after their residence was destroyed by arson.<sup>22</sup> Hartlands was leased for farming until the mid-1880s, when it was offered for sale as one lot:

It is admirably adapted to subdivisional purposes, the position being unequalled in the district, which is undoubtedly the most charming and picturesque suburb around Melbourne. It is only seven miles from the MELBOURNE POST-OFFICE. Tenders for the completion of the railway from Alphington to Heidelberg are shortly to be called for, and when the line is completed the value of the land in this delightful locality must necessarily increase enormously. The views to be obtained from this noble estate are TRULY MAGNIFICENT, and must be seen to be appreciated.<sup>23</sup>

From 1903, large parcels of Hartlands were excised for sale and subdivision.<sup>24</sup> The final transaction, in 1921, encompassed the core of the estate – approximately 30 hectares of sloping and cleared land between Lower Heidelberg Road and The Boulevard, including the subject allotment. This procurement was made by one of the nation's most recognised real estate agents and Catholic lay leaders, Thomas Michael Burke.<sup>25</sup> His 'Hartlands Estate' subdivision featured memorably named curvilinear roads,<sup>26</sup> presenting as a diluted version of the nearby Mount Eagle (1914) and Glenard estates (1916), both avant-garde Garden Suburb designs by Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin. The specific planner for the Hartlands Estate is unknown.<sup>27</sup> Initial sales of the offered lots continued into the mid-1930s and the building of residential homes was scant and sporadic until the postwar years.



Photograph extracted from a subdivision promotion for the Glenard Estate in 1916 with the Hartlands estate captured left of frame (Source: *Sale brochure for Glenard Estate, Mount Eagle, Victoria*, Eric Milton Nicholls collection, NLA, Bib ID 3701541)

<sup>19</sup> W Joy, 'Walker, Thomas (1804-1886)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1967, available online

<sup>20</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and its People*, pp31-2

<sup>21</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and its People*, pp41-2

<sup>22</sup> 'Incendiarism', *Australasian*, 15 April 1865, p6

<sup>23</sup> 'Advertising', *Argus*, 20 February 1886, p2

<sup>24</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 1844, folio 676

<sup>25</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4480, folio 831; and Tony Hannan, 'Burke, Thomas Mitchell (1870-1949)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1979, available online

<sup>26</sup> Streeton, McCubbin, Longstaff, and Mackennel were all Australian artists, while Kean Street was the namesake of a prominent local farmer and town planning advocate, Peter Kean, the developer behind the Mount Eagle and Glenard estates.

<sup>27</sup> In interwar Melbourne, beyond the Griffins, breaking with the typical gridiron subdivision was the calling card of the progressive surveyor, Saxil Tuxen (1855-1975).





Extract from a subdivision map for the Hartland Estate, dating from 1940s, with the subject allotment (no 59) outlined in red (Source: SLV, MAPS 820 BJE 1880)

Hazel Alice Heather acquired the subject allotment in August 1921 and held it for 30 years, during which time no development of the site occurred.<sup>28</sup> A covenant was placed on the site with the sale, and presumably others in the subdivision, that only a single residence could be erected on the site and prohibiting other building types, including commercial/industrial, educational or religious-affiliated. Furthermore, a tile or slate roof was required, no paling or close iron fences could be erected, and construction cost was to be not less than £500.

A 1931 aerial photograph (below) shows that Burke Road North not laid been out yet and that the land between Lower Heidelberg Road and the *Birrarung* /Yarra River was paddocks or farmland associated with the former Hartlands Estate. The Boulevard is evident, but none of the roads within the subdivision had been formed.

Ten years later, the 1942 MMBW plan (following) depicts the construction of only a single house in the subdivision east of Burke Road North on Keam Street, with only a few, had been constructed nearby on Burke Road North. The same circumstance is evident in a 1946 aerial photograph.<sup>29</sup>

John Leslie Smith, a Commonwealth public servant from Caulfield, became the proprietor of the subject land in April 1953.<sup>30</sup> He, too, undertook no works at the site as indicated in a 1954 aerial photograph. At this time, the northern section of Longstaff Avenue had not been laid out, nor had a section of Burke Road North. In addition, few houses had been constructed east of Burke Road North in this part of Ivanhoe East.

<sup>28</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4486, folio 012; Hazel Alice Heather died on 3 December 1956 at Portland, three years after selling the site (*Argus*, 4 December 1956, p24)

<sup>29</sup> Adastra Airways, Photo-map Ringwood\_849A1B, <https://services.land.vic.gov.au/DELWPmaps/historical-photomaps/>

<sup>30</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4486, folio 012



1931 aerial photograph, showing approximate location of subject place (star)  
 Hartlands is the large house to the south-west (circled)  
 (Source: Landata, Project 1931, Run 17, Frame 3328)



MMBW detail plan no 2601, dated 1942  
 Subject site is outlined in dashed red  
 (Source: SLV)





March 1954 aerial photograph, showing approximate location of subject place, indicated by the red star  
(Source: Landata, Project no 174, run 15, frame 75)

In May 1959, Jack Maxwell Crittenden, then of 142 Glenferrie Road, Malvern acquired the triangular subject lot.<sup>31</sup>

Crittenden (1921-2002) had served in the AIF during the Second World War, including in the Middle East and Papua New Guinea.<sup>32</sup> Afterwards, in 1948, he married Mavis Oswin Morgan (1927-2015),<sup>33</sup> and they had two children – Gavin Andrew and Megan Venetta.<sup>34</sup> Crittenden had taken over the family business of boutique grocery stores in 1954 on the death of his father Oscar Rupert George Crittenden, along with his brother Douglas Oscar and other long-standing employees of the company.

The Crittenden's chain, focusing on high-quality produce, often imported goods not readily available elsewhere, had been established in 1917 by Crittenden, Snr, when he opened his first store in Malvern, followed by another in Toorak in 1936. In the postwar period, the company expanded, especially the liquor outlet side, to create another five stores in other affluent suburbs, including one in Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe. Myer brought the business in 1982. They sold it to Coles in 1987, who closed most of the stores.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4486, folio 012

<sup>32</sup> NAA, Series B883, VX47412

<sup>33</sup> Marriage Certificate, BDMV, registration 10445/1948. Details of the wedding were recorded in the 'Other Ceremonies', *Argus*, 9 June 1948, p8

<sup>34</sup> Ancestry.com.au

<sup>35</sup> 'Crittendens', *Wikipedia*, available online

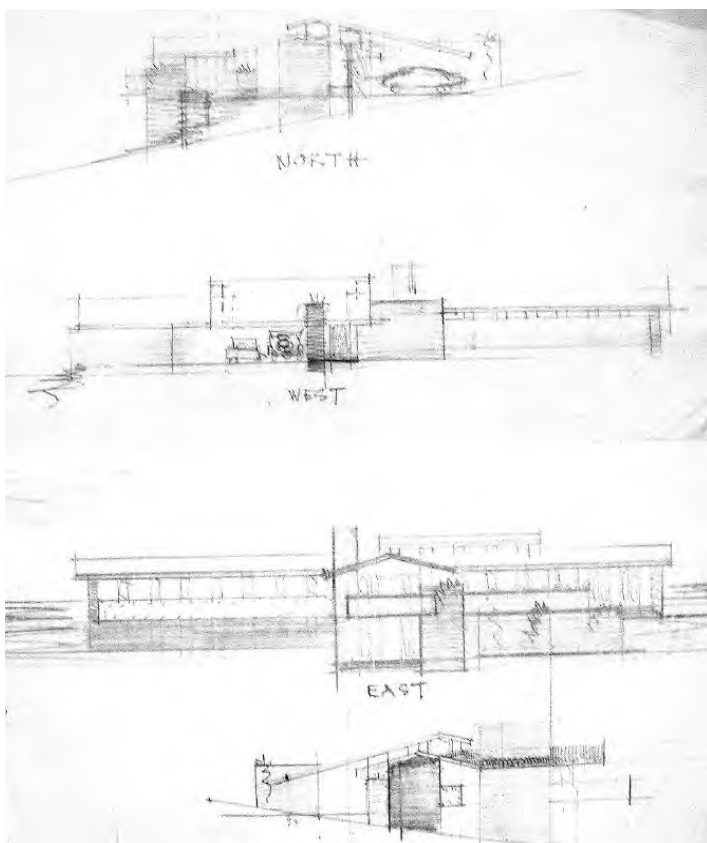




'The new Ivanhoe shop ... Now residents of Heidelberg, Kew, Northcote and Balwyn, can join with tens of thousands in the city and other suburbs in shopping at Crittenden's by going to 185 Upper Heidelberg Road.'  
(Source: 'Crittenden's Now at Ivanhoe!', *Age*, 31 October 1978, p17)

*Crittenden House* was designed by David Chancellor of the eminent architectural firm of Chancellor & Patrick during 1961, with the landscape design by William Head, with whom the firm had previously collaborated at the equally steep site of the Freiberg House, 26 Yarravale Road, Kew (1959-60).<sup>36</sup> Chancellor & Patrick designed other projects for Crittenden/s, including additions to their Toorak store (1966), alterations to the Glenferrie Road, Malvern store (1968) and a holiday house on the beachfront at Brighton (1973).<sup>37</sup>

Preliminary sketches for *Crittenden House* were prepared by David Chancellor, while the detailed drawings were prepared by Ian Banner (dated 19 October 1961). Construction appears to have taken place over 1961.<sup>38</sup>



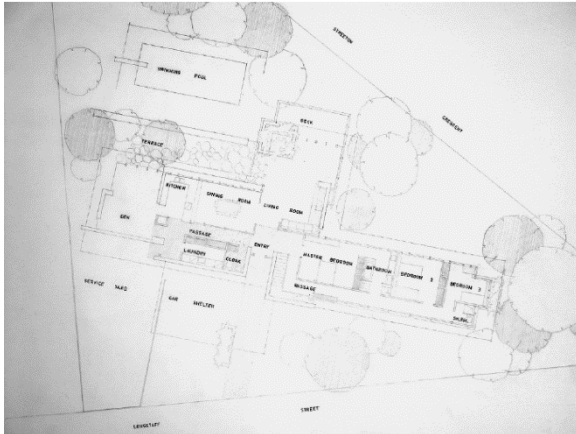
Preliminary Sketches, *Crittenden House*  
(Source: Winsome Callister, *Anchoring Identity*, vol 2, figure 305)

<sup>36</sup> Winsome Callister, *Anchoring Identity – the Architecture of Chancellor and Patrick 1950-1970*, PhD Thesis, Monash University, Department of Visual Arts, vol 1, 2007, pp201, 220, 356. Elsewhere it is incorrectly said that Edna Walling was responsible for the landscaping at the Freiberg House.

<sup>37</sup> Callister, *Anchoring Identity*, vol 1, pp220, 224, 253, 308, 373, 380

<sup>38</sup> Callister, *Anchoring Identity*, vol 2, figure 307

The Crittendens were residing at the site by 1963,<sup>39</sup> and retained the property for nearly two decades (until 1977).<sup>40</sup>



Main level plan, drawn by Ian Banner 19 October 1961  
(Source: W Callister, *Anchoring Identity*, vol 2, figure 307)



View from Streeton Crescent by Commercial Photographic Co, 1964 (Source: W Callister, *Anchoring Identity*, vol 2, figure 308)

Several photographs were taken soon after the house was completed, including a series of eleven photographs by Peter Wille (1931-71), a 'modern' enthusiast who traversed Melbourne photographing – in his view – notable examples of the modern movement.<sup>41</sup> Wille's lens captured *Crittenden House* when the garden was partly established and the pool installed.<sup>42</sup> These photographs provide an opportunity to more fully appreciate the bold and intricate volumetric expression of the design, which since have been partly concealed by planting.



View from Longstaff Street by Commercial Photographic Co, 1964<sup>43</sup>  
Note the original letterbox  
(Source: W Callister, *Anchoring Identity*, vol 2, figure 306)

Other elements evident in these early photographs are the planter boxes to the rear/north and extensive terracing required to the steep slope to the garden area to the north side, with several retaining walls of coursed basalt blocks required.

<sup>39</sup> 1963 Victorian electoral role, Division of Bateman, Subdivision of Ivanhoe, p38

<sup>40</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4486, folio 012

<sup>41</sup> 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).

<sup>42</sup> SLV, H91.244/1261-1271

<sup>43</sup> There is a copy of this image held at the SLV, H92.20/7589, and attributed to Lyle Fowler of the Commercial Photographic Co., Carlton



*Crittenden House*, mid-1960s, northeast end  
Extant eucalypts near the stairs on Streeton Crescent are evident  
(Source: SLV, Peter Wille, H91.244/1261)



*Crittenden House*, mid-1960s, northwest end  
Note clerestory roof section and planter boxes to rear deck  
(Source: SLV, Peter Wille, H91.244/1262)

The outdoor pool was installed during 1964 by Southern Cross Pools, Mentone and required the provision of another basalt retaining wall.<sup>44</sup> Additions to *Crittenden House* were undertaken in 1965, also by Chancellor & Patrick.<sup>45</sup> The latter may relate to the east end of the basement level, which was defined as 'future expansion' on the original the drawings of 1961.

### Chancellor & Patrick

The practice of Chancellor & Patrick existed for a half-century, from 1954 to 2003 though Chancellor retired circa 1982, were responsible for several iconic houses. Both principals were Melbourne-born – David William Chancellor in 1926 and William Rex Patrick in 1927 – and studied at the University of Melbourne, though Patrick undertook a diploma initially at RMIT (then the Royal Melbourne Technical College). After graduating, both worked at Yuncken Freeman Bros Griffiths & Simpson, with Chancellor setting up a solo practice at Frankston in 1952.<sup>46</sup> Subsequently, they undertook many projects in that area.

The pair had a mutual interest in Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian and Prairie style house designs, Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony's work in Australia, and the structural logic and expressive devices employed' by Austrian émigré architect based in Los Angeles, Richard Neutra.<sup>47</sup>

Chancellor & Patrick 'mediated modernism with a concern for the region and site, using traditional Australian forms and materials, combined with the Melbourne post-war interest in avant-garde experiment with plan, form and structure.' The *McCraith House* (1955) on the hill overlooking Dromana and the *Freiberg House* (1958) in Kew are well-known examples. The former has a butterfly roof, and the latter a prominent extruded gable-roofed wing that was a hallmark of their work at that time. However, they also designed a range of other building types, including commercial (banks), churches, hospitals, kindergartens and during the 1960s-1970s, several halls of residence at La Trobe and Monash universities.<sup>48</sup>

### 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

<sup>44</sup> Council Building File, permit application Sp04/64. The estimated cost was £1683.

<sup>45</sup> Callister, *Anchoring Identity*, vol 1, p369

<sup>46</sup> Winsome Callister, 'Chancellor & Patrick', in Philip Goad and Julie Willis, eds, *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Melbourne 2012, p139

<sup>47</sup> Philip Goad, *Melbourne Architecture*, The Watermark Press, 1999, p193

<sup>48</sup> Callister, 'Chancellor & Patrick', p139



## Comparative Analysis

Chancellor & Patrick received few commissions in the municipality. *Crittenden House* was one of only two new or greenfields projects – the other known is *Davis House* on St Helena Road, Greensborough, 1959 (not located). Another two known projects were to existing houses (additions/alterations), both in Ivanhoe.<sup>49</sup>

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'.

Only two individual houses constructed in the 1960s are affected by a HO in the municipality, along with several in the Elliston Estate (HO92), though a few are recommended for listing as part of this Study. *Crittenden House*, dating to 1961, is effectively on the cusp of the postwar period and late 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, in many ways, it looks forward to approaches that emerged over the 1960s, such as an interests 'natural' or recycled/reclaimed material, flat or pitched roofs, exposed masonry (concrete, recycled or clinker bricks), stained timberwork (fascias, openings, linings) and the continuity of the materiality between the interior and exterior. As the decade progresses, such a palette became more robust under the influence of Brutalism and the natural/native landscape more integrated into the overall design.

The following HOs are broadly comparable to *Crittenden House*:

- *Williams House*, 4 Glenard Drive, Eaglemont (HO146) – designed by Charles Duncan in 1963 and awarded the RIAA Victoria Architecture Medal (1965). It consists of a series of overlapping volumes with stepped flat roofs and extensive use of window walls. At construction, the design was described as an 'aggressive play of clinker brick walls and hefty roof planes edged by deep-fascias of stained timber'.<sup>50</sup> While displaying a more robust external palette of clinker brick and employing flat roofs than *Crittenden House*, it also continues its stained timber-lined ceilings between the exterior and interior.
- *Featherston House*, 22 The Boulevard, Ivanhoe (HO65) – designed by Robin Boyd in 1968 for Grant and Mary Featherstone, notable industrial and furniture designers, it received a posthumous citation in the RIAA (Victoria) awards of 1972. This iconic house of tan brick with reinforced concrete floors is defined by a series of elevated platforms to a large 'garden room' featuring a full, double-height window wall to the rear. From the street it has an unassuming presence, with a garage effectively screening it.
- *Elliston Precinct* (HO92) in Rosanna – a residential development by the innovative company Merchant Builders, initiated in 1969. Four notable architectural architects/practices were engaged (Charles Duncan, Daryl Jackson and Evan Walker, David McGlashan and Neil Everist, and Graeme Gunn) to prepare multiple designs with Ellis Stone responsible for integrating the subdivision with a contrived bushland landscape. Several houses by these architects were constructed in the southern section of the estate (Bachli Court to Von Ninda Crescent). These houses are generally modestly scaled and nestled in Stone's landscaping with a palette of brown or tan brick, flat or skillion roofs, and stained finish to the timberwork (fascias, windows, etc). In 1971 Merchant Builders sold the remaining parts of the estate for speculative development.

## Intactness

Intact

## Previous Assessment

- Australian Institute of Architects, Victorian Chapter, *Register of Significant 20<sup>th</sup> Century Architecture* (misdated)

<sup>49</sup> Callister, *Anchoring Identity*, vol 1, pp203, 347, 376, 379; and vol 2, figs 325-326. The other two documented projects were additions to the *Barnett House* in York Ave (1967) and alterations to the *Sidwell House*, Outlook Drive (1968). Another house seems to be incorrectly listed as being in Ivanhoe (p324, *Phillips House* – Mountain View Road, 1954) but was likely in North Balwyn.

<sup>50</sup> *Cross-Section*, The University of Melbourne Department of Architecture, issue no 142, 1 August 1964, np

- 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 (walls)
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	Yes (Lemon scented gums on Streeton Crescent)
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

**Extent of Heritage Overlay**

The proposed extent of the heritage overlay relates to the property boundaries and is outlined approximately below.



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

## HILLIARD HOUSE

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<b>Address</b>	6 Quandalan Close, Ivanhoe East
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1968-69
<b>Period</b>	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Hilliard House* at 6 Quandalan Close, Ivanhoe East is significant. It was designed by Smith & Tracey and constructed during 1968-69 for the timber merchant, James Hilliard and wife Effie.

The significant elements are its broad gable roof, clad in slate, that extends forward to form a wide return verandah to the front, which is lined in stained timber boards with a pergola/cut-out section at the north end, white-painted brick walls, timber-framed windows, and timber front door. The paving to the terraced front courtyard, carport and the curvilinear, painted brick front fence are also significant. The timber ceiling to the living area is also significant.

#### How is it Significant?

*Hilliard House* is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

#### Why is it Significant?

*Hilliard House* is of historical significance as one of several houses in this part of Ivanhoe East, where there is a high number of postwar architect-designed houses, especially concentrated in an enclave primarily east of Burke Road North. Land in this part of the suburb was relatively expensive and so attracted a well-heeled demographic, while the challenging topography of many sites demanded the services of an architect. Leading designers were responsible for many houses in the area, although *Hilliard House*



may be the only in the municipality undertaken by the well-regarded, although now not widely known, architectural practice of Smith & Tracey. (Criterion A)

*Hilliard House* is aesthetically significant as a remarkably intact and unusual example of a Japanese-influence domestic design in Melbourne. The placement of the dwelling high on a podium is striking and has a clear indebtedness to temple precedents. Its oversailing low-pitched gable roof, wide projecting rafters, exquisite timber-lined soffit – which extend internally to line the raked ceiling of the main living space – and regular division of openings or vertical members, deftly contrasted against the white walls/panels, support an accomplished design. *Hilliard House* has no ready comparison in the municipality. (Criterion E)

## Description

The subject property is located in the southeast corner of an irregular parcel of land (556m<sup>2</sup>) and is wider at its southern end. The site has a long, curved frontage and the ground level falls nearly 3 metres across its length, from the southwest to the northeast.

The original front boundary fence is painted brick to match the house, with toothed corners, and follows the sinuous line of the boundary, though it is setback creating a narrow garden bed with various planting (small trees and shrubs). The brick fence is high but allows for extensive views of the upper portion of the house. There are three openings in the fence – two pedestrian (to the northern end) and one vehicular (southern end) – all with similar metal palisade gates. The wider main pedestrian entry includes a return wall, which screens views of the building.

There is a timber-framed double carport at the north end of the site, which has an irregular footprint with brick piers to the corners and a flat roof, clad in profiled metal sheeting. The main open space is the terraced courtyard to the front, which has some small garden beds but is largely paved in red brick.



Northern end of site, with carport on left

*Hilliard House* has an L-shaped footprint and is located in the southeast corner with a minimal setback from the rear boundaries to take full solar advantage of the site's orientation. It is set on a podium, creating a partial lower storey/basement. The brick walls are painted white.

The slate-clad roof has a mitred edge to the ridge and no metal flashing. The roof form is a broad gable with an unusual asymmetrical profile in that the front faces are wider than the rear faces as they extend over the verandah. To the north front

corner, there is a cut-out pergola section below which is a sunken garden bed.

The wide rafters are exposed and extend beyond the edge of the roof. The raked soffit/ceiling is lined in stained tongue and grooved timber boards that extend through to the principal part of the interior (living and dining areas), unifying it with the exterior. The rafters are housed in the central part of the verandah's timber posts; likewise, the fascia in the outer part of the rafters. Such notched detailing is highly reminiscent of traditional Asian techniques, where metal nails/fixing are not employed, albeit in an interpretive manner.



North end showing carport and lower level

The verandah extends about the southern arm/wing. The western end of the south wing is fully glazed (living areas), including the peak of the gable end. There is a varying fenestration to other parts of the exterior; singular, tall units to the north and northern part of the west elevations, with the same – but grouped – to the east and south elevations. The window units typically consist of a fixed lower pane, a wide timber mullion, and an awning to the upper part. The mid-rail of the doors aligns with the mullions of the window units.

The timber elements, except for the soffit, are painted/stained brown including the windows, doors, verandah posts, rafters, and fascia.

The house is two levelled, though this is not immediately apparent. The upper level includes kitchen and living areas and bedrooms/study at the north end, and the lower level includes additional bedrooms and a rumpus room. Contemporary photographs of the site, including the interior, suggest that the latter is also largely intact.<sup>1</sup>

*Hilliard House's* unusual and distinctive design is rooted in the architectural ethos of the late 1960s in several regards, such as the use of natural or recycled materials and in its confident embrace of a singular expression, which in this case reveals a strong Japanese influence. As noted by architectural historian, Philip Goad:

The 1960s saw a return to the compartmented plan, natural materials and vernacular methods of construction, a search for traditional symbolic references to home, truth in structure and especially materials were all part of the process ... (and) Australia began to shake off the

<sup>1</sup> '6 Quandolan Close, Ivanhoe East', realestate.com.au, [www.realestate.com.au/property/6-quandolan-cl-ivanhoe-east-vic-3079](http://www.realestate.com.au/property/6-quandolan-cl-ivanhoe-east-vic-3079)



self-conscious copying of form and style of previous decades ... and saw a search for an Australian architecture appropriate to the bush local material and structural techniques.<sup>2</sup>



The use of recycled slate tiles to the roof provides a traditional and more refined response than pantiles, oft used at this time. Their edges have been carefully recessed behind the wide fascia to provide a particularly fine and flat finish. Similarly, the extensive use of timber-lined ceilings was relatively common in high-end contemporary examples; however, in this instance, they reinforce the Japanese aesthetic, especially as they are continuous between the interior and exterior at the front of the *Hilliard House*. The Japanese influence, especially referencing the temple tradition, is also evident in the raised platform on which the house sits, the sharp contrast between white and vertical members (principally the posts of the verandah and their regular grid-like formation) and the detailing to the timber beams and posts.

Although interest in Japanese architecture was an underlying current in progressive late 1960s design circles, it was rarely so pronounced in the residential domain as at *Hilliard House*. The influence is more readily apparent in some larger tertiary education projects of the mid-to-late 1960s, principally the *C B Alexander Presbyterian Agricultural College* at Paterson/Tocal in NSW (near Maitland), built between 1963 and 1965 to a design by Phillip Cox and Ian McKay. Its covered walkways (near the dining hall) and stepped courtyard treatment are similar to those at *Hilliard House*. In Victoria, architect Des Bloink's work at Glenormiston College (1969-73) and the *Student Amenities Building* at Burnley Horticultural College (1973) also reflects this trend.

The western interest in Japanese architecture, including in Australia, stemmed from the praise that leading modernists – such as Bruno Taut during the mid-1930s and Walter Gropius from 1954 – had for the famed *Katsura Villa*, outside Kyoto. In Australia, the influential architect and commentator Robin Boyd, through his writings, namely *Kenzo Tange* (1962) and *New Directions in Japanese Architecture* (1968), played a key role in the dissemination of Japanese design approaches he felt coincided with the key precepts of the postwar modern movement. Boyd regularly infused his own work during the 1960s with aspects of Japanese architecture – from the traditional shoji screens at the *Wright House* in Warrandyte (1962) to contemporary Metabolism in the *Menzies Building* at La Trobe University (1965-70).<sup>3</sup> In Victoria, precedents or other examples of similar employment of *Hilliard House*'s wide oversailing roofs appear limited; however, some contemporary residential examples are noted in Adelaide and Perth.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Philip J Goad, *The modern house in Melbourne, 1945-1975*, PhD thesis, Faculty of Architecture Building & Planning, University of Melbourne, 1992, chapter 6, pp1-2

<sup>3</sup> Phillip Goad, 'Robin Boyd and the Post-War 'Japanisation of Western Ideas'', *Architectural Theory Review*, vol 1, issue 2, 2009, pp110-111, 114

<sup>4</sup> Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*, Angus & Robertson, 1989, pp224-49. In particular, there are some parallels with the work of John S Chappel and Dickson & Platten in South Australia.



## 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.<sup>5</sup> 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 (est. 1835) downstream of the *Birrarung/Yarra* at Melbourne.<sup>6</sup> However, as part of the 'Heidelberg' district in the Parish of Keelbundora, this area passed rapidly into private hands via an auction in Sydney Town in 1838.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup> 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 mostly undertaken by tenant farmers.<sup>9</sup> This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.<sup>10</sup>

Ivanhoe – its name stemming from Archibald Thom's 'Ivanhoe Estate' – remained a sparsely populated agricultural area until Melbourne's 'Land Boom' in the late 1880s.<sup>11</sup> 'Picturesque' terrain, varied outlooks and the high repute of the broader district drew often well-off newcomers. By the turn of the century, 'Beautiful Ivanhoe' was routinely portrayed as a 'fashionable', 'exclusive locality' of 'model homes'.<sup>12</sup> An improved railway connection to Melbourne in 1901 supported further middle-class growth, instigating 'four decades of slow and relatively affluent suburban sprawl' in the vicinity of Ivanhoe, Eaglemont, and Heidelberg train stations.<sup>13</sup>

During the interwar years, suburban Ivanhoe solidified, although its southern and eastern reaches remained primarily locked up by the expansive 'Hartlands', 'Charterisville', and 'Chelsworth' estates.<sup>14</sup> To navigate the complexities that accompanied the subdivision of these areas (sloping land, curving streets, views) in the postwar period and galvanised by the swelling influence of modernism, many of the new and generally moneyed proprietors sought the services of an architect.<sup>15</sup> By the early 1960s, distinct enclaves of upmarket, modernist design culture were apparent in the southern reaches of Ivanhoe and Ivanhoe East, with the aesthetic and lifestyle reverberations of the modern movement also shaping infill development in the more established environs of the locale.



View near Heidelberg in Victoria, pen and ink drawing, circa 1858  
(Source: Eugene von Guérard, National Gallery of Victoria)

<sup>5</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

<sup>6</sup> James Boyce, 1835: *The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13

<sup>9</sup> Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

<sup>10</sup> 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

<sup>11</sup> Thom's estate designation was inspired by a novel of the same name by Sir Walter Scott (1819).

<sup>12</sup> Ivanhoe & Alphington Progress Society, *Beautiful Ivanhoe: the suburb of model homes and scenic charm*, Model Studio, 1900, SLV

<sup>13</sup> Ivanhoe Station opened in 1888; however, inefficiencies in the Heidelberg-Melbourne railway line initially bedevilled growth.

<sup>14</sup> Ivanhoe grew from roughly 2,000 residents in 1913 to nearly 8,000 by 1933 (*Victorian Year Books*, Australian Bureau of Statistics).

<sup>15</sup> Don Garden, 'Ivanhoe', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008

### Site-specific

The subject allotment derives from Portion 2 of the Parish of Keelbundora, a roughly 420-hectare holding purchased (along with portions 1 and 3) by Thomas Walker in 1838. A Sydney-based Scottish banker and philanthrope with an eye for marketable land across the colony, Walker's intention in the Port Philip District was speculative from the start. He commenced subdividing his acquisitions as early as mid-1839 to enormous profit.<sup>16</sup>

In the resulting sales, Portion 2 was carved up into multiple large estates. The subject land formed part of a roughly 33-hectare farm purchased by one of the first surveyors of the district, William Wedge Darke, and known as 'Waverly'. Darke appears to have developed this property rapidly, for at its sale in December 1839, it was noted as cleared, fenced, and under cultivation with a weatherboard residence.<sup>17</sup> Ultimately, Waverly was incorporated into Captain Sylvester John Brown's (the original spelling was 'Brown', the 'e' was added later by his son) considerable 'Hartlands' estate. Brown was a onetime shipmaster in the East India Company who had made a small fortune in Sydney through whaling and trade.<sup>18</sup> (He was also the father of multifarious Thomas Alexander Browne, celebrated during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as the novelist 'Rolfe Boldrewood'.) He made Hartlands his familial seat in 1840, cultivating the flats and socialising with the area's gentry.<sup>19</sup>

However, within a few years, the colonial economy's worsening conditions forced the foreclosure of Hartlands – the stress of which shattered Brown Snr. A fortunate marriage between his daughter and a relative of Walker (the mortgage holder) enabled the debt to be cleared through the partial sale of the estate in 1853 (namely, the western portion, establishing Maltravers Road) and the 'Brownes of Hartlands' were able to reoccupy the remainder of the traduced estate.<sup>20</sup> They remained there until the mid-1860s, departing in the wake of their residence's destruction by arson, after which the holding was leased agriculturally.<sup>21</sup>

The infamous 'Land Boom' syndicate, the Trustees, Executors & Agency Company, acquired most of the southeast segment of Portion 2 in 1889, including a large section of the former Hartlands estate, instigating intensive subdivision but sluggish development.<sup>22</sup> Castella Street was not laid until around 1928.<sup>23</sup> It was named after the viticulturist, François Robert de Castella, the nearby occupant of *Chartersville*, who was one of the owners of the property on either side of the street. A 1931 aerial photograph, reproduced below, shows this part of what would become known as Ivanhoe East as largely cleared, essentially rural land. At this time, the still sizable remnant of the Hartlands estate (to the north) remained the most prominent local entity.



1931 aerial photograph, showing approximate location of subject site, Hartlands is to the north-west (redstar)  
(Source: Landata, Project no 131, Run 17, Frame 3328)

<sup>16</sup> W Joy, 'Walker, Thomas (1804-1886)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1967, available online

<sup>17</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and its People*, p34

<sup>18</sup> He was also the father of multifarious Thomas Alexander Browne, celebrated during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as the novelist 'Rolfe Boldrewood'.

<sup>19</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and its People*, pp31-2

<sup>20</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and its People*, pp41-2

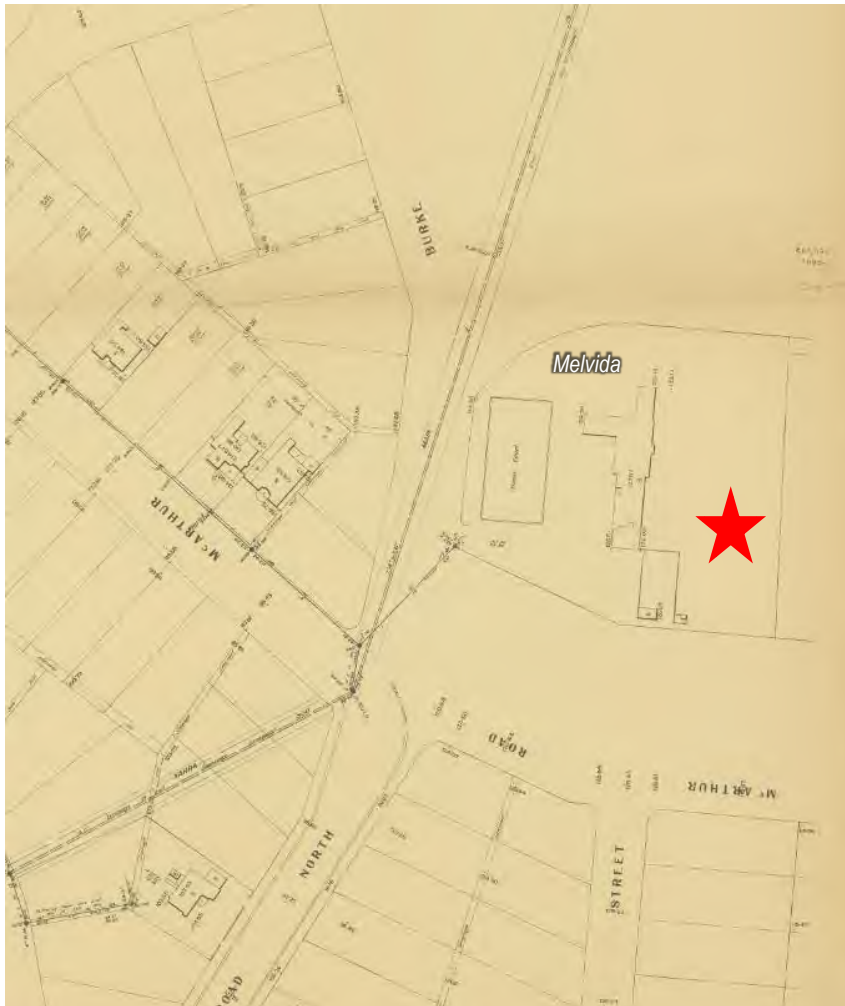
<sup>21</sup> 'Incendiarism', *Australasian*, 15 April 1865, p6

<sup>22</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 2142, folio 233

<sup>23</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 5435, folio 947

On 22 April 1940, Ernest Alfred Watts acquired a nearly 1-hectare parcel, which included the subject land.<sup>24</sup> On the same day, close to half an acre to the east on The Boulevard was also transferred to Mabel, his wife.<sup>25</sup> Their house at what is now 3 Quandolan Close – initially known as *Melvida* and later as *Quandolan*<sup>26</sup> – may have been constructed by that time. Some six months prior, the Watts had been living in Kew in 1939,<sup>27</sup> but were residing on Burke Road North, Ivanhoe by 1942.<sup>28</sup> Watts was one of Melbourne's leading builder, undertaking several office buildings in the CBD and other major construction projects, and had been appointed president of the Master Builders Association in 1938.<sup>29</sup>

A 1941 MMBW plan for the area depicts *Melvida/Quandolan* soon after construction on its large holding. The subject place is shown as vacant, similar to much of the surrounding area. A comparable circumstance is also evident in a 1945 aerial.<sup>30</sup> In 1951, a small sliver from the parcel of land owned by Mabel on The Boulevard was transferred to *Melvida* and shortly afterwards sold.<sup>31</sup> This narrow strip of land relates to the eastern edge of the subject property.



MMBW detail plan no. 2600, dated 1941

Red star indicates the approximate location of subject place relative to *Melvida*

(Source: SLV)

<sup>24</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 6438, folio 894

<sup>25</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 6438, folio 895. Most of this land was sold in 1950 and relates to 365-375 The Boulevard.

<sup>26</sup> The house was referred to as *Melvida* by 1945 ('Garden Fete at Ivanhoe', *Herald*, 15 March 1945, p11) and *Quandolan* by 1965 on a Certificate of Title (vol 8416, folio 603)

<sup>27</sup> 'Engagement announced at Party', *Age*, 11 September 1939, p3; *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria*, 1940, p1971. Watts was listed at 1291 Burke Road, Kew

<sup>28</sup> *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria*, 1942, p439

<sup>29</sup> 'Personal', *Herald*, 20 July 1938, p12

<sup>30</sup> Adastra Airways, Aerial survey of Victoria, Ringwood, 849a1b, The University of Melbourne

<sup>31</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 7736, folio 040



A 1954 aerial photograph shows the extent of the planting and gardens areas of *Melvida/Quandolan* by this time, with the subject place comprising part of a treed rear garden. The east side of Burke Road North was still in an embryonic phase, including the nearby section of McArthur Road. To the east of *Melvida/Quandolan* on The Boulevard, however, a well-established estate had developed.



1954 aerial photograph

The appropriate location of the subject place, then part of *Melvida/Quandolan* garden, is circled in dashed red  
(Source: Landata, Project 174, Run 15, Frame 74)

Watts retained *Melvida/Quandolan* until 1955 when it was transferred to Davies Coop & Co Ltd. Six years later, a company, Dovers P/L of Drewery Lane, acquired the property.<sup>32</sup> In 1963, Dovers undertook a seven-lot subdivision, establishing Quandolan Close. Their subdivision included two lots on Burke Road North and five lots to Quandolan Close.<sup>33</sup> The pre-existing house (Lot 3) became 3 Quandolan Close.

The subject place was identified as Lot 6 and, in 1965, sold to Donald Henry Trescowthick, a noted Melbourne businessman and philanthropist, and his wife, who were then the occupants of *Quandolan* (at that point, 46-50 Burke Road North). Ownership of the vacant land changed twice more before James William Hilliard, a company director of 10 Turner Street, Pascoe Vale, acquired it in November 1967.<sup>34</sup>

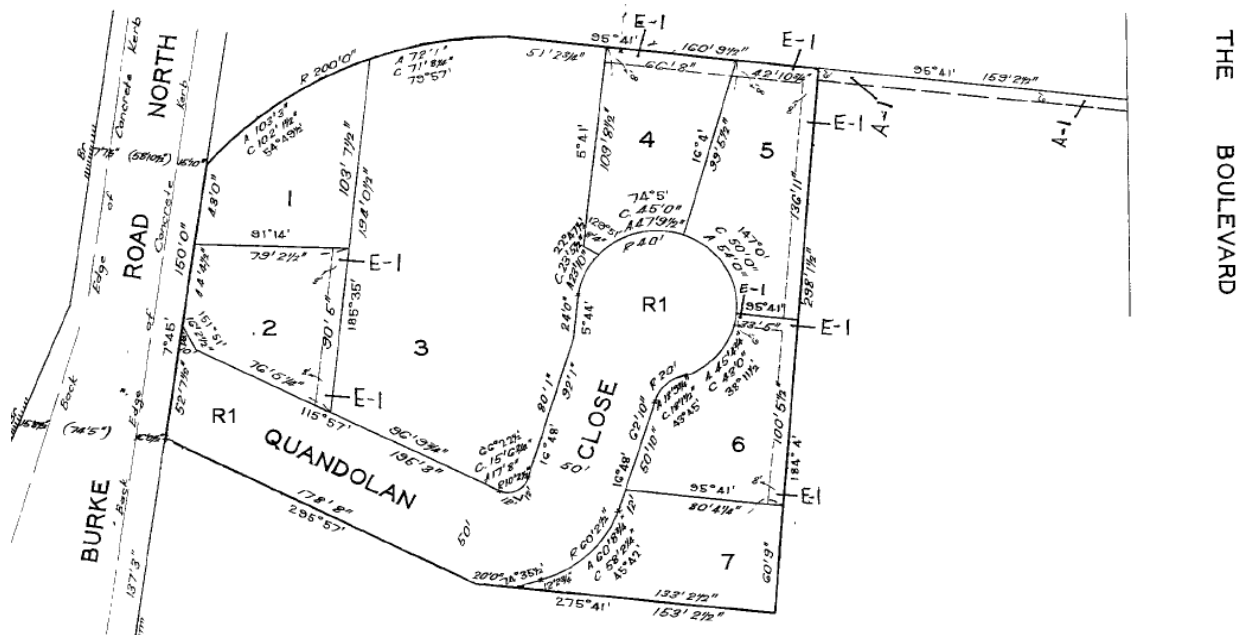
Presumably, the Hilliard acquired the site intending to erect a distinctive, architect-designed house. For only a few months after their acquisition, in January 1968, the practice he had engaged, Smith & Tracey, had prepared a perspective for a new residence. This drawing largely accords with *Hilliard House*, showing most of its notable features, such as its L-shaped

<sup>32</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 7736, folio 040

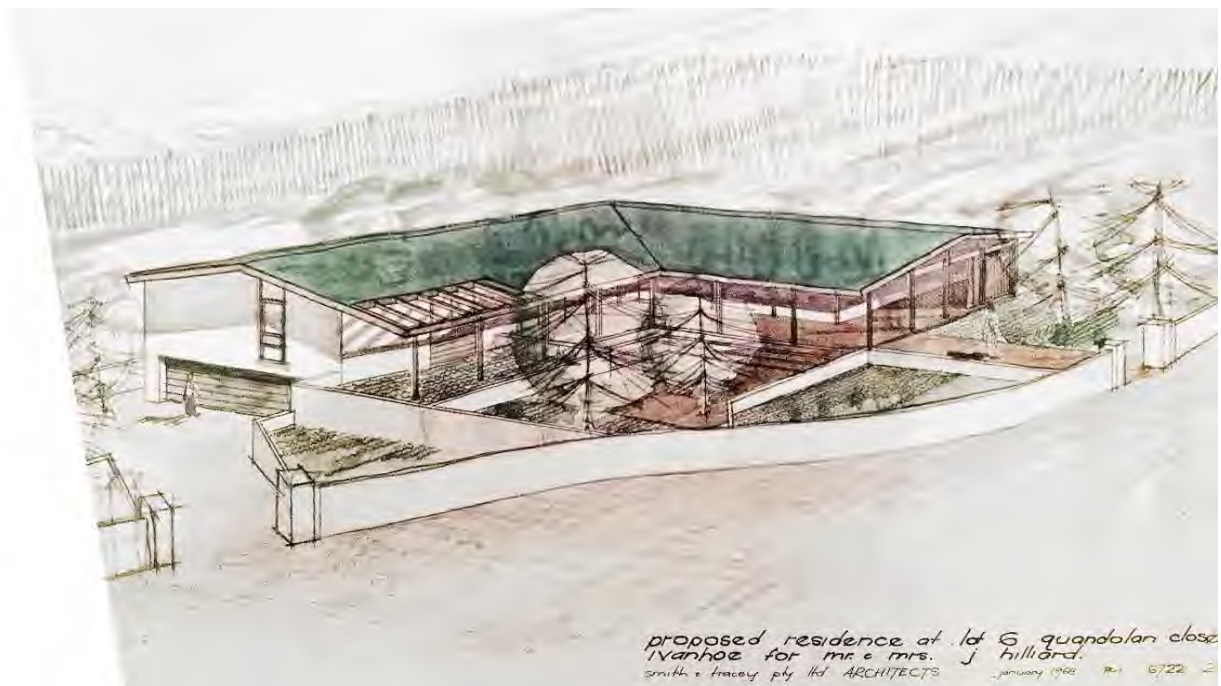
<sup>33</sup> Landata, LP56977

<sup>34</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 8416, folio 603

configuration, orientation, podium and broad roof with pergola cut-out. The principal difference is that a garage was proposed to the lower level, which later became a rumpus room with a separate carport included to the front.



1963 subdivision plan for Quandolan Close by Dovers P/L  
(Source: Landata, LP56977)

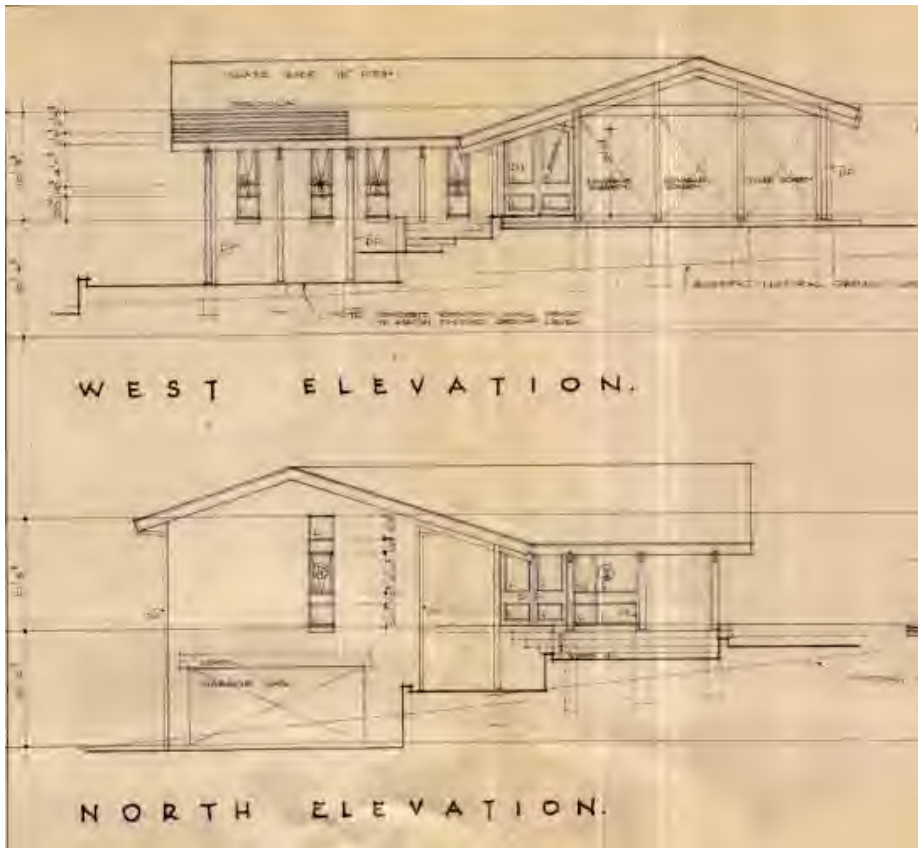


Perspective drawing, dated January 1969

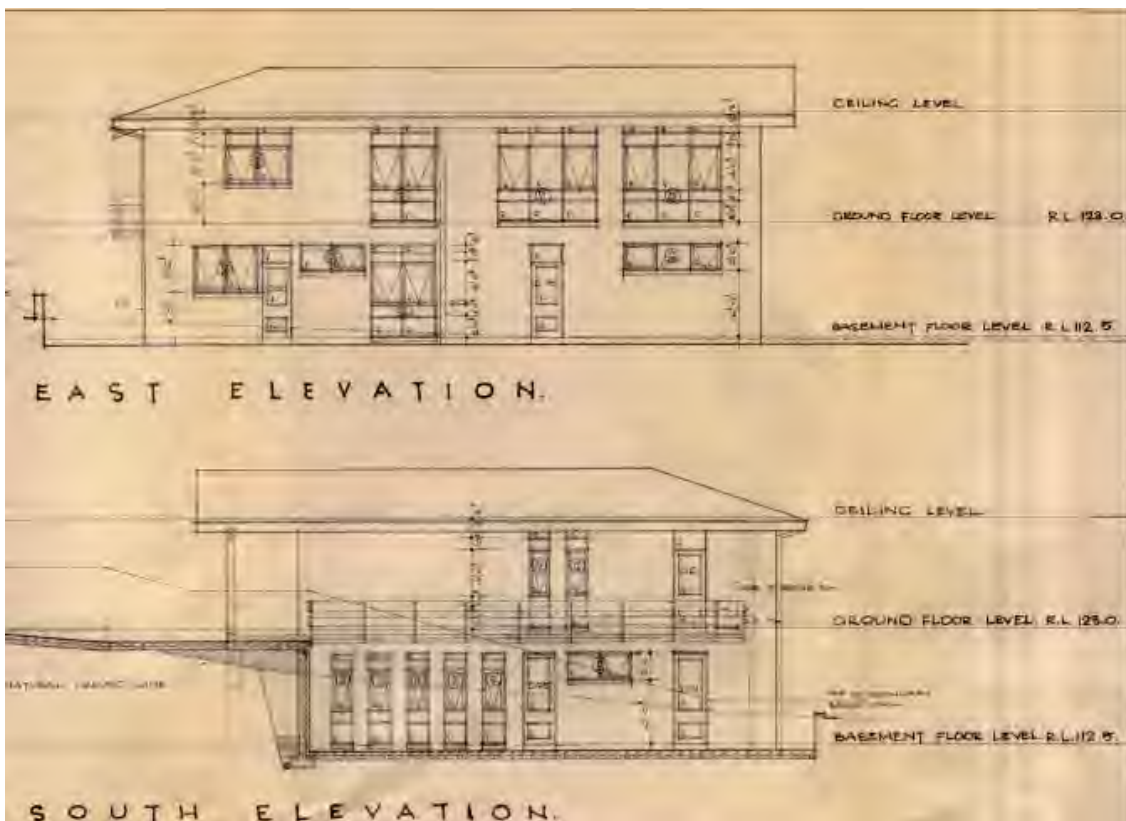
(Source: Built Heritage Pty Ltd, 'Smith & Tracey', *Dictionary of Unsung Architects*, [www.builtheritage.com.au/dua\\_smithtracey.html](http://www.builtheritage.com.au/dua_smithtracey.html))

A set of drawings, mostly dated June 1968, were approved by the City of Heidelberg in August 1968. The specification of June 1968 provides details of the high-quality or salvaged materials employed in the building, including pressed red bricks, all bagged externally, Western Red Cedar window frames, second-hand slate with mitred ridges, and copper gutters (concealed) and downpipes.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> City of Heidelberg Building File, *Specification* dated June 1968, pp7, 13, 17



West and north elevations of *Hilliard House*, Smith & Tracey, dated 1968  
(Source: City of Heidelberg Building File)



East and South elevations of *Hilliard House*, Smith & Tracey, dated 1968  
(Source: City of Heidelberg Building File)



An aerial photograph dated January 1969 suggests that *Hilliard House* was then under construction.<sup>36</sup> It had been completed by at least the following year, as James Hilliard and his wife were listed at the site in the 1970 electoral roll.<sup>37</sup> *Hilliard House* was the last residence to be constructed in Quandalong Close.<sup>38</sup>

Born in Brunswick, James Hilliard only lived in the house for a few years before dying at age 66 in April 1973.<sup>39</sup> He was survived by his wife, Effie May (Bunty) and their two children – Geoffrey and Anita (Mrs Colliver).<sup>40</sup> James had married Effie Pearce (1909-90) in 1933.<sup>41</sup>

Hilliard had a long career as a timber merchant, only having retired in 1972.<sup>42</sup> According to his probate, Hilliard held extensive shares in two companies, both of which were registered in Sussex Street, Coburg – the Sussex Timber & Trading Company P/L and Hilliard Holdings P/L. He also owned three racehorses (Yew, Red Light, Ideal Show) and two unnamed yearlings. In 1973, the *Hilliard House* was valued at \$45,000.<sup>43</sup>

The property was transferred to his widow in September 1974, who retained it for another twelve years.<sup>44</sup> When the property was offered for sale in 1986, it was advertised as a 'Distinctive Masterpiece of Top Quality':

Huge rooms with vaulted redwood timber lined ceilings and tall walls of glass overlooking beautifully landscaped garden with large areas of brick paved verandahs and terraces. When this magnificent residence was constructed no expense was spared to ensure this masterpiece was of top quality and its fastidious owners have continued to maintain this standard.<sup>45</sup>

## Smith & Tracey

Daniel Noel Tracey (1916-92) and Desmond Francis Smith (1918-2003), who studied at the Melbourne University Architectural Atelier and were active Catholics, formed a partnership in 1948.<sup>46</sup> By 1950, they were undertaking projects for the Catholic Church, from whom they gained many commissions over the years, with an early example being a modest church/school at a rural settlement in Tynong North.<sup>47</sup>

In 1952 the practice became Smith, Tracey, Lyon & Brock with the inclusion of two graduates from the Geelong Institute of Technology – Eric Lyon (1918-2006) and Leslie Thomas Brock (1920-2004). They gained a profile undertaking various projects for the Catholic Church, all reflecting a contemporary modernist aesthetic. Although less recognised for their residential commissions,<sup>48</sup> several examples were discussed in newspapers over the 1950s and 1960s. From the illustrated examples, the firm held a preference for low-pitched roof forms – either a broad gable or a skillion – and was receiving commissions from clients in 'progressive' suburbs where contemporary design was favoured (Beaumaris, Blackburn, Burwood).<sup>49</sup>

About 1959, with the departure of Lyon and Brock, the practice name reverted to Smith & Tracey. The 1960s was a particularly productive period for the office, particularly in regard to new church designs instigated by the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-63). During the decade, they were also responsible for several tenpin bowling alleys. Both original principals retired during the 1990s, however, the firm continues, initially under Gerard Smith, Desmond's son.<sup>50</sup> The domed Ukrainian Church of SS *Peter and Paul* in North Melbourne of 1963 is their most widely recognised design.

<sup>36</sup> Landata, Project no 754, Run 2, Frame 154

<sup>37</sup> Electoral Role, Division of Batman, Subdivision of Ivanhoe, 1970, p90

<sup>38</sup> Sands & McDougall's *Directory of Victoria*, 1970, p175

<sup>39</sup> Death Certificate, BDMV, registration 9418/1973

<sup>40</sup> 'Obituary', *Age*, 27 April 1973, p34

<sup>41</sup> Marriage Certificate, BDMV, registration 4991/1933; Death Certificate, BDMV, registration 15613/1990

<sup>42</sup> Tony Kennedy, 'Bookmakers blitzed on bets records', *Age*, 31 July 1972, p21. In this article about the large bets Hilliard placed on his horse, Yew, he is referred to as Mr Jim Hilliard.

<sup>43</sup> Probate for J W Hilliard (PROV, VPRS28, P6, Unit 415). Hilliard Holdings was liquidated in 1991.

<sup>44</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 8416, folio 603

<sup>45</sup> 'Advertisement'. *Age*, 29 November 1986, p75. NB – a photograph of *Hilliard House*'s frontage was included with the advertisement but the reproduction is poor.

<sup>46</sup> Simon Reeves, 'Smith & Tracey', in Philip Goad and Julie Willis, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp636-7

<sup>47</sup> 'Yarra Bank Meeting opens with Rosary', *Advocate*, 14 September 1950, p18

<sup>48</sup> Reeves, 'Smith & Tracey', p637

<sup>49</sup> For instance: *Argus*, 6 August 1953, p11; *Herald*, 16 October 1953, p11; *Argus*, 17 August 1956, p8; *Argus*, 26 October 1956, p8; and *Argus*, 9 November 1956, p8

<sup>50</sup> Reeves, 'Smith & Tracey', p637

## 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

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'.

Only two individual houses constructed in the 1960s are affected by a HO in the municipality, along with several in the Elliston Estate (HO92), though a few are recommended for listing as part of this Study. No other postwar house in the municipality, listed or otherwise, exhibits such a pronounced influence of Japanese or Asian architecture as the *Hilliard House*. In this regard, the subject place is unique. In other respects, its design reflects more common but still progressive contemporary design interests, such as the material palette of slate roofs, bagged walls, and stained timber linings, and the continuity of the materiality between the interior and exterior.

- *Williams House*, 4 Glenard Drive, Eaglemont (HO146) – an 'aggressive play of clinker brick walls and hefty roof planes edged by deep-facials of stained timber', built in 1963 to a design by noted organic architect, Charles Duncan.<sup>51</sup> It was later the recipient of the RIAA Victoria Architecture Medal (1965) and consists of a series of overlapping volumes with stepped flat roofs and extensive window walls. While displaying a more robust external palette, there are a similar use of stained, timber-lined ceilings that are continuous between the exterior and interior.
- *Featherston House*, 22 The Boulevard, Ivanhoe (HO65) – designed by Robin Boyd in 1968 for Grant and Mary Featherstone, notable industrial and furniture designers, it received a posthumous citation in the RIAA (Victoria) awards of 1972. This iconic house of tan brick with reinforced concrete floors is defined by a series of elevated platforms to a large 'garden room' featuring a full, double-height window wall to the rear. From the street, it has an unassuming presence, with a garage effectively screening it.

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.

## Intactness

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 (white-painted brick walls and stained timber)
Internal Alteration Controls	Yes (timber ceiling to living room)
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or fences	Yes (front fence)

<sup>51</sup> Cross-Section, The University of Melbourne Department of Architecture, issue no 142, 1 August 1964, np

## Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



Recommended extent of heritage overlay  
(Source: Nearthmap, March 2021)



## ST GEORGE PEACE MEMORIAL CHURCH

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<b>Address</b>	47 Warncliffe Road, Ivanhoe East
<b>Significance</b>	Local (likely State)
<b>Construction Date</b>	1936/53 (remnant part of original hall) and 1963-64 (main part)
<b>Period</b>	Mid-20 <sup>th</sup> century and late 20 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*St George Peace Memorial Church* at 47 Warncliffe Road, Ivanhoe East is significant. It consists of significant fabric remaining from the original church/hall, built in two stages during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and the principal construction phase of between 1963 and 1964, when it became known as the *St George Peace Memorial Church* as a memorial to all those who had fallen in armed conflict.

Though the site was acquired earlier (1930), the original hall to the southern boundary dates to 1936 (part, east end) and 1953 (most, west end); it has a gable roof clad in glazed terracotta tiles and ridge ventilators. The red brick walls are painted and feature buttresses with timber-framed openings. The original hall is a contributory element that has been well-integrated into the complex by the architects.

All of the original fabric of the main 1960s part is significant. It consists of tan brick walls ('Selkirk's Modular Santan' brick) and a low skillion roof following the site's slope, clad in tray deck. The most striking feature is the 70-columned colonnade of tall, bush-pole columns (now painted red-brown, though originally had a dark brown finish) with an arched fascia (originally a light colour) that extends across the front and another two sides of the courtyard as well as the raised walkway to the north side of the church and west elevation. The roof of the colonnade is steel-framed with additional bracing provided by cables, especially where open on both sides. The timber-framed openings – windows and doors – are original. Significant elements of the church interior

include the face brick walls, original timber ceiling and furniture (organ, altar, pulpit, lectern, pews), white cylindrical light fittings, baked glass (on a brick substrate) mural of 'Christ in Glory', and bronze baptismal font.

The four eucalypts to the north-west corner, though their condition/ULE may not be high, and the two exotics (likely Ash trees) at the south end of the courtyard are significant. The other trees are not significant.

## How is it Significant?

*St George Peace Memorial Church* is of local historical, social, and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

## Why is it Significant?

*St George Peace Memorial Church* is of historical and social significance as having been the centre of local community life – both specifically for worship by the Anglican parishioners but also supporting minds, bodies and souls generally - in this part of the municipality for three-quarters of a century. Construction of all phases was substantially supported by fund-raising efforts reflecting the key role the site has played and reflects the development of the area more broadly. The first, modest building on the site, part of which survives, was erected in 1936 for the initial small but growing community and was enlarged in 1953. A decade later (1963-64), a grander vision for the site was realised to support broader uses/needs of the fully established local community. This final phase was to the design of the eminent architect, Frederick Romberg, of the renowned practice of (Grounds,) Romberg and Boyd and is also significant as being one of the few religious projects undertaken by them. (Criteria A and G)

*St George Peace Memorial Church* is of aesthetic significance as a highly distinguished modernist church complex that unusually incorporates most of a pre-existing church hall. The overall form is cuboid with a gently sloping roof. The main part allows the downpipes to be concentrated onto the northern elevation and integrated into the consistent bay delineation of the exterior. Its format is unique, consisting of a square footprint with a central courtyard that opens onto the street (intended as a piazza/town square with activity occurring to each side) and through a tall colonnade of bush poles that extends about much of the building. The design by Frederick Romberg is a rare instance of such a pronounced use of vernacular detailing (bush poles) on a clearly urban building, which provides a level of grandeur that softens the otherwise modernist rigour of the geometry and configuration of openings. The church's interior has a calming, muted palette and strong connection to the exterior and is open to the street, serving to demystify the church activities. It is further enhanced by artist-designed elements (mural and baptismal font) and complementary timber furniture. In any context, this design is a tour de force. (Criterion E)

## Description

The nearly square site has an area of about 2770m<sup>2</sup> and gently slopes about 3 metres from the south-east to the north-west corner.



East side



The building consists of two distinct sections about a courtyard – the larger 1960s section and part of the earlier hall (1936 and 1953) in the southwest corner. The building is located close to the south boundary but is otherwise broadly centred on the site, with setbacks in the order of 5 to 7 metres from the other three boundaries. The site is otherwise either hard paved (concrete or asphalt) or has areas of lawn (courtyard and southwest corner). In the front setback, there is a flagpole and signage.

There are several trees, including some established eucalypts in the northwest corner, two of which overhang the abutting school site to the west. Their condition/ULE may not be high as they are reported to be dropping branches. In the front courtyard are two small deciduous exotics (likely Ash trees) at the south end and a few shrubs (north side and the southwest corner).

### 1960s Building

The 1960s section forms about three-quarters of the building fabric about the central courtyard, which is open to the street on one side. The northern wing is occupied by the St George Peace Memorial Church, signified by an offset cross above the entrance, and the southern wing by Evans Hall, named after Jack Evans, who had established the choir among other roles.<sup>1</sup> The remaining western section includes offices, multi-purpose areas, kitchens, etc.

It has a low skillion roof, which follows the ground line, clad in metal sheeting and is two-storey or double-height (the church). Given the slope of the roof, the downpipes are all located to the north elevation.

The east/street side is defined by the substantial colonnade with 30-foot-tall gumtree trunks (poles), which opens onto, and extends about three sides of the courtyard. The colonnade roof is steel-framed with additional bracing provided by cables where it is open on both sides (ie in front of the courtyard). A segmental-arched fascia extends between the poles, a profile which is reflected in that of the openings across the building.



Courtyard, west elevation



Courtyard, north elevation

The walls are faced in tan bricks (Selkirk's Modular in Santan), which are laid in stretcher bond and are squarer than standard dimensions. The bricks vary slightly in colour and have been laid so that subtle areas of banding or panelling have been created. Longer (regular dimensioned) bricks have been employed to the segmental-arched lintels to the openings. Vertical cracking through the bricks and joints is evident in some areas.

The pattern of openings is consistent across the building and contain either windows or paired French doors. There are distinct zones with blank walls according to the function of each part of the building. To the nave of the church (north wing), the openings are limited to the ground level but extend across both west wing levels. Given the slope, there is a concrete sill/spandrel to the lower-level windows of the courtyard, increasing in width to the north.

The north elevation has a raised concrete deck with a timber balustrade along the length of the nave of the church, where the colonnade returns. The rhythm of the downpipes at the west end continues that of the adjacent colonnade. Openings to this elevation are either to the lower part (nave) or upper part of the wall (sanctuary).

<sup>1</sup> Bruce Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe: a golden jubilee history 1929-79*, East Ivanhoe 1979, pp32-33





North elevation



West/rear elevation

A similar colonnade extends the rear/west elevation length, which incorporates a two levelled verandah and stair at the south end. The latter has a timber deck and an original single-membered balustrade, in front of which a metal palisade railing has been installed. Along both levels of the verandah are a similar pattern of timber-framed openings as to the front part of the building. The crypt at the lower/basement level in the northwest corner is defined by a group of five openings above, which is a non-original, utilitarian timber-framed canopy clad in corrugated Perspex sheeting. It is currently employed as an opportunity shop.

### Church Interior

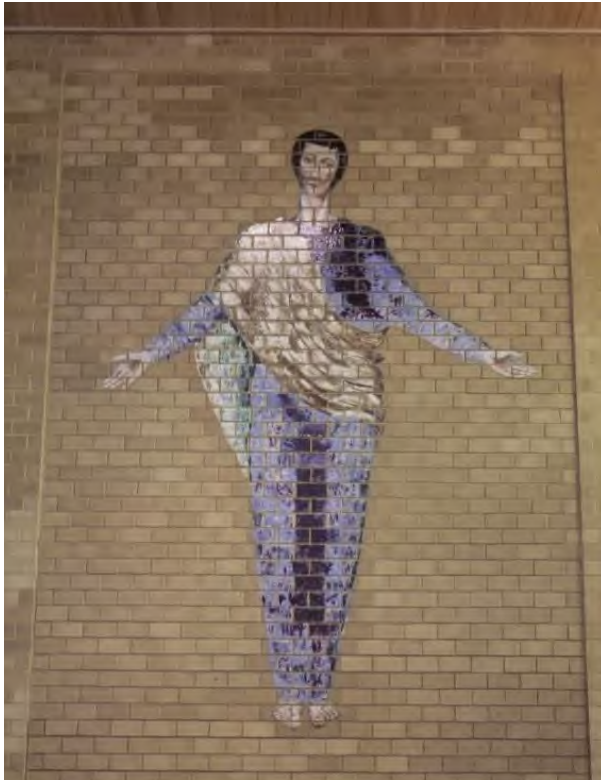
The interior of the church is an unencumbered T-shaped space, consisting of a long nave and a wider sanctuary. It has a fine acoustic quality and is regularly used as a performance space for choirs and the like.

The walls are the same tan bricks employed to the exterior and the ceiling, recessed in part, is lined with blond timber boards. Ten tubular, white glass pendant lights hang over the pews. The floor is lined with red carpet, replacing the original blue. The three sides of the nave are mostly punctuated by large openings at ground level – either windows or paired doors.



The focal point of the sanctuary is the altar, with an organ to the south side and four high-level windows (with a cross-like glazing bar configuration) illuminating it. Purpose-designed timber furniture includes the altar, pulpit, lectern, and pews.

Other elements of note are the mosaic mural of 'Christ in Glory' by Jean Atkins behind the altar and the bronze baptismal font by Vincas Jemantis near the front entry.



Glory of Christ mural of glazed bricks



Bronze Baptismal Font

### Original Church/Hall

The remaining part of the original church/hall to the southern boundary dates to 1936 (part, east end) and 1953 (most, west end). This section has a gable roof clad in glazed terracotta tiles and ridge ventilators. The stretcher bond, red brick walls are painted to the courtyard but unpainted to the rear/west elevation and feature buttresses. The openings are timber-framed, with the board-type doors likely being original; however, the windows vary – some are original (multi-paned) while others likely date to the 1960s phase (tripartite with central pointed-arched, fixed pane and flanking louvres).



Earlier Hall – north elevation



Earlier Hall – west elevation

## 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.<sup>2</sup> 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 (est. 1835) downstream of the *Birrarung*/Yarra at Melbourne.<sup>3</sup> However, as part of the 'Heidelberg' district in the Parish of Keelbundora, this area passed rapidly into private hands via an auction in Sydney Town in 1838.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup> 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 mostly undertaken by tenant farmers.<sup>6</sup> This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.<sup>7</sup>

Ivanhoe – its name stemming from Archibald Thom's 'Ivanhoe Estate' – remained a sparsely populated agricultural area until Melbourne's 'Land Boom' in the late 1880s.<sup>8</sup> 'Picturesque' terrain, varied outlooks and the high repute of the broader district drew often well-off newcomers. By the turn of the century, 'Beautiful Ivanhoe' was routinely portrayed as a 'fashionable', 'exclusive locality' of 'model homes'.<sup>9</sup> An improved railway connection to Melbourne in 1901 supported further middle-class growth, instigating 'four decades of slow and relatively affluent suburban sprawl' in the vicinity of Ivanhoe, Eaglemont, and Heidelberg train stations.<sup>10</sup>

During the interwar years, suburban Ivanhoe solidified, although its southern and eastern reaches remained primarily locked up by the expansive 'Hartlands', 'Charterisville', and 'Chelsworth' estates.<sup>11</sup> To navigate the complexities that accompanied the subdivision of these areas (sloping land, curving streets, views) in the postwar period and galvanised by the swelling influence of modernism, many of the new and generally moneyed proprietors sought the services of an architect.<sup>12</sup> By the early 1960s, distinct enclaves of upmarket, modernist design culture were apparent in the southern reaches of Ivanhoe and Ivanhoe East, with the aesthetic and lifestyle reverberations of the modern movement also shaping infill development in the more established environs of the locale.



View near Heidelberg in Victoria, pen and ink drawing, circa 1858  
(Source: Eugene von Guérard, National Gallery of Victoria)

<sup>2</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

<sup>3</sup> James Boyce, *1835: The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13

<sup>6</sup> Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

<sup>7</sup> 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

<sup>8</sup> Thom's estate designation was inspired by a novel of the same name by Sir Walter Scott (1819).

<sup>9</sup> Ivanhoe & Alphington Progress Society, *Beautiful Ivanhoe: the suburb of model homes and scenic charm*, Model Studio, 1900, SLV

<sup>10</sup> Ivanhoe Station opened in 1888; however, inefficiencies in the Heidelberg-Melbourne railway line initially bedevilled growth.

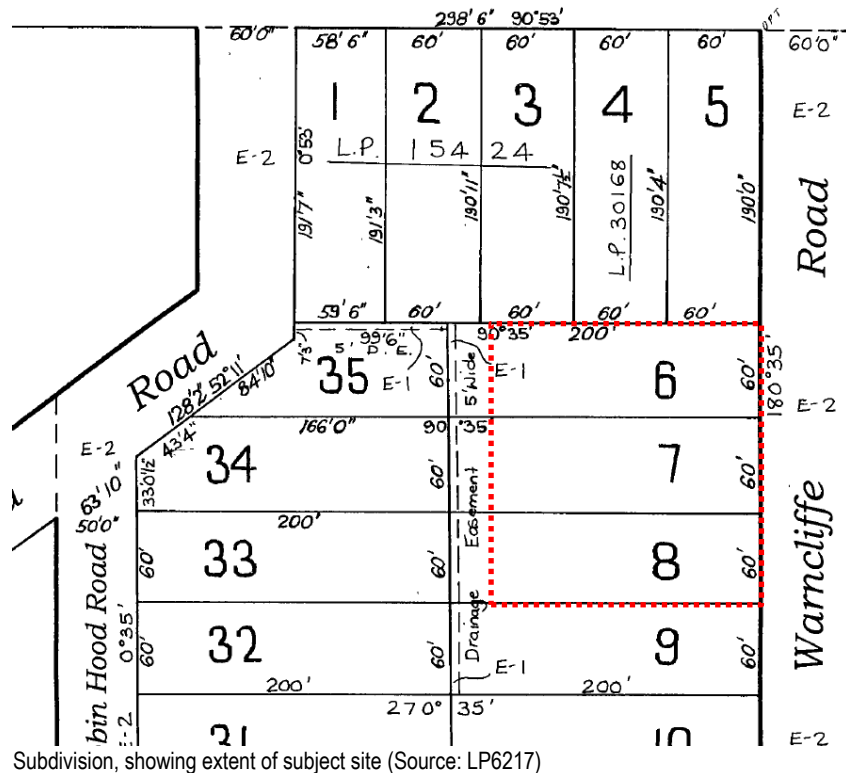
<sup>11</sup> Ivanhoe grew from roughly 2,000 residents in 1913 to nearly 8,000 by 1933 (*Victorian Year Books*, Australian Bureau of Statistics).

<sup>12</sup> Don Garden, 'Ivanhoe', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008



### Site-specific

The subject land was part of a 35-lot subdivision that was formalised during October 1913 that had been part of extensive holdings in the area of Phillip Champion Cresigny, bank inspector and William Lawson Davidson, accountant.<sup>13</sup> The lots were generally 60 x 200 feet (18.3 x 61 metres) and the subdivision was bound by Wallis Avenue (south) and Robin Hood Road (west), originally View Street.<sup>14</sup> The subdivision may not have been widely advertised, if at all,<sup>15</sup> as it was another four years before any lots were sold. The first sale was to John William Bainbridge, who acquired eight lots in 1917, including the subject site, when he was living in Banksia Street, Heidelberg.<sup>16</sup> Within two years, a house had been erected for Bainbridge on lots 33-35, with an address to Wilfred Road.<sup>17</sup> In May 1922, he acquired nearly all of the remaining lots in the subdivision (another 23).<sup>18</sup>



There was an extensive subdivision in this part of Ivanhoe during the 1910s, with the adjoining area to the west being the Warwick Estate, offered for sale in 1914,<sup>19</sup> and that to the east being the Charteris Estate during 1916.<sup>20</sup> A contemporary article highlights the attraction of the area.

Land subdivision in the Heidelberg district is likely 'to be the most pronounced feature in' real estate in the near future. The 'beautiful Yarra valley, is now the one remaining segment of rural land in the metropolitan area. Air the rest/have been more or less reduced, to small paddocks and residential allotments in the past four or five years.'<sup>21</sup>

Suburban development in the area commenced during the mid-1920s and the choice of the Education Department for a new State School in Ivanhoe East to the south on Warcliffe Road provided further impetus (acquired in 1926 from Bainbridge). At

<sup>13</sup> Certificates of Title, vol 2344, folio 777, and vol 3896, folio 073

<sup>14</sup> Initially there were house allotments on the Lower Heidelberg Road frontage (Landata, LP6217).

<sup>15</sup> Research on TROVE has not revealed any advertisements

<sup>16</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4043, folio 417 – lots nos 6-9 and 32-35. As such, he owned 31 of the 35 lots.

<sup>17</sup> Bainbridge was listed in the *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria* from 1919. He died in 1940 and eventually this land was sold to the Catholic Church to accommodate the Mother of God school.

<sup>18</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4573, folio 457

<sup>19</sup> *Argus*, 14 February 1914, p2

<sup>20</sup> Geo Parsons and Sons, 'Auction of the first section of the beautiful Charteris Estate at picturesque Ivanhoe', Haughton Collection, SLV. This brochure features contemporary images of the district.

<sup>21</sup> 'Heidelberg', *Herald*, 28 August 1913, p4

this time, the local Anglican community had to travel to St James Church at 252 Upper Heidelberg Road Ivanhoe (corner Noel Street), a considerable distance when motor cars were not widely affordable.<sup>22</sup>

On 12 December 1929, the Ivanhoe East Anglican community convened a meeting to organise church services and Sunday school classes in the area. Land in Warnccliffe Road owned by J W Bainbridge was purchased by the Diocese in April 1930 (most of lots 6-8). Church services were initially held once a month at the recently completed East Ivanhoe State School (no. 4386) to the south from 31 August 1930. The name for the new community was adopted soon after and so the St George's Mission was established within the Parish of St James.<sup>23</sup> The subject site consisted of most of three lots (nos 6-8). The rural nature of the environs at this time is captured in the following photograph.



1928 view of Ivanhoe East from Maltravers Road

Approximate location of subject site indicated

(Source: Cyril Cummins, ed, *A Pictorial history of Heidelberg since 1836*, 1982, p95)

A sketch design for a hall, with a sanctuary that could be closed off, was prepared in 1931 by T E Routley of the St George's Committee and featured in a four-page pamphlet used for fund-raising:

The Diocese has agreed that if £400 be raised it will make the deeds available in order that the necessary money may be borrowed to erect the hall, which will cost about £850, and we earnestly appeal to you to assist in making its early erection possible.<sup>24</sup>

A contemporary aerial photograph shows that the site was vacant at that time and that limited development had occurred in the vicinity, though mostly in Warnccliffe Road – the school and five houses. The Bainbridge house, *Drumrossie*, is evident with a well-established garden and perimeter planting directly to the west of the subject place.

<sup>22</sup> Bruce Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe: a golden jubilee history 1929-79*, East Ivanhoe 1979, pp6-7

<sup>23</sup> Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, p7; and Certificate of Title, vol 5650, folio 967

<sup>24</sup> Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, pp8-9



1931 aerial, showing approximate location of subject site (dashed), *Drumrossie* (star) and Ivanhoe East State School (arrow)  
(Source: Landata, Project no 1931, Run 17, Frame 3328)

The St George's Hall was opened on 1 March 1936 by the Archbishop, the Most Rev. F W Head. Designed to be extended, it consisted of two bays, both 20 x 12 feet, and was more modest in detail than the original sketch due to necessary economies. The Ladies Guild made a major contribution to the building fund, raising £260.<sup>25</sup>



Original hall design, 1931  
(Source: B Skeggs, *St George's Anglican Church*, p9)



Completed hall, circa 1950s  
(Source: B Skeggs, *St George's Anglican Church*, p13)

A Tudor Revival-style house opposite the site, which was constructed circa 1940, was acquired during the early 1960s as a vicarage. The house had initially been occupied by Mrs Martha Love for at least 15 years.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> B Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, pp13-14

<sup>26</sup> Sands & McDougalls directories.



The original extent of the hall, that is the eastern part, is evident in a 1945 aerial (below). More houses had been constructed adjacent on the east side of Warnccliffe Road, including the Vicarage at no. 46, and street planting is evident.



1945 aerial, showing eastern half of the original hall completed.  
The house now used as the vicarage opposite at no. 46 (arrow) had been constructed.  
(Source: DELWP, Ringwood\_849A1A, <https://services.land.vic.gov.au/DELWPmaps/historical-photomaps/>)

After the Second World War, the rapidly growing local population exacerbated the cramped quarters of the original section of the hall. Fundraising was undertaken from at least 1950 as the original section was capable of seating about 50 people and by May 1951, plans had been prepared for its extension and 'building was to commence soon'.<sup>27</sup> This proposal however was not realised for another two years when the earlier building was doubled in length to the west. The original section of the hall was employed as a church – the altar was moved to the east end and furnished in a more church-like manner. Sliding doors separated the two sections but both could be used together if necessary.<sup>28</sup> The second part was opened by the Archbishop of Melbourne, the Most Reverend Joseph Booth, on 13 December 1953.<sup>29</sup>

A new dedicated church however was the dream on the horizon and was noted in a contemporary article relating to the 1953 opening:

Parishioners of St. George's, Ivanhoe, have given church furnishings, costing hundreds of pounds, for the extension to St. George's hall to be used as a church. These have been designed so that they may be used in the permanent church when built.  
Archbishop Booth will dedicate the extension tomorrow at 3 p.m., when the mayor of Heidelberg- (Cr. W. J. Boyd) and Mrs. Boyd will attend. The Archbishop will also unveil and dedicate a memorial stone.<sup>30</sup>

A 1954 aerial photograph, reproduced below, shows the full extent of the original hall and the increased development in the area including the nearby shops on the south side of Lower Heidelberg Road. *Drumbrossie* (formerly Bainbridge's house), adjoining to the west, remained in its extensive garden setting.

<sup>27</sup> 'Work for Church and Hospital', *Age*, 11 May 1951, p5

<sup>28</sup> Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, pp18-19

<sup>29</sup> Foundation stone on north side of the earlier church/hall section

<sup>30</sup> 'Gifts by Parishioners', *Age*, 12 December 1953, p18



1954 aerial photograph, with full extent of original hall evident, subject place outlined in dashed red  
(Source: Landata, Project no 174, Run 15, Frame 75)

With continuing growing enrolments in the Sunday School, and the newly established kindergarten, a Campaign Committee was formed in 1955 to create a separate Parish and expand the facilities at the site. The Diocese required the establishment of a vicarage as a pre-requisite to parish status being granted. To that end, the house at 46 Warncliffe Road, opposite the site was acquired in April 1957. A master plan was developed in 1958 and the noted architect Louis Williams, who was responsible for many Anglican projects, was approached to prepare drawings. The project was to be staged. However, over the next few years the priorities were changed, culminating with the appointment of the first vicar, Rev H R Bailey (1959-61) of the St Georges Parish, which was officially created on 1 December 1959. The second Rev, Norman Hill (1961-68), oversaw another shift in that applications from other architects were sought in early 1962.<sup>31</sup>

An initial letter to Grounds, Romberg and Boyd from the Vestry of St George's Church of England sought a submission, which was recorded as having been received by Robin Boyd on 20 March 1962. The practice responded indicating that sketches and estimates could be prepared by 13 May of that year. On 19 April 1962, Frederick Romberg met with representatives from the church when the budget was estimated at £50,000. The secretary of the Vestry of St George's Church of England wrote to Romberg on 27 April 1962 confirming his appointment and a detailed brief was prepared.<sup>32</sup> Among the directions given to the

<sup>31</sup> Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, pp20-27

<sup>32</sup> Grounds, Romberg and Boyd Collection, SLV, MS 13363, various boxes (at the time being re-numbered and re-packaged). Other records relating to the site are contained in Box 34 (drawings), box 141 (Specification, March 1963). There also records in the public building files held at PROV relating to the site, which were not reviewed (VPRS 7882/ P1, unit 967, item 8270 and VPRS 7882/ P1, unit 1607, item 13565).

architects by the Vestry, the recent precedent of St Pauls in in Windella Avenue, Kew East (1960, Earle and Bunbury) in regard to its 'positioning of the choir, close contact between sanctuary and congregation, and use of the narthex for additional seating'.<sup>33</sup>

The commission was gained about the time the practice of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd dissolved in an acrimonious manner over the National Gallery of Victoria commission, which was taken over by (Sir) Roy Grounds, causing Frederick Romberg and Robin Boyd to form a separate practice. Within both practices, the principal architects are known to have generally worked on projects separately.



Perspective with free-standing belltower – May 1962  
(Source: RMIT design archives)

Romberg's initial drawings were well-received and adopted in principle on 29 May 1962. Authorisation was given in August to prepare the detailed plans and specifications and tenders were called in January 1963.<sup>34</sup>

By early-1963, the practice of 'Romberg and Boyd' was identified on the documentation. Generally, the internal correspondence includes the initials FR, but on one occasion RB was noted (presumably referring to Robin Boyd), possibly when Romberg was unavailable.<sup>35</sup>

The initials BGH appears on the drawings, referring to Bernice Harris, who also was a witness on the contract drawings. Bernice Harris, an associate of Romberg & Boyd, was responsible for the working sketches, detailed drawings and the specification.<sup>36</sup> 'Missie' Harris, as she was known, was evidently a practically minded person who generally took responsibility for contract documentation, supervision and administration, together with the general business of 'running the office'.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, p27

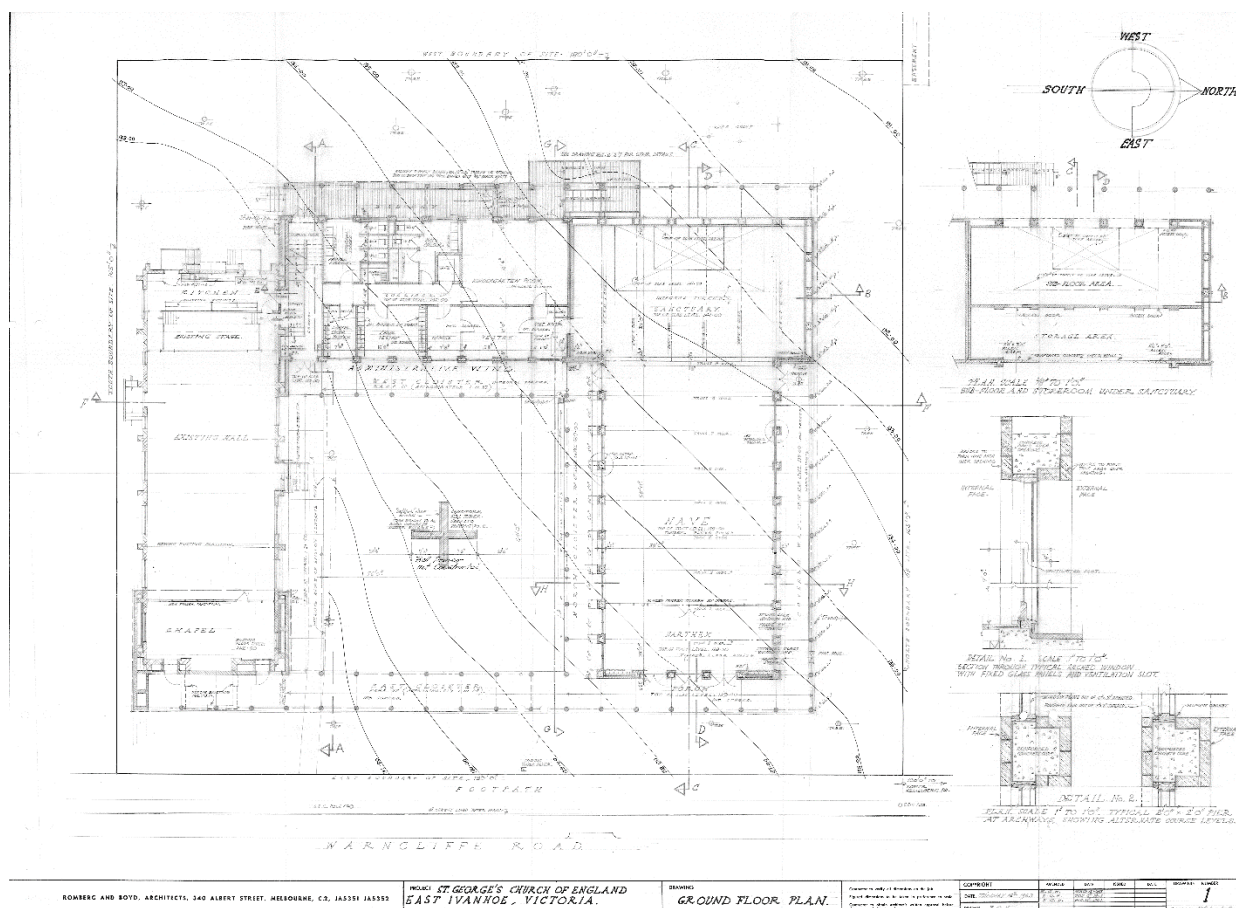
<sup>34</sup> Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, pp27-28

<sup>35</sup> Grounds, Romberg and Boyd Collection, SLV, MS 133363. Initials of other members of staff include BM, BC and FR. It is not known who these refer to.

<sup>36</sup> Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, p31

<sup>37</sup> Berenice Harris, 'Homage to Robin Boyd', *Architecture in Australia*, vol 62, no 2, April 1973, p77, reproduced in Deborah White, 'Women and Architecture Revisited', *Parlour*, 28 March 2018, available online





Ground Floor Plan, dated 15 January 1963  
(Source: St Georges Church archives)

Over the course of 1963, the financial realities were resolved. In May, the Vestry of St George's placed a cap of £60,000 on the project and in June, approval was received from the Archbishop if the amount borrowed was less than £45,000. A loan of that amount was secured by September. The tender from R F Anderson P/L was accepted for £61,614, although excising the belltower, which would have cost another £3,081. Building work commenced in October and the foundation stone was laid on 8 December 1963.<sup>38</sup> The original/front part of the earlier hall was demolished to accommodate the new works.

By May 1964, the mural had been installed in the sanctuary wall and was said to be first of its kind in Australia, consisting of glass melted onto the bricks. In June 1964, preparations were underway for the opening later in the year. At that time, the brickwork of the church and crypt had been completed, and work was progressing on the rear two-storey part.<sup>39</sup>

The building took eleven months to complete and was dedicated by the Archbishop of Melbourne, Frank Woods, on 7 November 1964 who marvelled at the broad range of facilities incorporated and what an asset they would be to the community – 'St George's with its church, vestries, intellectual and social activities rooms under the one roof, point to the Church's mission of caring for the bodies and minds of people, as well as their souls'.<sup>40</sup> The complex was dedicated as 'St George's Peace Memorial Church and Parish Centre' according to the official plaque. The 'Peace Memorial' came to be officially included in the title of the new complex as several members of the church leadership group had been greatly affected by their experiences of serving in WWII and hence sought to have the whole site dedicated to peace and as a memorial to all those who had served in a time of war or conflict.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, pp28-29. Rupert F Anderson were responsible for Royal Freemasons Homes, Horsham Base Hospital, Burnley Horticultural College, and Horsham Town Hall (1938-39).

<sup>39</sup> Grounds, Romberg and Boyd Collection SLV, MS 133363. Details from 'The Sword of St George', vol 4, no 4, June 1964, p1

<sup>40</sup> Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, p32

<sup>41</sup> Information provided by Rev Canon John Sanderson, 4 September 2021



Church interior, dedication plaque

The T-shaped church was 104 feet long (31.7m) and 40 feet (12.2m) wide to the nave though widening to 56 feet (17m) at the sanctuary; all sections with a ceiling height of 27 feet (8.2m). Three hundred people could be accommodated in the nave with another one hundred people in the narthex if necessary. Audio-visual equipment was concealed and a large crypt included. The two-storey section (west wing) links the new church with the remaining earlier hall section consisting of two vestries, kindergarten, storage areas at ground floor with activities hall and kitchen to the first floor.<sup>42</sup>



Frontage, 1964/65 (note incorrect catalogue entry at SLV)

Note the dark colour/finish of the poles, gutters and window frames with the contrasting muted colour of the arched facias  
(Source: SLV, Peter Willie Collection, H91.244-4224)

<sup>42</sup> Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, pp30-32



The fabric entailed 200,000 modular bricks manufactured by Selkirk of Ballarat and a Brownbuilt steel deck roof, which follows the profile of the sloping ground. The 70 lofty columns – oiled gum tree trunks more than 30 feet high [9.15 metres] – were provided by H Beecham and Co. The church furniture was manufactured by F Fallow & Sons.<sup>43</sup>

A request for memorials resulted in several generous contributions, including the pulpit, sanctuary furniture, and pews, as well as the solid bronze font and towards the never-realised bell tower. The hall was named after Gwylm Jack Russell Evans, a key parishioner who died in 1963.

The mosaic mural of 'Christ in Glory' – 14 foot (4.3 metres) high in baked bricks – was designed by Jean Atkins, a member of the congregation. The design was painted in an earthenware glaze onto 244 ordinary smooth modular bricks, the bricks numbered, and then refired at 1080 degrees centigrade before being re-assembled by the bricklayers into the wall 'like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle'.<sup>44</sup> Jean had studied art at RMIT and although experienced with pottery, this was a new process for her. The limited tonal palette is in part a result of the high temperatures required to manufacture the bricks.<sup>45</sup>

The distinctive bronze baptismal front was created by Lithuanian-born sculptor Vincez Jemantis (1922-2001).<sup>46</sup> Jemantis emigrated to Australia in 1948, initially living in Western Australia, before moving to Victoria in 1950, where he worked variously as house painter, toy factory worker, furniture factory worker, and a draughtsman with the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission of Victoria. In 1961 he commenced working in the art/sculpture department at RMIT, where he remained until his retirement in 1987.<sup>47</sup>



Circa 1964/65 – Rear (north-west corner)

(Source: SLV, Peter Willie Collection, H91.244-4223)

<sup>43</sup> Romberg & Boyd, Press release, 3 October 1967 and 'Memorandum - St George's Church of England, East Ivanhoe', 4 October 1967, RMIT Design archives

<sup>44</sup> Romberg & Boyd, 'Memorandum - St George's Church of England, East Ivanhoe', 4 October 1967, [held at

<sup>45</sup> Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, p31. Atkins' involvement included regularly overseeing the manufacturing process at Selkirk's Ballarat brickworks and assisting with the installation in order to avoid the bricklayers tossing the specially-fired bricks.

<sup>46</sup> The spelling of his name is either Vincez Jemantis or Vincas Jomantas.

<sup>47</sup> Biography associated with two images of the font at SLV, H2007.33/278 + 279. At RMIT, Jemantis was initially appointed as a temporary instructor in art. For two years he shared a studio with painter Leonard French in Cheltenham. In 1965 he was appointed as Lecturer in Sculpture, RMIT, becoming Senior Lecturer in Sculpture during 1973.



Photographs by Peter Willie show the eucalypts at the rear of the site must have been purposely retained. The two trees in the south side of the courtyard had also been planted. These photographs show the building essentially as it is except for the original dark colour/finish to the bush poles (colonnade), gutters and window frames and the contrasting muted colour of the arched fascias, which have all been painted in red-brown scheme.

Initially a smaller organ was concealed behind a curtain however funds were raised for the current organ, which was installed in 1989. The Fincham Pipe organ consists of 1,193 pipes and is larger/more elaborate than most employed in churches, as it is more consistent with a type used in concert halls.<sup>48</sup> It was built from pre-existing materials by Australian Pipe Organs of Keysborough.<sup>49</sup>

Some minor changes are known to have occurred such as replacement of the original blue carpet to the interior of the church.

### Frederick Romberg (1913-92)

Frederick Romberg was born to Else (Elspeth) and Kurt Romberg, judge, in Tsingtao, a former German enclave in east China, during 1913.<sup>50</sup>

On returning to Germany, the family lived in Hamburg and Munich, but after the Nazis came to power, they left the country. Having studied both architecture and law for a while in Germany, Romberg continued with architectural studies at the ETH in Zurich from 1933. There he became familiar with the technique of reinforced concrete, especially as he was tutored by an expert in the field, Otto Salvisberg. He came to Melbourne in 1938 on a travelling scholarship to escape the political situation in Europe.<sup>51</sup>

In Melbourne, Romberg soon gained independent commissions. During the 1940s, he was responsible for two significant apartment buildings located near each other on Queens Road: *Newburn* at no. 30 (1939-42) with Mary Turner Shaw and *Stanhill* (1940-45) at no 34. Some of his other notable early projects are apartments: *Glenunga* at 2 Hornsburgh Grove, Armadale (1940-1) with Mary Turner Shaw and *Hilstan*, Nepean Highway, Brighton (1950), demolished during the 1970s. His work of this period has been defined as being a fusion of European modernism and 'Heimatsstil', or homeland style, a Swiss movement in which it was acceptable to use traditional materials, wood and stone, in a contemporary design. The design of these buildings is multi-faceted in regards forms, and in some cases, also materials.

From the early 1940s, few private construction projects were possible, and during the Second World War most architects were seconded to work on military projects including Romberg. It was not until the early 1950s, that material shortages were alleviated and that architects were gainfully employed again. About this time, in 1953, he entered into partnership with Roy Grounds and Robin Boyd to form Grounds Romberg and Boyd, which was the most eminent architectural practice in Melbourne during the 1950s. Although in partnership, the three architects rarely collaborated and projects have been usually credited to one architect in particular. With the departure of Grounds in 1962, the practice was renamed Romberg and Boyd, which continued from East Melbourne until Boyd's premature death in 1971.<sup>52</sup>

Within both iterations of the practice, Romberg became the specialist in industrial, commercial, and institutional work. Leading projects included the ETA Factory, Braybrook (1957-61), which was a landmark example of modern factory design. He also began to experiment with the centrally planned, geometric architecture that Grounds had pioneered with his residential work early during the 1950s such as the Sacred Heart Girls' School, Oakleigh (1954) at and Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Canberra (1960) were both square in plan, while the Ormond College buildings Picken Court (1959), MacFarland Library (1962), and McCaughey Court (1965) were polygonal. The Microbiology building (1965) at the University of Melbourne was more overtly Brutalist.

Romberg was, however, appointed the Professor of Architecture at the University of Newcastle in 1965, where he remained for a decade before returning to Melbourne. After his return to Melbourne in 1975, he continued a small practice into the early 1980s.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Information provided by Rev Canon John Sanderson, 4 September 2021.

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.stgeorgeseastvanhoe.org/wordpress/organist/>, accessed 17.01.2022

<sup>50</sup> Phillip Goad, *Melbourne Architecture*, The Watermark Press, 1999, p250

<sup>51</sup> Conrad Hamann, 'Roy Grounds, Frederick Romberg and Robin Boyd', in Howard Tanner, ed, *Architects of Australia*, 1981, p132

<sup>52</sup> Hamann, 'Roy Grounds, Frederick Romberg and Robin Boyd', p129

<sup>53</sup> Hamann, 'Roy Grounds, Frederick Romberg and Robin Boyd', p139

## 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:

- Theme 6: Community and cultural life

## Comparative Analysis

There are nine churches included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in Banyule.<sup>54</sup> Of these, only one dates from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

- *St Bernadette's Church*, 89-91 Bond Street, Ivanhoe (HO181) – a modernist Catholic church designed by Robert O Ellis and constructed 1961-62. It has a prow-like form and curved sidewalls of cream brick with concrete structural elements. Some design components, particularly the elliptical tower and random window configuration (sidewalls), reflect the influence of Le Corbusier's seminal *Chapel of Notre Dame du Haut* at Ronchamp (1955). *St Bernadette's* has a traditional interior, consisting of a long nave and remote sanctuary.

The above church and the other proposed for a HO by this Study (*Mother of God Catholic Church*) are more traditional, or recognisable as churches in their form as they have pitched roofs, while reflecting a contemporary design approach and detailing that indicate their period of construction.<sup>55</sup>

While *St Bernadette's* and the nearby *Mother of God* are distinctive examples at the local level, *St George Peace Memorial Church* is more distinguished and/or unique at a broader level. There are few if any major, urban buildings where bush poles have been employed on such a grand scale. Employment of bush poles has strong associations with vernacular Australian architecture, especially agricultural buildings, as well trestle bridges. Roy Grounds employed them during the 1930s on two residential projects – *Lyncroft* and *Chateau Tabilk*.<sup>56</sup> A tall bush pole colonnade had also previously been used by Robin Boyd at the *Black Dolphin Motel*, Merimbula (NSW) in 1958-60. Romberg himself employed them again to the wrap around verandah of the *Bangerang Cultural Centre* in Shepparton of 1978.

Employment of strict geometric footprint was a standard feature of Romberg's later work. He had employed the square plan at *Sacred Heart Girls School*, Oakleigh (1954) and the *Holy Trinity Lutheran Church*, Canberra (1960). The former includes a central courtyard and distinct areas of solid and void relating to functional requirements similar to *St George* and the latter is defined by a central spire. He had used a similarly exaggerated verandah consisting of tall supports at the *Lutheran College*, Croydon (1958).<sup>57</sup>

*St George Peace Memorial Church* is distinguished from many other late 20<sup>th</sup> century churches by its cuboid form and lack of an instantly recognised element associated with Christian religious buildings such as a spire-like element, although a tall belfry was proposed but not realised. Another notable example of a cuboid form being employed in Melbourne about this time is the *St James Anglican Church* at 1461 High Street, Glen Iris of 1959 by Bogle Banfield and Associates.

## Intactness

Intact

<sup>54</sup> HO14, HO78, HO86, HO88, HO108, HO115, HO181, HO182, and HO183

<sup>55</sup> In the municipality, Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell were also responsible for designing the small chapel at Ivanhoe Grammar School (1981) It has a slate-clad domed roof with a cross at the apex and appears to be constructed of light-tinted concrete blocks with sections of window walls. The chapel is located adjacent to the east side of The Ridgeway, roughly mid-way between Latham and Rose streets, but is largely obscured by fencing and foliage. See Norman Day, 'School Chapel', *Age*, 15 December 1981, p10

<sup>56</sup> Jill Sheppard Heritage Consultants, 'Penders - The Grounds & Myer Holiday Retreat, Mimosa Rocks National Park CMP', December 2002, p67

<sup>57</sup> Harriet Edquist, ed, *Frederick Romberg, the Architecture of Migration 1938-1975*, RMIT Press, 2000, pp45-46, 50-54, 95

## 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 (timber elements)
Internal Alteration Controls	Yes (church interior)
Tree Controls	Yes (four eucalypts to north-west corner, two exotics to courtyard)
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

## Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



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



## MOTHER OF GOD CATHOLIC CHURCH

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<b>Address</b>	56 Wilfred Road, Ivanhoe East
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1957
<b>Period</b>	Postwar
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Mother of God* at 56 Wilfred Road, Ivanhoe East – a Roman Catholic Church – is significant. It was designed in 1956 by Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell for an eponymously named new parish that covered Ivanhoe East and constructed the following year. John Mockridge was likely the primary designer, as was the usual practice in the firm.

The significant sections of *Mother of God* are its lozenge-shaped plan/form, narthex and original flat-roofed ancillary wing (west and part south elevation). Significant elements are the gable roof, slate cladding, ridge vent, concrete frame, copper crosses, flat roof (concrete slab), the cantilevered section of the porch roof, pair of tapered porch columns, remnant (or covered) tiling to the porch floor, barrel vaulting (west elevation), concrete-framed window walls (including mullions and muntins), all stained glass, exposed concrete-cased steel framing, wall panels of silica bricks, and all original openings (rectangular slots and cruciform windows).

Internally, the exposed black-matt painted steel beams and timber-lined ceiling are significant.

The arrangement of the front garden – driveway, triangular lawn and placement of a central tree (not the planting itself, which is a replacement) – as well as the nearby Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca') and sunken rear courtyard (southwest), are original landscape elements that contribute to the setting of *Mother of God*.

Later additions are not significant.

### How is it Significant?

*Mother of God* is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

### Why is it Significant?

*Mother of God* is of historical significance as the earliest modernist church constructed in the municipality and the first religious commission by the then young postwar architectural practice of Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell. It represents a noteworthy juncture in the design oeuvre of this well-regarded architectural firm, which went on to be responsible for a number of other notable 'modern' churches in Victoria and an important event for the local Roman Catholic community. The construction of *Mother of God* is illustrative of Ivanhoe East's suburban energetic consolidation in the postwar period as well as the pronounced modernist undercurrents latent in this development. Its nonconventional character is highly evocative of the necessity felt by the church and congregation to respond to the rapidly shifting and different socio-cultural landscape of the mid-1950s with a new built image of their faith. Father Bernard Joseph Geoghegan, who was appointed the first parish priest, was instrumental in its development. (Criterion A)

*Mother of God* is of aesthetic significance as a generally intact, distinctive instance of 'modern' church design. Its progressive architects, Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell, took bold advantage of novel postwar construction techniques (steel framing) and materials (precast concrete, silica bricks) to convey a modernist expression, chiefly through its lozenge-shaped form, exaggerated gable and dramatic but welcoming cantilevered porch, then elements all unfamiliar for places of worship in Victoria. Christian architectural traditions were not completely eschewed, with the utilisation of slate cladding, highlighting of mullions and muntins, colourful stained glass, and employment of cruciform openings in the design of the church demonstrating contemporary interests in integrating simplified, abstracted ecclesiastical elements and symbols; resulting in a balance between stability and provocation. The interplay of expressive modernity and traditional continuity is indicative of the first phase of 'modern' postwar suburban church design in Victoria. (Criteria E)

### Description

*Mother of God* is a large church that occupies the majority of its gently sloping kite-shaped corner allotment. The building is situated at a moderate setback from Wilfred Road (north) and slightly below the street level of Robinhood Road (east). In the west and south, the property is bordered by private residences. The triangular front garden is characterised by an area of lawn with a centrally planted tree (existing is a replacement) and bisected by a driveway of pre-cast concrete panels (initially 'Lilydale Topping'). Other original landscaping includes the tall Atlas Cedar (*Cedurs atlantica* 'Glauc') situated northwest of the facade and a small sunken courtyard garden in the southeast corner, compromised of brick paving and planter beds.<sup>1</sup> A non-original timber paling fence extends along the south and west perimeter.

The church consists of several distinct volumes. The key components are the principal form (nave and sanctuary) with attached narthex (north) and ancillary wing, which runs most of the west elevation and part of the south. The small volume to the east elevation provides access to and from the sunken courtyard is also original. Other projections from the main footprint are later additions (see below).

The main volume – comprising the nave and sanctuary – has a lozenge-shaped plan and form. This bold geometry is most visible and best appreciated from the east (Robinhood Road). The lozenge roof form, clad in its original slate, tapers to a gable at each end and has an elongated original ridge vent. Surmounting the apex of both gable ends are copper crosses. The concrete frame, painted white, is most evident to both side elevations, where it includes boxed gutters. The frame also defines the edge of the façade. The north-facing gable end – traverse to Wilfred Road – has a stained-glass wall of green, blue, red, orange with three narrow cantilevered canopies (in a stepped configuration).

*Mother of God's* façade (to Wilfred Road) features a narthex (a vestibule/antechamber) situated well below the gable end. It has a flat concrete slab roof initially sheeted with asbestos felt (which may remain). The narthex roof extends to the side cantilevering upwards over the footpath to create a canopied porch to Robinhood Road. This extended roof includes four plastic dome skylights, which are original. The porch has been partly enclosed with glazing and double timber doors. Its original floor of 'Carborundum' (silicon carbide stone) panels with contrasting 'English grey-blue quarry tiles has been carpeted over, although a small strip remains evident in front of the tapered concrete columns.<sup>2</sup> It is possible that this tiling survives beneath the carpet.

<sup>1</sup> Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell, 'Garden Layout', *Memorial Church of the Mother of God*, 21 August 1957, drawing no 382/77 in *Collection of architectural drawings from the firm Mockridge Stahle & Mitchell*, SLV, YLATD 16

<sup>2</sup> Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell, 'Porch 1. Paving Setout', *Memorial Church of the Mother of God. E. Ivanhoe*, 9 August 1957, drawing no 382/76 in *Collection of architectural drawings from the firm Mockridge Stahle & Mitchell*, SLV, YLATD 16

Despite these modifications, the porch – at the time of construction, an ultramodern flourish – remains readily interpretable within the place's design schema.



*Mother of God* from opposite Robinhood Road, the skillion-roofed volume right of frame is a later addition (porch out of frame)

Extending along the west and part of the rear (south) elevations of the nave and sanctuary is a return wing (one room in width). It was designed to accommodate separate vestries for the priests, boys and women, as well as the 'Chapel of Our Lady' and toilets. This wing is roofed in the same manner as the narthex, except that it features tunnel (barrel) vaulting (four) at its mid-section with projecting concrete mullions that terminate at the ground level and large arched windows (permitting light to the chapel). The front part of the wing's western section, behind the narthex, has been replaced by a skillion-roofed and tan brick addition. There is an original section of perforated brickwork to the rear of the south wing (airflow for laboratories).

The flat-roofed volume attached to the southern portion of the east elevation is an original component of the design; however, it underwent some modification during the earlier stages of planning and was initially envisioned with a curved stone feature wall. It includes a porch entered via recessed timber-framed, glazed double-leafed doors with toplight (south face) and enclosed the organ console and cleaner cupboard.

A small skillion-roofed, tan-brick volume has been built to the east elevation in line with the porch's piers. There is a similarly designed addition attached to the (south) elevation behind the sunken courtyard garden.

*Mother of God* is constructed of a steel frame (welded on site), cased in precast concrete. The infill walls – recessed well back from the framing to emphasise its expression – are of pink-fawn silica (cement 9 in. by 4½ in. by 3 in.) bricks in a stretcher bond course.<sup>3</sup> The floor is presumably a concrete slab. The designers, Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell, were quick to embrace postwar advances in construction techniques and materials, such as the steel frame and truss systems and precast concrete, recognising their cost and time effectiveness and capacity to create large, unhindered interiors and a vast array of forms/spatial experiences. The light toned brickwork also appear to be part of an effort to harmonise the church with its immediate residential context.

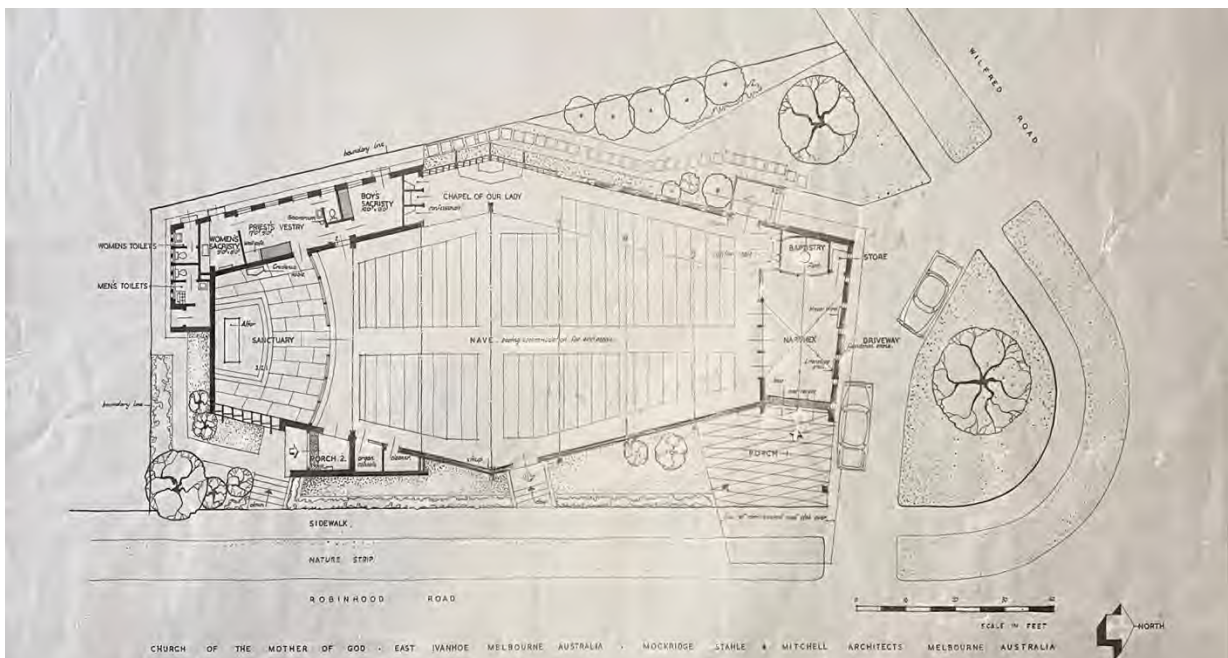
<sup>3</sup> 'Church of the Mother of God East Ivanhoe, Victoria: Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell, Architects', *Architecture and Arts*, December 1957, p29



The north wall of the narthex displays five rows of alternating rectangular slots with stained glass infill (some windows are divided into panes, others three with an openable middle pane). At the lower centre is a metal plaque.<sup>4</sup> The slot windows were carried through to the front part of the west wing but have been mostly deleted by the skillion-roofed addition.



View to porch, from Robinhood Road



Resolved original floorplan, undated but likely 1957

(Source: Collection of architectural drawings from the firm Mockridge Stahle & Mitchell, SLV, YLATD 16)

<sup>4</sup> '+Church of the Mother of God+ The Archbishop of Melbourne Most Reverend Daniel Mannix Blessed and Place this Stone Eleventh Day of November 1956 Father Bernard Geoghegan PP'

The upper part of the east elevation's middle four bays is punctured by rows of small cruciform openings with clear glass infill. There is also a concrete-famed section of window wall at the southern end of the east elevation with 'randomly' spaced muntins and stained glass. The ground-floor opening near off centre in the east elevation is original but the double door is not.



South (rear) elevation with later addition skillion volume in the foreground and section of window wall with 'random' muntin bars on right of frame

The interior of *Mother of God* was not inspected and is known to have undergone a succession of modifications. However, based on contemporary photographs in the public domain, some elements designed or specified by Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell remain.<sup>5</sup> These include the exposed steel roof beams, painted matt black and timber-lined ceiling. The plastered walls and vertical timber-lined dado are also apparent. In the recent past, the Hermann Hohauser-designed and produced timber altar crucifix was also evident (relocated to the side of the altar war), as were his Stations of the Cross bas-relief panels (both sidewalls).

Until the Second World War, the preponderance of churches constructed in Victoria were historicist in style, chiefly drawing from British antecedents. After the lifting of building restrictions and increased availability of materials/labour, a small number of pared-down, innovative churches began to appear in the early 1950s.

From about the middle of the decade, an increasing number of new churches – like *Mother of God* – adopted the language of architectural modernism in their new geometries and avoidance of conventional ecclesiastical reference. Yet, while the aim was to convey an authentic image of modernity, traditional design was not eschewed entirely in most cases at this phase. As demonstrated by the subject place, 'modern' places of worship in the 1950s still often sought a level of continuity with pre-war idioms. Accordingly, established elements such as the longitudinal plan, semi-circular sanctuary, a pitched roof, insistent verticality, stained glass, emphasised mullions and muntins, and cruciform openings were all utilised to reveal the building as a place of worship, albeit in a simplified and abstracted manner.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> For instance, see 2013 images of Melissa Webb at *Starkitecture*, <http://starkitecture.blogspot.com/2013/07/sneaking-up-on-mother-of-god.html>, accessed 10 February 2021

<sup>6</sup> Philip Goad, 'Churches', in Goad and Julie Willis, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp185-87



## 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.<sup>7</sup> 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 (est. 1835) downstream of the *Birrarung/Yarra* at Melbourne.<sup>8</sup> However, as part of the 'Heidelberg' district in the Parish of Keelbundora, this area passed rapidly into private hands via an auction in Sydney Town in 1838.<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup> 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 mostly undertaken by tenant farmers.<sup>11</sup> This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.<sup>12</sup>

Ivanhoe – its name stemming from Archibald Thom's 'Ivanhoe Estate' – remained a sparsely populated agricultural area until Melbourne's 'Land Boom' in the late 1880s.<sup>13</sup> 'Picturesque' terrain, varied outlooks and the high repute of the broader district drew often well-off newcomers. By the turn of the century, 'Beautiful Ivanhoe' was routinely portrayed as a 'fashionable', 'exclusive locality' of 'model homes'.<sup>14</sup> An improved railway connection to Melbourne in 1901 supported further middle-class growth, instigating 'four decades of slow and relatively affluent suburban sprawl' in the vicinity of Ivanhoe, Eaglemont, and Heidelberg train stations.<sup>15</sup>

During the interwar years, suburban Ivanhoe solidified, although its southern and eastern reaches remained primarily locked up by the expansive 'Hartlands', 'Charterisville', and 'Chelsworth' estates.<sup>16</sup> To navigate the complexities that accompanied the subdivision of these areas (sloping land, curving streets, views) in the postwar period and galvanised by the swelling influence of modernism, many of the new and generally moneyed proprietors sought the services of an architect.<sup>17</sup> By the early 1960s, distinct enclaves of upmarket, modernist design culture were apparent in the southern reaches of Ivanhoe and Ivanhoe East, with the aesthetic and lifestyle reverberations of the modern movement also shaping infill development in the more established environs of the locale.



View near Heidelberg in Victoria, pen and ink drawing, circa 1858  
(Source: Eugene von Guérard, National Gallery of Victoria)

<sup>7</sup> Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

<sup>8</sup> James Boyce, *1835: The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13

<sup>11</sup> Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

<sup>12</sup> 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

<sup>13</sup> Thom's estate designation was inspired by a novel of the same name by Sir Walter Scott (1819).

<sup>14</sup> Ivanhoe & Alphington Progress Society, *Beautiful Ivanhoe: the suburb of model homes and scenic charm*, Model Studio, 1900, SLV

<sup>15</sup> Ivanhoe Station opened in 1888; however, inefficiencies in the Heidelberg-Melbourne railway line initially bedevilled growth.

<sup>16</sup> Ivanhoe grew from roughly 2,000 residents in 1913 to nearly 8,000 by 1933 (*Victorian Year Books*, Australian Bureau of Statistics).

<sup>17</sup> Don Garden, 'Ivanhoe', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008



## Site-specific

The subject land derives from Portion 2 of the Parish of Keelbundora, a roughly 420-hectare holding purchased (along with portions 1 and 3) by Thomas Walker in 1838. A Sydney-based Scottish banker and philanthrope with an eye for marketable land across the colony, Walker's intention in the Port Philip District was speculative from the start. He commenced subdividing his acquisitions as early as mid-1839 to enormous profit.<sup>18</sup>

In the resulting sales, Portion 2 was carved up into multiple large parcels. The subject land was incorporated into the eastern reaches of a roughly 215-hectares property – a combination of portions 1 and 2 of the Parish of Keelbundora. It was purchased by the well-heeled Captain George Brunswick Smyth and christened the 'Chelsworth Estate'. His respectable 1860s homestead, overlooking the *Birrarung*/Yarra, is now utilised as the Ivanhoe Golf course clubhouse (HO185). By the late 1870s, most of the estate was occupied by tenant farmers.<sup>19</sup>

Around 1900, the majority of the Chelsworth Estate was acquired by Philip Champion de Crespigny, an official for the Bank of Victoria, and William Lawson Davidson, an accountant.<sup>20</sup> Their survey was responsible for establishing much of the existing road layout in the area bound loosely by Studley Road (north), Marshall Street (west), Hopetoun Grove (east), and the river. A series of subdivisions occurred up until the First World War. In 1913, Carl Otto Marschner, an Ivanhoe-based importer, acquired the triangular block now bound by Wallis Avenue, Wilfred Road, and Robinhood Road (originally View Street) – a parcel including the subject land.<sup>21</sup> Marschner organised its subdivision into differently sized allotments, advertised under the banner of the 'Warwick Estate':

No district has made such remarkable advancement in recent years than this beautiful spot [*Ivanhoe*], which has been aptly named the Garden Suburb of Melbourne. The railway returns evidence the wonderful increase in traffic year by year. A large quantity of land has been subdivided, and so far, every subdivisional sale has been a marked success. The Warwick Estate is situated south from the Lower Heidelberg road, is very high, and commands beautiful views. The new boulevard, which will run along the river through to Melbourne passes immediately in front of the estate.<sup>22</sup>

The rate of sales from the wider estate was slow and continued into the postwar period. However, the first sale in 1917 was of the kite-shaped allotment at the intersection of Wilfred and Robinhood Road (now 50 and 56 Wilfred Road), which encompassed the subject place. The buyer was a foreman, Percival Herbert Austin.<sup>23</sup> Soon after, he constructed a residence at the centre of the double allotment.<sup>24</sup>



Late 1920s photograph across Ivanhoe East from Maltravers Road with the junction of Lower Heidelberg and McArthur roads (East Ivanhoe Village) visible in the centre – Mother of God Church would be constructed out of frame left. (Source: Cyril Cummins, *A pictorial history of Heidelberg Since 1836*, Heidelberg Historical Society, 1982, p71)

<sup>18</sup> W Joy, 'Walker, Thomas (1804-1886)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1967, available online

<sup>19</sup> Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, pp27-28, 41, 92

<sup>20</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 344, folio 777 (note the front title has largely perished, making the date of transfer indecipherable)

<sup>21</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 3784, folio 741

<sup>22</sup> 'Ivanhoe', *Herald*, 26 February 1914, p5

<sup>23</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4015, folio 924

<sup>24</sup> Review of *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria*

Austin's dwelling, along with the interwar house of John W Bainbridge, a Department of Agriculture official, that was situated opposite Robinhood Road (since demolished) were some of the earliest dwellings in the immediate area.<sup>25</sup>



1931 aerial photograph of the rough centre of Ivanhoe East  
Austin's house, then occupying the subject place, is circled in dashed red  
(Source: Landata, Project no 1931, Run 17, Frame 3328)

In 1951, new owners subdivided the corner allotment, creating the subject allotment.<sup>26</sup> A couple of years later, in January 1956, the Roman Catholic Trusts Corporation for the Diocese of Melbourne purchased the subject property, at which time Austin's residence was demolished.<sup>27</sup>

Behind the decision of the Diocese to acquire the corner site was the rapid suburban transformation of Ivanhoe East over the late 1940s and early 1950s, which equated with a growing flock that outstripped existing religious facilities.<sup>28</sup> The activist English immigrant, Father Bernard Joseph Geoghegan (1894-1977), then the inaugural priest of the fledgling (established 1940) Immaculate Conception Parish, appears to have played a principal role in advocating and planning for a new church and parish for the burgeoning locale of Ivanhoe East. Both the former and latter were to be known as 'Mother of God'.<sup>29</sup> News of a new church had been in public circulation as early as 1954, with the Catholic weekly newspaper, *The Advocate*, reporting:

As a result of the meeting held at the home of Mr. Frank Galbally, Withers-street, East Ivanhoe, recently, the forty or so present unanimously decided that a church should be erected in the vicinity to meet the needs of the Catholics of this rapidly growing residential suburb who find that they are too remote from the churches at Heidelberg and Ivanhoe. Plans for the new building are in the course of preparation and as

<sup>25</sup> 'Mr. J. W. Bainbridge', *Age*, 9 August 1940, p10

<sup>26</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4015, folio 924

<sup>27</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 8103, folio 611

<sup>28</sup> The wider growth of Banyule's Roman Catholic community, including its increasing middle-class complexion from the interwar years, and the impact of southern European (particularly Italian) postwar immigration (challenging the monolithic Irish-Catholic character of the church), is discussed in the *Banyule Thematic Environmental History* (Context, October 2018, pp42-3)

<sup>29</sup> The Ivanhoe area initially fell within the boundaries of the Heidelberg Parish (established 1851). In 2005, Banyule's three postwar Catholic parishes (St Bernadette's, Immaculate Conception, Mother of God) were formally consolidated into the 'Mary Mother of the Church – Ivanhoe Parish'.

soon as they are finalized, the church will be commenced. It will be erected at the intersection of Maltravers-street and Ormond-road. Father J. Geoghegan, P.P., Immaculate Conception parish, Ivanhoe, is in charge of the district embraced by the proposed church.<sup>30</sup>



1954 aerial photograph, with the undivided subject property, still occupied by Austin's residence, circled in red  
(Source: Landata, Project no 174, Run 15, Frame 75)

Evidently, the later purchase of the subject property superseded the site noted in the *Advocate*. The identity of the architect/s noted in the article is also not known. Nonetheless, by at least early 1956, Fr Geoghegan (likely aided by a building committee) had engaged the young, progressive practice of Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell. *Mother of God* – titled 'Memorial Church of the Mother of God' on the drawings – was to be the firm's first religious commission. The commemorative aspect of this title was to be conveyed in the plaque to the narthex, dedicating the building to those that died during the world wars (and specifying the architects); however, its wording does not appear to have been ever installed (see existing plaque).<sup>31</sup>

In the mid-1950s, such a decision to 'go modern' was still bold, only becoming more typical (particularly for new suburban parishes) later in the decade as Victoria witnessed a veritable surge in church construction that continued into the early 1970s. A myriad of factors likely underpinned such a determination, including issues of economy and the reforming Liturgical movement, and a desire to appeal and remain relevant to younger generations and new families by adopting a 'modern' architecture – one more in character with the swiftly modernising and different landscape of 1950s Australia.<sup>32</sup> The British architect, Edward Mills, captured this influential aspect in the design of postwar religious building in his much-publicised 1956 book, *The Modern Church*: 'If we do not build churches in keeping with the spirit of the age we shall be admitting that religion no longer possesses the same vitality as our secular buildings'.<sup>33</sup>

In general, the Christian churches were 'expansionist in outlook' across the postwar years,<sup>34</sup> assured in their capacity to meet mainstream contemporary desires for social stability and cohesion, a renewed focus on home and the nuclear family, and

<sup>30</sup> 'New Church for Ivanhoe East', *Advocate*, 1 April 1954, p2

<sup>31</sup> 'Church of the Mother God – This Church is Erected to the Memory of Those Australians Who Gave Their Lives During World War I and II – 15 September 1957 – Architects Mockridge Stahle & Mitchell' (*Amended Set out of Lettering*, undated, drawing no 382/79A', SLV, YLATD 16)

<sup>32</sup> The 20<sup>th</sup>-century international Liturgical movement called for liturgical and theological reforms, culminating in the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council of 1962-65 (Vatican II).

<sup>33</sup> Edward D Mills, *The Modern Church*, Praeger, 1956, p15

<sup>34</sup> David Hilliard, 'Popular Religion in Australia in the 1950s: A Study of Adelaide and Brisbane', *Journal of Religious History*, vol 16, no 2, December 1988, p235.



trepidation towards moral decline and international tension.<sup>35</sup> Church authorities and local lay leadership routinely perceived the building of modernist churches as essential (and exciting) activities – a fundamental investment in their spiritual claim to the expanding footprint of the suburbs and highly visible stake in a coalescing postwar civic realm.<sup>36</sup>

The foundation stone for *Mother of God* was blessed by Archbishop Mannix with much fanfare on 11 November 1956. The *Advocate* carried a detailed description of the church, then under construction:

The church will be a steel framed building with the structural members clothed in pre-cast concrete to facilitate speedy erection and precision finish. Infill walls will be of pink-fawn Colortone bricks and the roof is to be of slate.

The architects, Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell, have pursued an unusual lozenge form which was suggested by the wedge-shaped site. The exaggerated perspective produced by this shape will lead the eye directly to the high altar. Extensive use of plain stained glass will be made in the large window over the entrance, in the lady chapel, and in the large window at the side of the sanctuary which will flood this area with light and form an interesting pattern on the painted brick altar wall. Subdued general light will be provided by panels of small cruciform windows high up in the east wall. The church which is designed to seat 450, will sit on a concrete mat to be covered with lino tiles.

Rich colour will be introduced on the plastered walls whilst dado and ceilings will be in hardwood lining boards waxed in their natural colour. Pews also will be constructed of this timber. Italian glass mosaics will be used to sheath four columns which occur between the nave and the aisle.

The Lady Chapel, which is part of the nave, will be emphasized by the barrel vaulting of the ceiling, and plastic domes in the flat roof will flood the baptistry and the centre of the narthex with light. A priest's vestry, boys' sacristy and women's sacristy for flower arranging are also provided.<sup>37</sup>



November 1956 photograph of the foundation stone blessing  
*Mother of God's* steel frame visible left of frame  
(Source: 'Parish History Project', *Mary Mother of the Church*, undated, available online)



Archbishop Mannix (mitra hat) and clerics bless *Mother of God's* foundation stone  
(Source: 'Parish History Project', *Mary Mother of the Church*, undated, available online)

The appointed contractors for the church were the prominent Melbourne building firm of Clements Langford Pty Ltd (1868-1960s), with the total construction costs reported as £40,000 – a substantial sum in line with the middle-class complexion of the congregation and area.<sup>38</sup> Another £10,000 was expended on furnishing *Mother of God*.<sup>39</sup>

The first mass was celebrated at *Mother of God* in September 1957. Archbishop Mannix, again in attendance, praised Fr Geoghegan's for the 'beautiful church' and 'magnificent site', while also hinting at a note of unease from another (unnamed, imaginably conservative) clerical speaker with the modern nature of the design.<sup>40</sup>

The *Age* carried a photograph of the 'New Roman Catholic Church at East Ivanhoe' in October (reproduced below).

<sup>35</sup> Graeme Davison, 'Religion', Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre, *The Cambridge History of Australia*, vol 2, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp227-28

<sup>36</sup> As noted by Richardson, the 'far-reaching influences of modernity' (individualism, female participation in the workforce, new avenues for self-improvement, etc) gradually came to compete with the centrality of the church to Australia and fuelled a rising secularisation (*The untold story of modernism*, pp63-4).

<sup>37</sup> 'New Church at East Ivanhoe', *Advocate*, 8 November 1956, p3

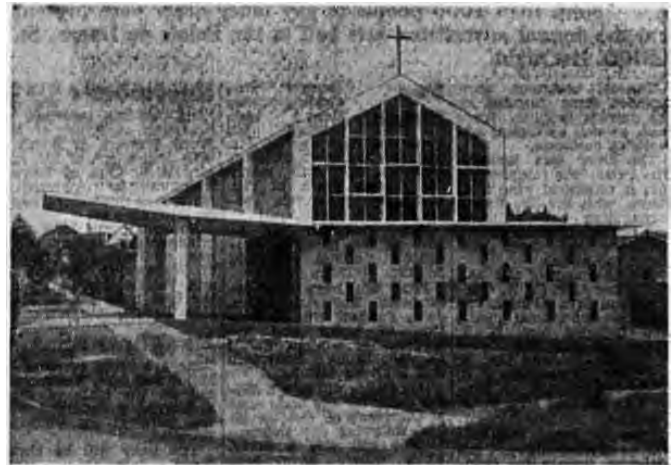
<sup>38</sup> *Cross-Section*, December 1956, no. 50, np; and November 1957, no. 61, np – The University of Melbourne, digitised items

<sup>39</sup> 'Beautiful Church on Fine Site at East Ivanhoe', *Advocate*, 26 September 1957, p7

<sup>40</sup> 'Beautiful Church on Fine Site at East Ivanhoe', *Advocate*, 26 September 1957, p7

A few months later (November), the clinker-brick Tudor revival-style residence opposite the church at 63 Wilfred Road was purchased as the presbytery.<sup>41</sup>

Fr Geoghegan was appointed parish priest at the formal constitution of Mother of God in January 1958.<sup>42</sup> While the broad-ranging religious, social and religious activities of this church have not been researched in-depth, a phrase common in the 1950s and 1960s was the 'seven-day-a-week' church, which speaks to the vigour of congregational life in this period and the myriad of happenings that occurred in suburban buildings like *Mother of God*.



(Above) *Mother of God* church and entrance hall  
(Source: *Age*, 12 October 1957, p8)

(Left) Fr Geoghegan (rear) photographed conducting the first mass at the Mother of God Church, 1957  
(Source: 'Parish History Project', *Mary Mother of the Church Catholic Parish Ivanhoe*, available online)

The polemical *Cross-Section*, a newsletter prepared by the Department of Architecture at the University of Melbourne, had published a sketch of *Mother of God* in late 1956, during its construction. Its brief coverage highlighted Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell's design as an uncommon departure from church design, which it castigated as 'architecturally, the most backward building-type' in Australia' ('the artistic sacrilege rests with the church committees, notorious for being "Sunday architects"').<sup>43</sup>



Sketch of *Mother of God*, presumably from the office of Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell  
(*Cross-Section*, December 1956, no. 50, np, The University of Melbourne)

The modernist enthusiast Peter Wille (1931-71) photographed *Mother of God* – north and west elevation – during construction.

<sup>41</sup> *The Catholic Parish of Ivanhoe: A Brief History*, Catholic Parish Ivanhoe, undated, refer to parts 1 and 4, available online

<sup>42</sup> *The Catholic Parish of Ivanhoe: A Brief History*, part 4

<sup>43</sup> *Cross-Section*, December 1956, no. 50, np, The University of Melbourne



View to frontage and along west elevation, during construction  
(Source: Peter Wille, undated, SLV, no a22359)



View to west elevation, during construction – note barrel vaulting  
(Source: Peter Wille, undated, SLV, no a22359)

The Melbourne-based *Architecture and Arts* journal, which editorialised in support of modern design, published an in-depth article on *Mother of God* in its December 1957 edition:

This Roman Catholic church was completed in September.

It is a steel-framed building with precast concrete column casings and gutters painted white. Panel walls are pink-fawn silica (cement 9 in. by 4½ in. by 3 in.) bricks and the main roof is slate. Concrete slabs sheeted with asbestos felt roof the lower areas and barrel vaulting defines the Lady Chapel.

Located in a high-class residential area requiring special permission to build, the church has been designed as far as possible not to obtrude on its surrounding houses. The plan shape was adopted in order to take full advantage of the unusual and restricted site and to give all worshippers a clear view of the altar. The exaggerated perspective produced by the slowly rising springing line (of the roof) further dramatises the white-painted altar wall.

The church seats 450. It also contains a Priest's Vestry, Boys' Sacristy and a Women's Sacristy for flower arranging, etc.

The confessionals have been planned so that they do not project into the nave, and the electronic organ is installed in a recess near the sanctuary.

The building cost about £A40,000, exclusive of furnishings.

Consulting Engineers, J. L. & E. M. Daly, Melbourne.

Builders, Clements Langford Pty. Ltd.

Timber dado, pews and ceilings are of Australian mountain ash treated with a white filler and satin plasticised finish.

Side walls of the nave are painted deep blue-green and the altar walls is white painted bagged brickwork. Exposed steel roof beams are painted matt black and the walls and ceilings of the Lady Chapel are white. Italian glass mosaics in grey-green, blue-green and copper clothe the columns to the Lady Chapel, which has a mahogany altar matching the "floating" Stations of the Cross panels, which also mask the regulation inlet vents. As yet unfinished, the Stations will have bas reliefs in Australian mountain ash now being carved by Hermann Hohaus, a New Australian sculptor, who also carved the Crucifix.<sup>44</sup>

Several photographs of church's exterior and interior taken by the noted architectural photographer, Wolfgang Sievers, accompanied the *Architecture and Arts* article. Some are reproduced below.

<sup>44</sup> 'Church of the Mother of God East Ivanhoe, Victoria: Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell, Architects', *Architecture and Arts*, December 1957, p29





*Mother of God from Robinhood Road, Wolfgang Sievers*  
(Source: *Architecture and Arts*, December 1957, p28)



*Mother of God from Wilfred Road*  
(Source: *Architecture and Arts*, December 1957, p28)

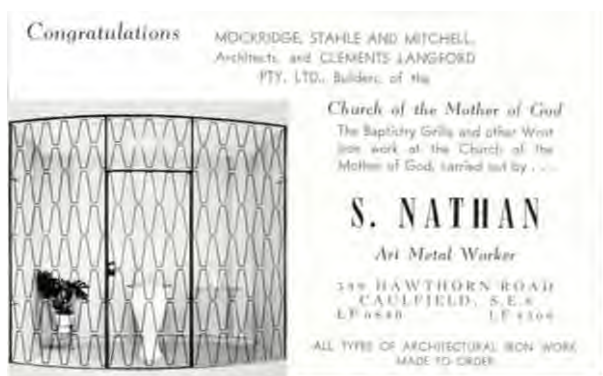


Arrangement of original altar, since modified, and rail (removed)  
(Source: *Architecture and Arts*, December 1957, p49)

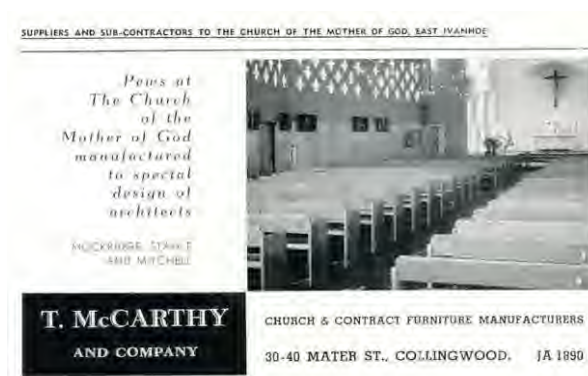


Original nave showing 'starburst' light fittings (replaced) and steel beams  
(Source: [www.ivanhoecatholics.com/parishhistory.htm](http://www.ivanhoecatholics.com/parishhistory.htm))

The *Architecture and Arts* article, along with the copious archived drawings related to *Mother of God's* construction, illustrate the 'total design' approach increasingly adopted by modernist architects in the postwar period, with Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell responsible for nearly a myriad of aspects at the place, including much of the original internal furnishing, ritual objects and landscaping. The commissioning of the modernist German-born sculptor Hermann Hohaus (1920-90) to design/handmake the altar crucifix and Stations of the Cross panels (of native timber) speaks to contemporary efforts in integrating art and architecture.<sup>45</sup>



Advertisement showing baptistry grille at *Mother of God*, since removed  
(Source: *Architecture and Arts*, December 1957, p58)



Advertisement of timber pews at *Mother of God*, still extant  
(Source: *Architecture and Arts*, December 1957, p58)

*Mother of God* was Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell's first completed religious commissions. Its generally positive critical and public reception appears to have been important for the development of the office and gave rise to additional church building projects, including in Banyule (see Comparative).

The 'Mother of God Primary School' opened in 1963 on recently acquired land opposite the new church (across Robinhood Road).<sup>46</sup>

In response to Vatican II, liturgical alterations were undertaken in 1968 and included the raising of the sanctuary floor to create a mass-facing altar – itself renewed – as well as the carpeting of the floor. Further modifications, overseen by the locally-based architect, Vito Cassisi, occurred in 1987. These resulted in the removal of the baptistry grille, internal division of the nave with timber-framed glazing and the enclosure of the porch.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Hohaus later prepared two bronze Madonna and Child sculptures at the Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell-designed *Mary Immaculate Church*.

<sup>46</sup> The parish school was closed at the end of 2017.

<sup>47</sup> *The Catholic Parish of Ivanhoe: A Brief History*, pp19-20



Close-up of cantilevered porch, mid-1980s – soon after partly enclosed with glazing, mid-1980s  
 Note original floor of white Carborundum (silicon carbide stone) panels and 'English' grey-blue quarry tiles  
 The mature tree central to the triangular front garden (background) has since been replaced  
 (Source: courtesy of Graeme Butler)

### Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell (1948-83)

The Melbourne-based architecture practice of Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell emerged as leading practitioners of an ascetic yet refined and humane interpretation of the modern movement over the postwar period.<sup>48</sup> The range of their work was wide but is chiefly associated with residential, ecclesiastical and educational designs, both in Victoria and the ACT. As noted by the architectural historian Philip Goad, their important mid-century contribution has been 'significantly under-researched', and their principal designer, John Mockridge, should be considered one of the State's 'pre-eminent architects of the 1940s' and 'one of the outstanding designers of the 1950s'.<sup>49</sup>

John Pearce Mockridge (1916-94), James Rossiter ('Ross') Stahle (1917-2000), and George Finlay Mitchell (circa 1916-2006) founded the practice in 1948, after a collective stint at Buchan Laird & Buchan. All were relatively young, returned service members who had attended the University of Melbourne Architectural Atelier during the late 1930s – then an incubator of architectural experimentation in Melbourne.<sup>50</sup> The partnership's dynamics emerged quickly and proved potent:

While all [*the*] partners collaborated on basic design decisions, early on in their association, each found his forte in the burgeoning practice. Mitchell handled relationships with clients and officialdom. Mockridge, at his drawing board, slaved over the elegant details that were the signature of the new firm's work, while Stahle, the administrator, supervised staff benevolently and building contracts meticulously.<sup>51</sup>

The firm's initial string of houses and embrace of the new structural and material possibilities of the postwar period established its strong modernist credentials.<sup>52</sup> Beyond the readily identifiable 'modern' imagery of their buildings, Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell are also distinguished for the contextual sensitivity of their design work and response to 'New Empiricism', a term coined

<sup>48</sup> Winsome Callister, 'Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell', in Philip Goad and Julie Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedias of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp461-62.

<sup>49</sup> Goad paraphrased in David Yencken, 'A Tale of Two Motels: the times, the architecture and the architects', *La Trobe Journal*, no 93-94, September 2014, p154, available online

<sup>50</sup> Julie Willis, 'The Melbourne University Architectural Atelier, 1919-1947', *Journal of Architectural Education*, vol 58, no 3, February 2005, p13

<sup>51</sup> Neil Clerehan, 'Schools were 'in' for designer', *Age*, 5 July 2010

<sup>52</sup> The practice's early work featured prominently in the special 1954 issue of *Architecture in Australia* alongside other leading postwar architects (Harry Seidler, Yuncken Freeman Brothers, Roy Grounds, Hassell and McConnell).



in Europe during the late 1940s to describe a more humanist interpretation of the modern movement.<sup>53</sup> Their ecclesiastical design was avant-garde, particularly in its examination of geometrical plans and shapes.<sup>54</sup> Notable places of worship by the practice beyond Banyule include St Faith's Anglican Church, Burwood, 1956-58 (VHR H2254), Whitley College and Ridley College Chapel at Parkville, 1962-65, and the multifaith Religious Centre at Monash University, Clayton, 1967-68 (VHR H2188).



Left to right, Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell  
(Source: *Architecture and Arts*, February-March 1953, p17)

## Thematic Context

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

- Theme 5: Suburban development
- Theme 6: Community and cultural life

## Comparative Analysis

There are nine churches included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in Banyule.<sup>55</sup> Of these, only one dates from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its details follow:

- *St Bernadette's Church*, 89-91 Bond Street, Ivanhoe (HO181) – a modernist Catholic church designed by Robert O Ellis and constructed 1961-62. It has a prow-like form and curved sidewalls of cream brick with concrete structural elements. Some design components, particularly the elliptical tower and random window configuration (sidewalls), reflect the influence of Le Corbusier's seminal *Chapel of Notre Dame du Haut* at Ronchamp (1955). *St Bernadette's* has a traditional interior, consisting of a long nave and remote sanctuary.

As noted, *Mother of God* was the first of three distinctive, modernist places of worship constructed in the Ivanhoe area for the Catholic Church. Alongside *St Bernadette's*, the other is *Mary Immaculate Church* at 2-6 Waverley Avenue, Ivanhoe (1961-62), also designed by Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell.<sup>56</sup> Situated on a corner site, *Mary Immaculate* has a kite-shaped nave capped by a pair of triangular roof planes clad in blue Cordova tiles and is constructed of dark-grey, rough-faced concrete bricks. Notable to the southern plane is a steel-framed triangular spire clad in copper, surmounted by a cross. At the time of assessment, a number of alterations and additions were being undertaken that will compromise its original aesthetic.

In the municipality, Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell were also responsible for designing the small chapel at Ivanhoe Grammar School (1981).<sup>57</sup> It has a slate-clad domed roof with a cross at the apex and appears to be constructed of light-tinted concrete blocks with sections of window walls.

*St George's Anglican Church* at 47 Warnclyffe Road, Ivanhoe East (chiefly 1963-64) – designed largely by the noteworthy Swiss-trained émigré architect Frederick Romberg, then of Romberg and Boyd – is also recommended for a HO by this Study. It is

<sup>53</sup> Mockridge himself later highlighted as influential the work of Californian William Wurster and Richard Neutra alongside Miles van der Roche and Le Corbusier. (Mockridge interviewed by Hazel de Berg, 1973, sounding recording, NLA, Bib ID 2327182)

<sup>54</sup> Refer to collection 'Records of the architectural practice of Mockridge Stahle and Mitchell, ca. 1962 – ca. 1985', SLV, MS 12496

<sup>55</sup> HO14, HO78, HO86, HO88, HO108, HO115, HO181, HO182, and HO183

<sup>56</sup> Refer to 'Mary Immaculate Church', *Recommendation of the Executive Director and assessment of cultural heritage significance under Division 3 of the Heritage Act 2017*, 17 November 2017, available online

<sup>57</sup> The chapel is located adjacent to the east side of The Ridgeway, roughly mid-way between Latham and Rose streets, but is largely obscured by fencing and foliage. See Norman Day, 'School Chapel', *Age*, 15 December 1981, p10

situated east of *Mother of God* and incorporates a section of a late interwar and 1950s hall. Romberg's main modernist complex is relatively grand and unique, distinguished by its cuboid form, strict geometric footprint with prominent courtyard and unusual melding of urban expression with vernacular detailing.

There are several other known instances of church design from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Banyule.<sup>58</sup> Of these, only *Greensborough Baptist Church (former)* is believed to date from the 1950s; however, its clinker brick walls and terracotta tile-clad gable roof reflect an instance of the continuation of traditional/conservative design in the postwar period. Other modernist designs of potential note – namely, *Bread of Life Uniting Church*, *All Saints Anglican Church*, *St Martin of Tours Catholic Church*, and *St Mary's Catholic Church* – all date from the 1960s/1970s. While individualistic and of potential heritage significance, their designs reflect a more established phase of 'modern' ecclesiastic design when compared to *Mother of God*.

*Mother of God* is the first definitive instance of postwar modernist church design in Banyule. More broadly, it is classifiable as an early example of 'modern' church design in Melbourne.<sup>59</sup>

Together with *St George's Anglican Church*, the subject place is a key non-residential example of the postwar modern movement in Ivanhoe East, a largely postwar locale with a relatively high proportion of modernist architecture.

## Intactness/Integrity

Generally intact

## Previous Assessment

- Ian and Roslyn Coleman (with Eleanor Bridger and Joanna Wills), *Twentieth Century Churches in Victoria: A Study for the Historic Building Council*, January 1996 – *Mother of God* is identified as 'Secondary Significance'
- 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 (brick walls)
Internal Alteration Controls	Yes (exposed matt-black steel roof beams and timber-lined ceiling)
Tree Controls	Yes (Atlas Cedar, front garden)
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

<sup>58</sup> Greensborough Baptist Church (former), 520 Greensborough Road, Greensborough (1950s); *Bread of Life Uniting Church*, 321 Lower Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe East (1961, Bates Smarts and McCutcheon, proposed for demolition); *All Saints Anglican Church*, 1 Main Street, Greensborough (circa 1966, Blyth and Josephine Johnson); *Living Faith Church* (formerly Methodist), 35-37 Grimshaw Street, Greensborough (Alexander Harris & Associates, 1966); *St Martin of Tours Catholic Church*, 2 Silk Street, Rosanna (architect unknown, late 1960s/early 1970s); *St Francis Xavier Catholic Church*, 84 Mayona Road, Montmorency (1965); and *St Mary's Catholic Church*, 210 Grimshaw Street, Greensborough (Max Chester, 1971).

<sup>59</sup> Refer to Ian and Roslyn Coleman (with Eleanor Bridger and Joanna Wills), *Twentieth Century Churches in Victoria: A Study for the Historic Building Council*, January 1996

## Extent of Heritage Overlay

The proposed extent of the heritage overlay is outlined below.



Recommended extent of heritage overlay  
(Source: Nearmap, depicting December 2019)



## OKALYI HOUSE

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<b>Address</b>	66 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1968-70
<b>Period</b>	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Okalyi House* at 66 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty is significant. It was designed by the architect Charles Duncan for husband-and-wife Zoltan and Elizabeth Jane Okalyi and built between 1968 and 1970.

The significant elements are its U-shaped form, gabled roof, deep eaves, timber-lined soffit, central chimney, stained timber beams and rafters, variegated dark-brown brick walls, piers, obtuse-angled brick detailing, timber-framed and floor-to-ceiling windows, incorporated double carport, and slate-clad courtyard. The 'bushland' character of the garden, including the raised earth bank immediately east of the house, complements the overall aesthetic of *Okalyi House*.

Some original elements to the interior are also significant, specifically the pine-lined ceilings (raked and concealed), exposed brick walls, floors paved in slate, and brick fireplace,

Later addition elements are not significant.

#### How is it Significant?

*Okalyi House* is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

#### Why is it Significant?

*Okalyi House* is of historical significance as an accomplished 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

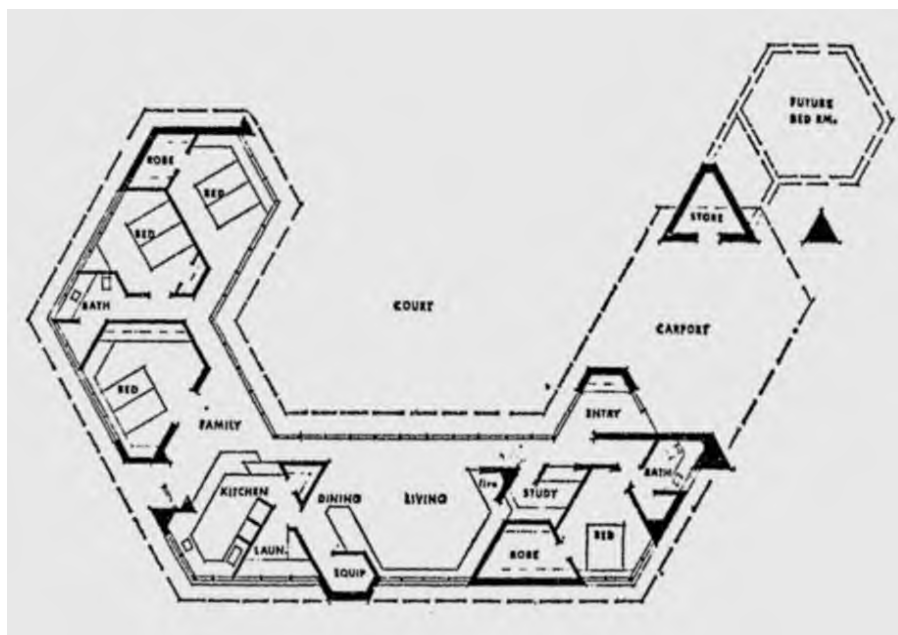
relatively small group of architects to develop a regionalised, more humanist version of international modernism rooted in local landscapes and conditions. While Duncan was celebrated in his heyday, his role in advancing and popularising a convincing regional idiom in Melbourne is now less generally recognised. *Okalyi House*, which was awarded *The Age*/RAIA Citation (no 34) in 1972, provides a valuable opportunity for examining a largely intact and idiosyncratic example of Duncan's work. More broadly, the residence – with its focus on functional and flowing spaces, natural light, and enhanced indoor/outdoor relationships – reflects some of the major lifestyle shifts that defined its period. Noted landscape designer, Gordon Ford, was responsible for the original garden, and a 'bush style' character remains evident. (Criterion A)

*Okalyi House* is of aesthetic significance as a largely intact and outstanding instance of organic/regional modernism in Melbourne. Its horizontality and remarkable modular U-shaped form demonstrate the command exercised by its architect, Charles Duncan, over Wrightian principles and ability to reference 'natural' arrangements in built form and detail. The emphatic expression of load and support conveyed to the street by the cavernous carport is striking. Less noticeable, due to orientation and landscaping, is the deft contrast achieved between robustly massed and textured brick piers/return walls and expansive sections of full height windows. The ground-hugging quality of the dwelling, supported by its low gabled roof and extended eaves, and considered relationship with its landform, illustrates Duncan's desire to craft complete designs that sensitively anchored house to site – the building surfacing from the landscape rather than imposed on it. Reinforcing these aspects of the place are seamless transitions between inside and outdoor living spaces, especially the slate-paved courtyard and its limited 'earthy' material palette. (Criterion E)

## Description

The single-storey *Okalyi House* is situated lengthwise on a large allotment at a moderate set back from the south side of Old Eltham Road. It is bordered to the west and east by residential properties and, to the rear, by the Heidelberg Golf Course. The residence is relatively concealed, with the majority of the building screened by trees and the undulating contours of the land or purposefully sited away from the street. This interest in privacy over public display was a key marker of many progressive architect-formulated houses from the early 1960s.

The footprint and form of *Okalyi House* are distinctive and modular, comprised of two hexagonal (front and centre) and octagonal (rear) wings that interlink to create a U-shape around a central courtyard. The interior has a triangular layout, with no right angles included within the floorplan.<sup>1</sup> Duncan explained these radical departures from the conventional as dictated by the slope of the property to the south. It also reveals his interest in organic architectural principles, particularly the aim of harmonising structure and site and orientating living spaces to take advantage of the solar cycle. Manifest also is the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright's *Hanna-Honeycomb House* (1937), although shorn of its stylistic excesses.<sup>2</sup>



Original floor plan, note extensive 'window walls' indicated by parallel lines. The 'future bedroom' that was proposed to join the north of the carport was never constructed (Source: Barker, "The Age" — RAIA Citation Award No. 34', *Age*, 15 May 1972, p11)

<sup>1</sup> John Barker, 'A new angle on planning', *Age*, 15 May 1972, p11

<sup>2</sup> Also noted by Philip J Goad, *The modern house in Melbourne, 1945-1975*, PhD thesis, Faculty of Architecture Building & Planning, University of Melbourne, 1992, Chapter 6, p53. The form of *Okalyi House* is elsewhere referred to elsewhere as a 'repeating polygonal module'. (Heritage Alliance, *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria*, Stage 1, vol 2, October 2008, p183, part F)



*Okalyi House* has a very low-pitched gable roof, now clad in later addition metal sheeting, with deep eaves and a timber-lined soffit.<sup>3</sup> There is a squat and geometric brick chimney to the roof of the middle wing. Skylights to the rear wing may be later additions, although Duncan was known to employ them.

An integrated double carport defines the front wing and streetscape presentation of *Okalyi House*. It is surmounted by three hefty laminated and darkly stained pine beams, which puncture or sit atop the same number of differently sized triangular piers. The inner pier, adjacent to the house's main entrance (obscured from the street), pierces the roofline. The incorporation of the entry within the carport was increasingly favoured over the 1960s, expressing a direct connection between the house and the car, a 'drive-in domesticity'.<sup>4</sup> The carport's floor is paved in brick. Sightlines through the carport to the internal courtyard are obscured by a solid timber fence, which is possibly non-original. Roof beams also project at the rear of the dwelling.



Carport with timber beams prominent

During construction, a roughly metre deep 'cut' was made for the dwelling into the incline. Excess soil was then arranged around the eastern side of the house, forming a 'high' side. This cut and fill activity was undertaken to accentuate the image of the house burrowing/nestling within the contours of the site. Such a relationship between the dwelling and landform remains.

The dwelling is of cavity wall construction employing variegated dark-brown stock bricks set in a stretcher bond with light brown tinted mortar. Such materials were low-maintenance and 'earthy' in aesthetic, which assists in further melding the house with the grounds. Brickwork throughout is confined to short lengths of return walls and piers of varying sizes. For the most part, banks of timber-framed floor-to-ceiling 'window walls' enclose *Okalyi House*. While predominantly not visible from the street, these elements – fundamental for the introduction of light into the interior and the creation of indoor/outdoor spatial continuity – are likely to remain.

The corners of the front piers disappaly obtuse-angled brickwork, a Wrightian motif intended to invoke the appearance of honeycomb (initially experimented with at the *Hanna-Honeycomb House*). This decorative treatment is continued to some other wall corners, both external and internal.

<sup>3</sup> Originally, Monier Besser brand grey-coloured cement tiles in a 'slate pattern'. (Barker, 'A new angle on planning, p11)  
<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey London, Philip Goad and Conrad Hamann, *An Unfinished Experiment in Living: Australian Houses 1950-65*, UWAP Publishing, 2017, p17





Rear wing (south), during or soon after construction  
(Source: Peter Wille, SLV, H91.244/1738)

The sizable courtyard is open to the west, where it melds with the bush garden, and surfaced in recycled slate paving (possibly reused roofing slates). It contains a small in-ground pool, a future addition envisioned by Duncan.<sup>5</sup>

As discussed, *Okalyi House*'s original floor was triangular, presenting as a series of carefully delineated, free-flowing spaces. The interior was designed in a pared-down fashion with pine-lined raked and concealed ceilings (recessed lights), a lighted coloured ('orange-brown') brick and slate paved floors. The central living room has a small but cave-like fireplace.



Living room, facing north – note obtuse brick-detailing above the fireplace  
(Source: Peter Wille, SLV, H91.244/173)

<sup>5</sup> Barker, 'A new angle on planning', p11

The house is set within a 'bush style' garden devised by Gordon Ford. The essence of his approach remains interpretable in the informal native/indigenous landscaping of the whole site, which presents from the street as genuine bushland. The relaxed placement of boulders on the on the east side of the gravelled driveway may be original and certainly reflects Ford's desired aesthetic. The retention of the earth bank at the front of the site, with a swale drain acting as public gutter, underlies the natural setting of *Okalyi House* (and is repeated elsewhere in Old Eltham Road). Fencing is not evident to the front and side of the subject place.



Views to *Okalyi House* filtered through its 'bush style' garden

*Okalyi House* is classifiable as an example of what architectural historian Philip Goad describes as the 'Wrightian survival'.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup>

Alongside some Melbourne architects' 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.<sup>8</sup> In contemporary circles, organic/regional versus rational/international modernism proved the central architectural dichotomy. Duncan's creative practice within the domain of the former is notable.

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 enthrallment 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.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Goad, *The modern house in Melbourne, 1945-1975*, Chapter 6, pp31-32

<sup>7</sup> 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

<sup>8</sup> Goad, 'Regionalism', in Goad and Julie Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p589

<sup>9</sup> 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-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.<sup>10</sup>

Sizable land parcels and absentee owners predominated over the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the emergent locality was mainly cleared and cultivated or stocked by a small community of tenant farmers. The 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.<sup>11</sup> The present-day Main Road (initially called Eltham Road) was laid in 1869.<sup>12</sup>

Subdivision in the Lower Plenty intensified during the 1920s, although the locale remained sparsely populated and a 'semi-suburban and rural area' into the 1950s.<sup>13</sup> Reminiscing about the postwar years, the notable mudbrick builder Alistair Knox described cycling through the area with the émigré architect Frederick Romberg, describing the Lower Plenty as a 'wide undulating... savannah landscape' dotted with 'Primeval redgums of enormous size'.<sup>14</sup>

Residential development increased progressively from the 1960s, with the construction of 'prestige' houses on large-scale allotments predominating.<sup>15</sup> Within this layer, a conspicuous minority displayed an 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.<sup>16</sup>

Open spaces and a general natural/rustic setting remain prevalent throughout Lower Plenty, with a peri-rural character predominating in its southern reaches. The Lower Plenty was administered by the District (later the Shire) of Eltham until 1994, after which municipal amalgamation led to its transfer (along with Montmorency) to the newly formed City of Banyule.



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)

<sup>10</sup> '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)

<sup>11</sup> The Plenty River was named in 1835 by Joseph T Gellibrand, the first Attorney-General of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) and a leading figure within the Port Phillip Association. Its designation as a river was more warranted before the formation of the Yan Yean Reservoir in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, which reduced its flow. Hoddle referred to it as the 'Yarra Rivulet'.

<sup>12</sup> The 1843 bridge was replaced in 1865 by the existing 'Old Lower Plenty Bridge' (HO106).

<sup>13</sup> Alan Marshall, *Pioneers & Painters: One Hundred Years of Eltham and its Shire*, Thomas Nelson, 1971, p84

<sup>14</sup> Alistair Knox, *We Are What We Stand On: a personal history of the Eltham Community*, Adobe Press, 1980, chapter 39

<sup>15</sup> '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

<sup>16</sup> Rick Campbell, 'Suburban Living, but with hills and bush', *Age*, 9 November 1968, p23. See also, various slides by Peter Wille of organic/regional architecture in the area at the SLV.



## 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.<sup>17</sup> He had arrived in Sydney Town in 1837 as a Captain in the 50<sup>th</sup> (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.<sup>18</sup> In 1927, a large part of Portion 2 was acquired for use by the Heidelberg Golf Club.<sup>19</sup>

Suburban allotments on either side of Old Eltham Road were released and developed in a seeming ad hoc fashion from the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century. In November 1968, husband-and-wife Zoltan and Elizabeth Jane Okalyi became joint proprietors of the subject allotment.<sup>20</sup> Then a block covered in regrowth bush. Attached to the Certificate of Title was a covenant requiring that at least \$16,000 is expended for residential construction, at the time placing a new build within the middle-cost bracket.<sup>21</sup> Both Okalyis were accomplished international-level fencers, and Zoltan studied medicine and later practised in the district as a psychiatrist.<sup>22</sup>



October 1968 aerial photograph of the undeveloped subject allotment, indicated by the red arrow, (Source: Landata, Project no 1968, Run 15, Frame 192)

Contemporaneous with the Okalyi purchase, the *Age* published a feature article that highlighted the influence of the modern movement in the Lower Plenty:

On one stretch of the Old Eltham Road, just a few hundred yards from the Lower Plenty shopping centre, all but one or two of the houses are built around the concept of squat, angular geometry. There may be more or less glass. White surfaces may contrast with dark wood. But always roofs are flat and windows square and open...<sup>23</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Refer to *Plan of the Parish of Nillumbik*, Office of Lands and Survey, 1866, SLV, available online

<sup>18</sup> 'Death of Captain Baxter: An Old Colonist and Pioneer', *Mornington Standard*, 19 May 1892, p3; and Marshall, *Pioneers & Painters*, pp82-4

<sup>19</sup> *Heidelberg Golf Club*, 'History', available online

<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth was initially recorded as the sole proprietor in June 1968. (Certificate of Title, vol. 8722, folio 500)

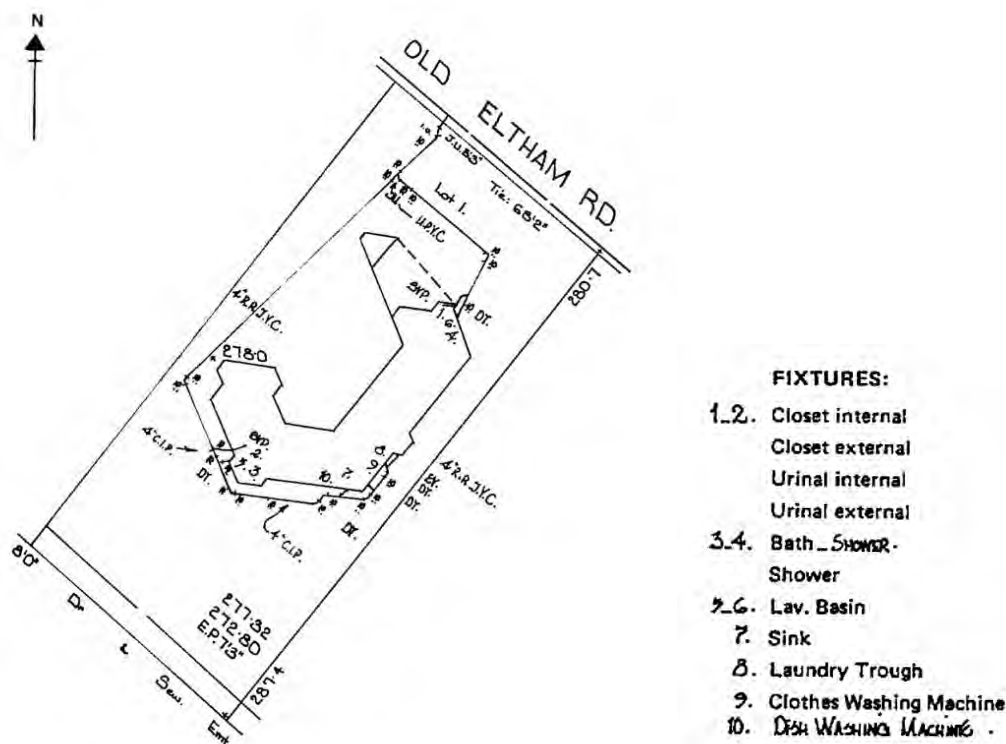
<sup>21</sup> Certificate of Title, vol. 8722, folio 500. Details of this covenant are supplied by Rick Campbell, 'Suburban Living, but with hills and bush', *Age*, 9 November 1968, p23. Assessment of average construction costs deduced from various sources, for instance: Daryl Jackson, 'Houses off-the-hook', *Age*, 26 June 1967, p11

<sup>22</sup> Born in Hungary, Zoltan represented Australia at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome as a fencer. By at least the early 1980s, 'Liz' was being described as one of 'Australia's top women fencers'. (SR/Olympic Sports record, available online; *Age*, 30 June 1964, p1; and Peg McMahon, 'Our fencers are aiming high', *Age*, 30 December 1981, p15)

<sup>23</sup> Campbell, 'Suburban Living, but with hills and bush', p23

The well-established modernist architect Charles Duncan was engaged by the Okalyis to design their family home. The nature of their relationship is unknown; however, Duncan later commented that his most fruitful work stemmed from creative/positive with his clients, when both parties adopted the dogma 'every good building must have one idea'.<sup>24</sup> It appears that that *Okalyi House* was designed in 1968; Duncan may have commenced the process before the property was formally acquired. The residence had been constructed and occupied, at the latest, by 1970.<sup>25</sup> The contractors were K Soust Development Pty Ltd.<sup>26</sup>

During or soon after completion, *Okalyi House* was photographed by the modernist enthusiast Peter Wille (1931-71), who recorded much of Duncan's domestic work in the period.<sup>27</sup> In early 1972, *Okalyi House* was awarded *The Age*/RAIA 'House of the Week Citation' (no 34) – then a recognized architectural prize with widespread reach.<sup>28</sup>



Property Sewerage Plan, *Okalyi House*, 25 February 1976 – a reflection of the slow rollout of services in the area, rather than the construction date (Source: Yarra Valley Water)

The detailed article accompanying the citation, prepared by the then director of the Architects' Housing Service, John Barker, provides several insights into the design development of *Okalyi House*:

In an age of standardisation and modular planning, few designers depart from floor plans based on rectangular shapes. Generally this trend is promoted by the need for economy and speed of construction. An exception to the rule is provided in a 22 square house designed by architect Charles Duncan for a sloping site in Old Eltham Road.

The plan of the house was based on triangular shapes and constructed in solid brick with heavy timber beams. Mr. Duncan justifies this design approach, not in terms of economy but in utilisation of space. "Three co-ordinate planning is useful particularly in domestic work for creating a continuity of space and pockets of usable area not found in rectangular planning," say Mr. Duncan.

"Rooms which are small in area may be dimensionally larger than would otherwise be possible. A release from the rigidity of rectangular planning is exciting and entirely functional when properly resolved. In this case the planning principle was not pre-conceived but developed naturally from the most desirable positioning of rooms on the site."

<sup>24</sup> Andrew Briant, *Charles Duncan Architect*, University of Melbourne, November 1983, p9

<sup>25</sup> The design date (1968) is provided in a university essay by an author with firsthand knowledge of Duncan's practice (Briant, *Charles Duncan Architect*, p3). Zolton and Jane are first recorded at 66 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty in the 1970 edition of *Australia, Electoral Rolls*, Subdivision of Eltham (p103). However, Goad gives the construction date as 1968 (*The modern house in Melbourne*, Chapter 6, p53).

<sup>26</sup> John Barker, 'A new angle on planning', *Age*, 15 May 1972, p11

<sup>27</sup> Willie 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).

<sup>28</sup> Barker, 'A new angle on planning', p11

The site had a cross fall of about 6 feet to the north west. An excavated cut of three feet allowed the house to be set snugly into the contours using the external wall below the window sill to retain the soil. A continuous cavity ensured that dampness would not penetrate the house. The combination of a high ground line and deep projecting eaves achieves a sympathetic relationship between building and site. Surplus soil was used to form artificial mounds which exaggerate the natural features of the wooded terrain. Walking around the high side of the site one can reach out and touch the natural grey cement roof tiles which sweep down below eye level. The ridge of the roof is supported by a 16 inch deep laminated pine beam which is carried through to the carport as a continuous structural spine.

The timber lined ceiling follows the low pitch of the roof and floating timber panels above passage ways are used to conceal the indirect ceiling lighting. Areas are articulated internally by angular elements of exposed brickwork. For example, the large living area is simply defined by the two triangular forms of the pantry and open fire-place. The continuous flow of space requires few doors as visual privacy develops from the appropriate juxtaposition of areas.

From the living section the bedroom and carport wings extend to enclose a landscaped court which receives sun throughout the day. The slate paved court is surrounded by full glass walls and contains a bluestone barbeque with provision for a future swimming pool. The carport wing is planned for future extension to provide extra accommodation.

A simple colour scheme is derived from the use of natural materials throughout the house. Exposed orange-brown bricks and pine ceilings contrast with the neutral grey floor paved in reused roofing slates. Controlled use of orange Laminex adds a touch of colour to the bench tops. The house is heated by an oil fired system with ducts laid below the concrete floor.<sup>29</sup>



'Heavy laminated beams supported on brick piers enclose the carport of Charles Duncan's design at Lower Eltham' (Source: Barker, "The Age" — RAlA Citation Award No. 34', *Age*, 15 May 1972, p11)

The article also noted that Gordon Craig Ford (1918-99) was responsible for the site's garden.<sup>30</sup> Ford, a local of Eltham, was then emerging as a well-regarded landscape designer in the vanguard of furthering and popularising 'bush style' gardens. He often collaborated with modernist architects, supporting many in their aim to integrate building and site.<sup>31</sup>

The Okalyi family occupied the subject place into at least the 1980s.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Barker, 'A new angle on planning', p11

<sup>30</sup> Barker, 'A new angle on planning', p11

<sup>31</sup> Gordon Ford with Gwen Ford, *Gordon Ford: The Natural Australian Garden*, 1999

<sup>32</sup> Electoral rolls, [Ancestry.com.au](http://Ancestry.com.au)





1975 aerial photograph

The footprint of *Okalyi House*, obscured by foliage, is indicated by the red arrow

(Source: Landata, Project no 1243, 24A, Frame 147)

### 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.<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup>

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.<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup>

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.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Goad, *The modern house in Melbourne, 1945-1975*, Chapter 6, p30.

<sup>34</sup> Ray Davie, 'It's a grand winner' *Age*, 7 February 1970, p25

<sup>35</sup> Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd: A Life*, Melbourne University Press, 1996, p104

<sup>36</sup> 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

<sup>37</sup> *Merchant Builders: Towards a new archive*, Melbourne School of Design, 2015, p19

<sup>38</sup> *Cross-Section*, The University of Melbourne Department of Architecture, issue no 142, 1 August 1964

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.<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup> It was later the recipient of the RAI Victoria Architecture Medal (1965) and consists of a series of overlapping volumes with stepped flat roofs and extensive window walls. It is more representative of Duncan's formative organic designs, compared to the more ambitious formwork of *Okalyi House*.

There are also some instances of Duncan's residential work within the Elliston Estate (HO92) in Rosanna – a residential development by the innovative company Merchant Builders, initiated in 1969. Four notable architectural architects/practices were engaged (Charles Duncan, Daryl Jackson and Evan Walker, David McGlashan and Neil Everist, and Graeme Gunn) to prepare multiple designs with Ellis Stone responsible for integrating the subdivision with a contrived bushland landscape. Several houses by these architects were constructed in the southern section of the estate (Bachli Court to Von Ninda Crescent). These houses are generally modestly scaled and nestled in Stone's landscaping with a palette of brown or tan brick, flat or skillion roofs, and stained finish to the timberwork (facias, windows, etc.). In 1971 Merchant Builders sold the remaining parts of the estate for speculative development.

Several Duncan-designed houses have also been identified in Banyule as part of this Study.<sup>41</sup> 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.

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 *Okalyi 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.

*Okalyi House* stands apart from other instances of postwar or late 20<sup>th</sup>-century modernism for its atypical modular form and potent ability to epitomise a mature rendition of 1960s organic/regional design philosophy.

<sup>39</sup> *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

<sup>40</sup> *Cross-Section*, The University of Melbourne Department of Architecture, issue no 142, 1 August 1964, np

<sup>41</sup> 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, Banyule; *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.

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.<sup>42</sup>

## Intactness

Largely intact

## Previous Assessment

- Heritage Alliance, *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria*, Stage 1, vol 2, October 2008, p183 (part F)
- 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 (pine ceilings, brick fireplace, exposed brick walls, slate floors)
Tree Controls	Yes (front garden – mature native/indigenous species)
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

## Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



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

<sup>42</sup> Geoffrey London, Philip Goad and Conrad Hamann, *An Unfinished Experiment in Living: Australian Houses 1950-65*, UWA Publishing, 2017, passim



## LINDSAY EDWARD HOUSE

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



(Source: Street-facing elevation, March 2016, realestate.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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup>-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 local 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

*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).

<sup>1</sup> '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 Runting, '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 19<sup>th</sup> century. During that period, in Victoria, adobe construction was especially common in the Central Goldfields and some of Melbourne's outer-suburban areas.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

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

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

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

<sup>4</sup> '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.<sup>5</sup>

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 20<sup>th</sup>-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.<sup>6</sup>

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:

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

<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> 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).<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup>-century.

<sup>7</sup> 'Down to Earth in Housing: He Crusades For Mud', p7

<sup>8</sup> Goad, *The Modern House in Melbourne 1945 – 1975*, chapter 3, p58

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

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

<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>

Sizable land parcels and absentee owners predominated over the 19<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> The present-day Main Road (initially called Eltham Road) was laid in 1869.<sup>14</sup>

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.<sup>15</sup> 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'.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup>

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)

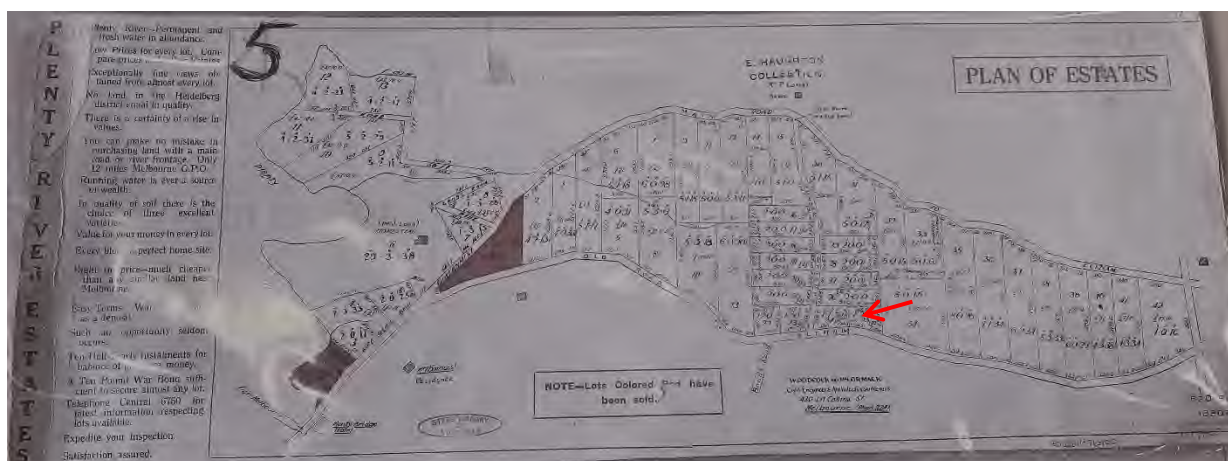
- <sup>12</sup> 'Nillumbik' may stem from the Indigenous word *nyilumbik*, meaning 'bad, stupid or red earth'. (Jill Barnard, 'Nillumbik Shire', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008, available online; and Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online)
- <sup>13</sup> 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-19<sup>th</sup> century, which reduced its flow. Hoddle referred to it as the 'Yarra Rivulet'.
- <sup>14</sup> The 1843 bridge was replaced in 1865 by the existing 'Old Lower Plenty Bridge' (HO106).
- <sup>15</sup> Alan Marshall, *Pioneers & Painters: One Hundred Years of Eltham and its Shire*, Thomas Nelson, 1971, p84
- <sup>16</sup> Alistair Knox, *We Are What We Stand On: a personal history of the Eltham Community*, Adobe Press, 1980
- <sup>17</sup> 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)
- <sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> He had arrived in Sydney Town in 1837 as a Captain in the 50<sup>th</sup> (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.<sup>20</sup> In 1927, a large part of Portion 2 was acquired for use by the Heidelberg Golf Club.<sup>21</sup>

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*).<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> 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'.<sup>24</sup> As part of this subdivision, Panorama Avenue was established, although it remained an 'unmade road ... in a bad state' into at least the 1930s.<sup>25</sup>



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.<sup>26</sup> 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*.<sup>27</sup> Macartney sold the entire property in 1950 to Lindsay M Edward, an artist and then teacher at RMIT.<sup>28</sup>

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

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

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

<sup>21</sup> *Heidelberg Golf Club*, 'History', available online

<sup>22</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 289, folio 706

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

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

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

<sup>26</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 4905, folio 996

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

<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup>

*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.<sup>30</sup> 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'.<sup>31</sup> 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'.<sup>32</sup> *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.<sup>33</sup>

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.<sup>34</sup>

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 19<sup>th</sup>-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.<sup>35</sup> 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'.<sup>36</sup>

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.<sup>37</sup> 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:

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

<sup>30</sup> 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

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

<sup>32</sup> "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)

<sup>33</sup> Goad, *The Modern House in Melbourne 1945 – 1975*, chapter 1, p1

<sup>34</sup> Goad, *The Modern House in Melbourne 1945 – 1975*, chapter 3, p3

<sup>35</sup> 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)

<sup>36</sup> Knox, *We are what we stand on*, chapter 45

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

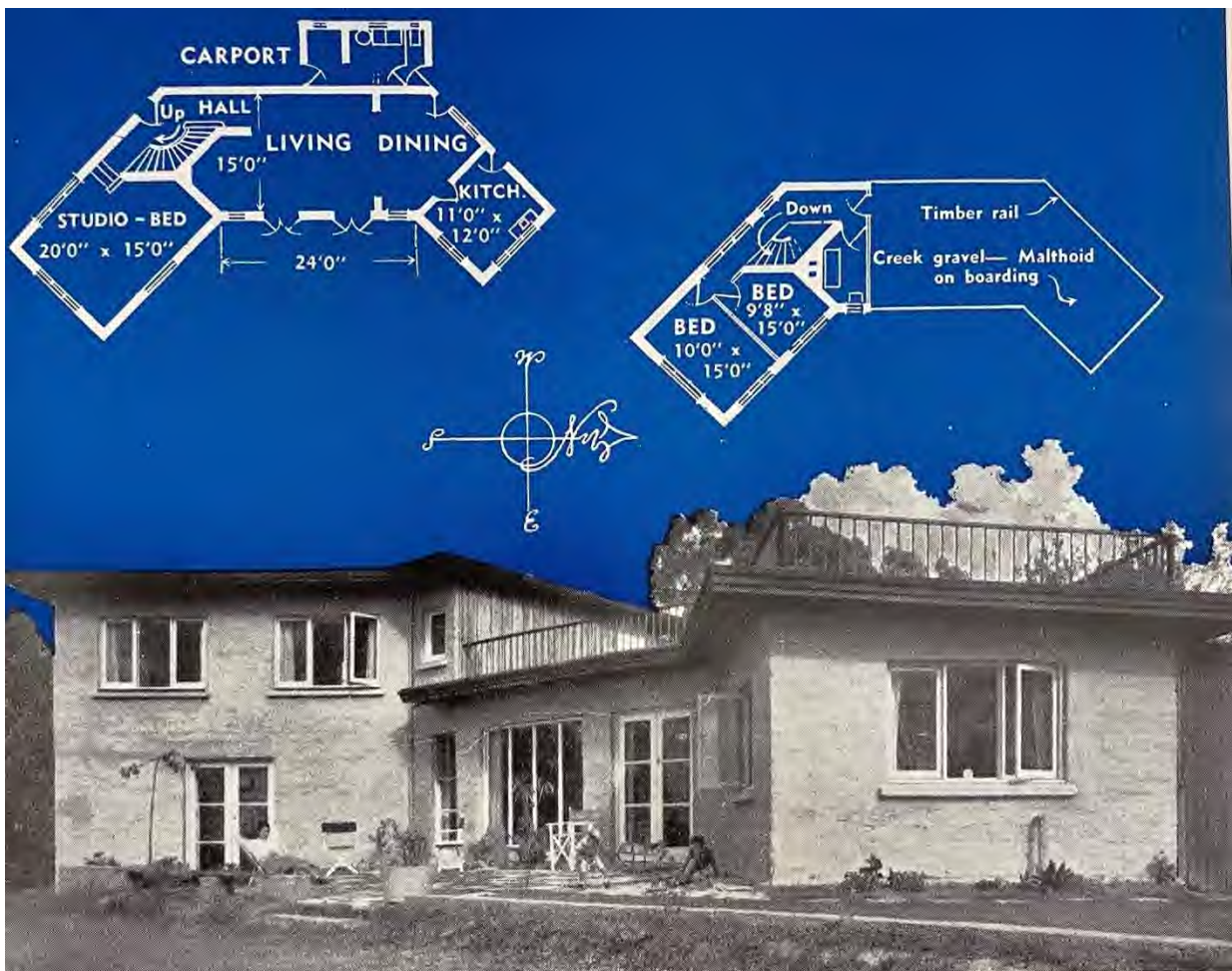


'We were young, enthusiastic idealists, keen to avoid becoming Thoreau's "men who lead lives of quiet desperation".'<sup>38</sup> Some became interested in unconventional construction techniques or turned to them by necessity; as noted by Boyd, many of the mud-brick builders 'had little money for building and they liked rustic simplicity. They looked to the earth for materials.'<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup>

*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.<sup>41</sup>



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)

<sup>38</sup> Ford, Gordon Ford: *the natural Australian garden*, p9

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

<sup>40</sup> 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>

<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup>

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: *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.

<sup>42</sup>

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.

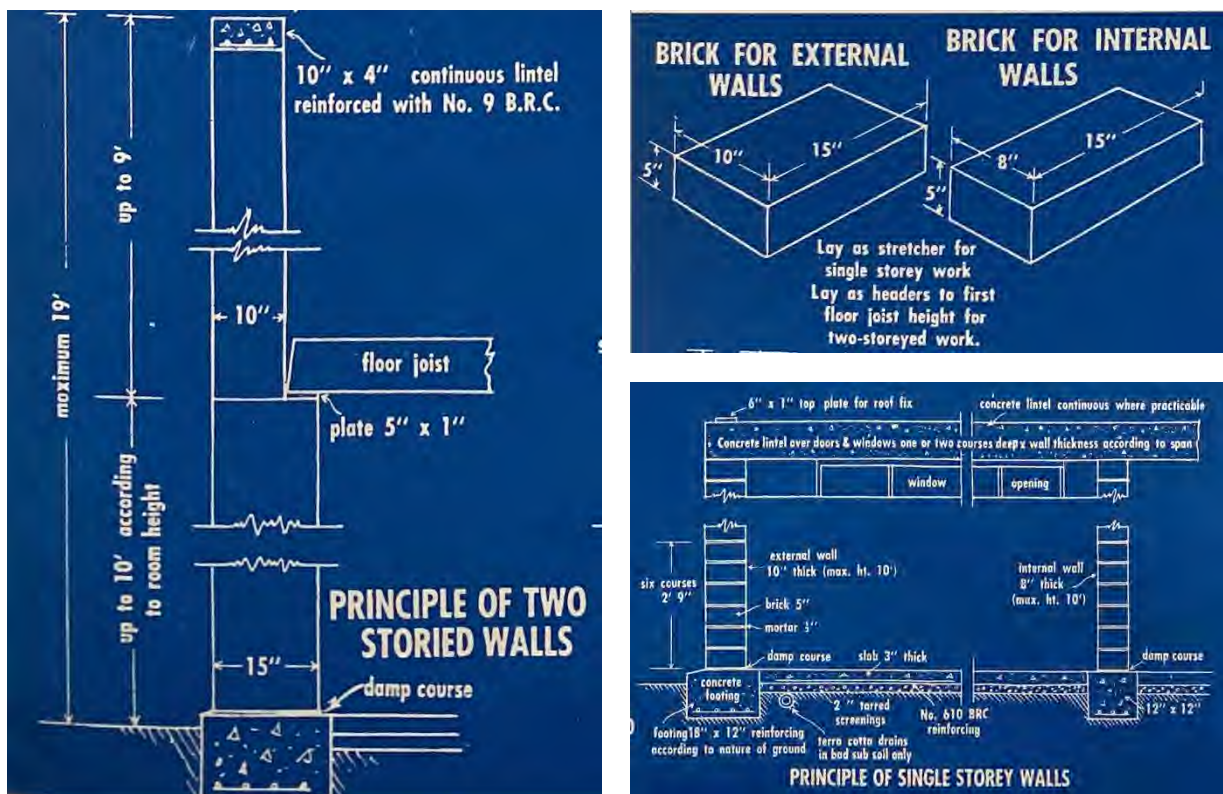
The cost of the excavation and concrete is more than compensated for by the saving in wall heights, the flexibility of the building, its relationship to its environment, temperature control, durability and beauty. Preconceived notions of what the house should be must be held in reserve until one determines 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.<sup>43</sup>

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).<sup>44</sup> Soon after, Rennie, a builder, is believed to have commissioned Knox to design a mud-brick house and studio on this allotment.<sup>45</sup> 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 ...

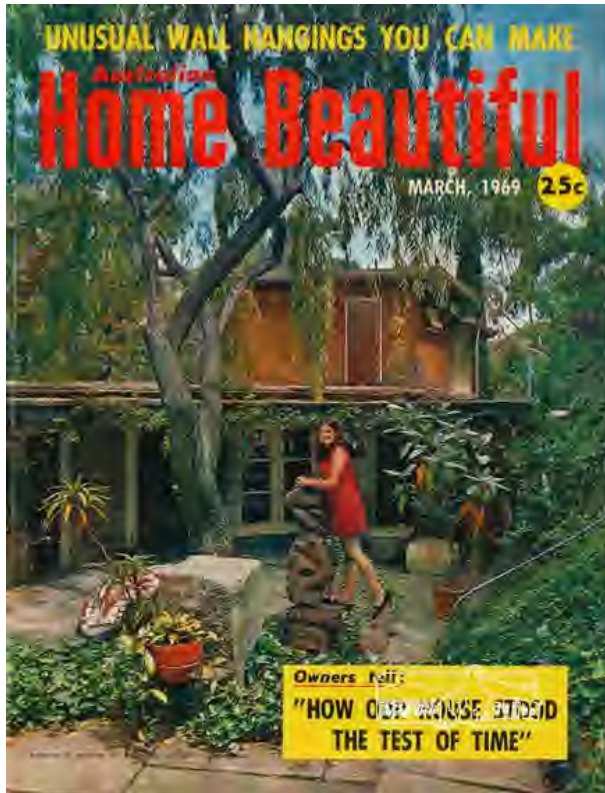
<sup>44</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 8069, folio 724

<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup>

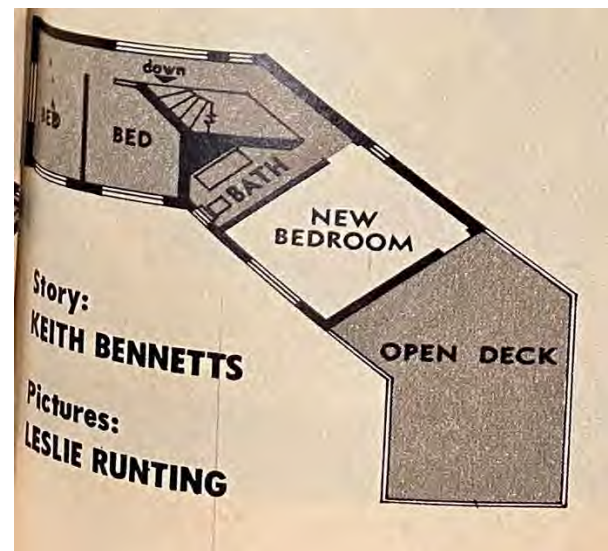
The 1960s small mud-brick studio discussed above survives on a battle-axe property excised from the subject place in 2015. It is now utilised as a private dwelling (151 Old Eltham Road).<sup>47</sup>



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)

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

<sup>47</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup>-century ground-floor northeast additions (sunroom and bedroom) to the northern extension/addition of the first-floor master bedroom.<sup>48</sup>

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.<sup>49</sup> 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'.<sup>50</sup> 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.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Personal correspondence with Edward family, November 2020

<sup>49</sup> Service Record, B883, VX87540, National Archives of Australia

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

<sup>51</sup> 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 ...<sup>52</sup>

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 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>53</sup>

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.<sup>54</sup>

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.<sup>55</sup> 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.

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

<sup>53</sup> 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

<sup>54</sup> Knox, *We are what we stand on*, xiii and p47

<sup>55</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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].'<sup>56</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup>

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

<sup>56</sup> Goad, 'Knox, Alistair', p338

<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup> 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.<sup>59</sup>
- *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.<sup>60</sup>

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.<sup>61</sup> 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

<sup>58</sup> 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.

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

<sup>60</sup> 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

<sup>61</sup> *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)



## VERA KNOX HOUSE

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<b>Address</b>	46 Panorama Avenue, Lower Plenty
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1958-60
<b>Period</b>	Postwar
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Vera Knox House* at 46 Panorama Avenue, Lower Plenty is significant. It was constructed between 1958 and 1960 as a retirement dwelling for Vera (*née* James) Knox, the widow of the artist and businessman William Dunn Knox, by his relative the designer/builder, Alistair Knox. Vera remained at the place until the early 1980s, after which it was sold.

The significant elements are the placement of the house below the level of the front garden and its original footprint, including its gabled roof, exposed rafters, pergola cut out, fascia, ashlar walls and chimney of Mount Gambier limestone, and original timber-framed window walls and sliding doors.

Existing trees enhance the setting of *Vera Knox House*.

Later additions, such as the carport, front gate and rear linked-in pavilion, are not significant.

#### How is it Significant?

*Vera Knox House* is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

## Why is it Significant?

*Vera Knox House* is of historical significance as a noteworthy example of modular design by the acclaimed practitioner and advocate for environmental building, Alistair Knox, between the mid-1950s and early 1960s. The modular approach – stressing standardisation, prefabrication, lightness – adopted by Knox in an effort to professionalise and economise his building/design practice revolved around the employment of a novel postwar product, 'Stramit' (a self-supporting compressed strawboard). Knox carried its 1,200mm (4 feet) width into wall systems, a move that considerably increased the speed and effectiveness of his house-building activities. The place also reflects another strain of unconventional housing (alongside mud-brick residences) that contributed to the postwar reputation of the Lower Plenty, then more associated with Eltham, as a community noted for its creative and 'alternative' dynamics. (Criterion A)

*Vera Knox House* is of aesthetic significance as a distinctive, generally intact instance of Alistair Knox's shift from his formative mud-brick designs to a regionalised modular idiom, in this case, unusual for the designer in its Miesian expression. It is differentiated from the numerous, more uniform brick/timber dwellings he built across Melbourne during this phase by its wall sections of Mount Gambier limestone, which were apparently salvaged from a demolished dwelling in Bullen connected to the family. Such employment of limestone is likely unique in the municipality. The contrast achieved between the residence's fine timber-framed, street-facing window walls and the hefty, luminous ashlar sections of limestone – filtered through trees at the site – is evocative of natural variations and palettes that Knox sought to encapsulate in his work. While the careful siting of the low-slung house within the fold of the landform, below the front ground level, is also expressive of his goal of harmonising structure and site, reversing the ascendancy of the built form over the landscape. (Criterion E)

## Description

*Vera Knox House* is situated at an ample setback from Panorama Avenue on a diamond-shaped allotment that slopes markedly to the north. The dwelling is off centre on the property and positioned close to the south boundary. Its large front garden is comprised of a mixture of soil and pine needles and defined by a grove of tall pine trees and mature eucalyptus. These plantings appear to have been present since at least the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

The frontage is unfenced, lined by a bed of *Agapanthus*, and features a timber batten gate flanked by mid-height square limestone pillars with masonry coping. Timber paling fences are present to the sides and rear of the property. A gravelled driveway runs the northern perimeter, leading to a later addition double carport with a skillion-roof (exposed beams) supported by a pair of square limestone pillars in the front and metal poles to the rear. In the south, a brick-paved curved path provides pedestrian access to the dwelling.



View to *Vera Knox House* with gate/limestone pillar right of frame

The single-storey *Vera Knox House* is situated below the level of the front garden, nestling behind the front garden bank on a likely excavated platform (limestone retaining wall, possibly non-original). This aspect of the design is reflective of the interest



shown by its designer, Alistair Knox, in the sensitive integration of structure and site – building within the landscape rather than on top of it. Combined with the stand of front garden trees, this placement also delivers privacy, allowing for the façade of *Vera Knox House* to be predominantly open and glazed. Due to such a siting and screening, views from the public realm to the place are blocked or obscured; as such, this assessment depends partly on real estate photography and an original architectural drawing (see Site-Specific).<sup>1</sup>

The original residence has a rectangular footprint and is capped by a low-pitched gabled roof with a large central beam. Initially, the roof was covered in a layer of Malthoid (bituminous felt) and creek gravel over 'Stramit' boards (see below). This finish presumably deteriorated, probably due to UV exposure, and corrugated metal sheeting now clads the roof. Rafters of Oregon timber are exposed and overshoot the walls to provide wide eaves. These are divided in half between a covered section (soffits of plaster sheeting) and an open section, which functions as a cut out pergola closed off by a rebated timber fascia. This arrangement has been lost to the rear (see below), but remains apparent in the façade. Both the ridge beam and rafters continue to be visible within the interior. Ceilings are timber boards, which may not be original (it is unclear whether Knox concealed the Stramit boarding).

The tall limestone pier adjacent to the entrance is non-load bearing and is likely a later addition.

The rear roof plane (east) has been modified by the enclosure of the eave/pergola section, allowing an expansion of living space. The northern half of the pergolas have been covered in glazing, while the primary roof has integrated the southern section. As noted, the original rafters survive and remain interpretable.

A squat slab-like chimney of Mount Gambier limestone punctures the rough centre of the roof, just back from the ridgeline (preserving an unbroken line). Such a siting was a Wrightian-influenced device and read as 'anchoring' the building to the landform.



Roof of *Vera Knox House* viewed from the south, across the front garden of no 44

<sup>1</sup> '46 Panorama Avenue, Lower Plenty', realestate.com.au, December 2012, [www.realestate.com.au/property/46-panorama-ave-lower-plenty-vic-3093](http://www.realestate.com.au/property/46-panorama-ave-lower-plenty-vic-3093); and Alistair Knox Collection, *V Knox House, Lower Plenty*, 1958, RMIT Design Archive, Box 3, Job 212 – note only one sheet was archived.



*Vera Knox House* is of timber-frame and masonry construction with a concrete-on-ground slab (fairly novel for a domestic building in Melbourne at the time). Original walls are formed by ashlar sections of Mount Gambier limestone and window walls. Purportedly, this limestone was reclaimed from a demolition site in Bullen (see Site-Specific) and re-used at the site. Such activity was not unusual for Knox, who one of Victoria's leading exponent of architectural salvage/integration, although it was less routine in this stage of his building career.



Close-up of the façade (west elevation), showing limestone ashlar section of wall

The façade (west) is largely intact, although a small southern section – once enclosed with flywire (see south elevation below) – has been enclosed with later addition sheeting of some kind. Original components are the broad section of Mount Gambier limestone and extensive window wall. The latter is comprised of slender timber-frames with each window module divided into three units; a thin fixed toplight, central fixed or casement window, and lower spandrel of fixed clear glazing.



North and west (façade) elevations of *Vera Knox House* with the carport left of frame

It is likely that all original timber frames at the place – almost certainly Oregon – were produced at a joinery workshop operated from the rear of Knox's second family home in York Street, Eltham.<sup>2</sup>

Initially, the east elevation largely mirrored the façade, although its lower spandrel was some type of opaque or textured panel ('sclia', sp), and it also incorporated a solid timber door. This wall was removed during later alterations to the eaves/ pergola. However, it seems likely that the original limestone section was re-used within the new external wall, as there is a return of ashlar masonry at the southeast corner. The remainder of this new wall is either weatherboard or glazing.

The north elevation was originally recessed with the oversailing section of gable creating an informal verandah. This arrangement has been partly lost in the eastern half, where the former verandah has been enclosed with timber-framed glazing. As part of this modification, it appears that the original central section of the Mount Gambier limestone wall, while entirely or largely retained, was extended outwards (with limestone) and given a short return to the west. Internally, some of this limestone seems to have been rendered or sheeted over. The west timber-framed sliding door and full-height window (exact unit breakdown as façade) appear to have been replaced by a contemporary door and corrugated metal sheeting. Nonetheless, the module nature of this small section remains interpretable. These same components in the east may have been retained and re-used as part of the extension, as they appear evident adjacent to the later addition return of the limestone wall.

The original south elevation featured a central section of Mount Gambier limestone with timber partition walls or window walls on either side. It faced a concrete verandah floor initially encased with flywire (likely to create a 'sleep out'). The latter has been removed and replaced with an undetermined walling. The previously external limestone wall is now an internal partition.

Set back from the rear elevation of the original house is a gabled pavilion addition linked via a short-glazed passageway. Its construction date is not known but occurred at least after 1975.<sup>3</sup> Of note is that the pavilion echoes the design of *Vera Knox House*, including the employment of exposed timber rafters, limestone walls and pillars, and window walls. Such an aesthetic raises the possibility that Knox (active until 1980) or one of his pupils/collaborators may have had a hand in its erection. It also is conceivable that the limestone used in this addition (and elsewhere at the site) came from leftover Mount Gambier blocks from the original salvage, which could have been stored on-site.

The initial floor plan of *Vera Knox House* largely remains; however, it is now less legible because of the provision of additional living space in the east, including a new ensuite, washroom, laundry and kitchen, and deletion of the original bathroom (to provide for a central passageway). Floors were identified as cork, concrete or earth on the original floor plan but are now chiefly glazed bricks in a herringbone pattern (such a finish was utilised at other Knox projects). The living room remains dominated by a substantial ashlar partitioning wall and fireplace (note curved brick back), both of Mount Gambier limestone. Timber mantle and pilasters to the fireplace may be later additions.

Rear yard timber decking, steps, in-ground pool and other built elements are non-original.

By the mid-1950s, Knox had completed several idiosyncratic mud-brick houses. However, he had grown increasingly wary of the high labour costs of adobe and other inherent difficulties. From this period, Knox pivoted to a more straightforward, modular design mode utilising traditional and novel materials, which allowed for smaller professional building crews (as opposed to his eccentric friends) and more cost-effective construction. Within his career, this approach is recognisable as his second building phase and lasted until the early 1960s, after which he again took up mud brick.

Knox's family home in York Street, Eltham (1956-58, since largely demolished) was his opening experiment in modular building. From this project stemmed an array of elements that came to characterise his second phase: slab-on-ground construction, 1200mm (4 foot) wall modules, expressed frame, window walls, limited junctions detailing, and pared-down details.<sup>4</sup> Such elements are pronounced at *Vera Knox House* as well as in the dwellings he prepared for Dome Construction at the innovative 'Hillcrest Estate' in Donvale (1959-61).

Underpinning Knox's newfound preference for the modular method was Stramit, a new-fangled proprietary material manufactured in Melbourne from 1955.<sup>5</sup> It was a compressed and rigid self-supporting strawboard, impregnated with various

<sup>2</sup> 'Design and Building Career', *Biography*, Alistair Knox Foundation, available online, <https://alistairknox.org/>

<sup>3</sup> 1975 aerial photograph of the subject place, Landata, Run 24A, Frame 147 – not included in citation

<sup>4</sup> Richard Peterson and Bohdan Kuzyk, 'Alistair Knox (1912-1986): modernism, environment and the spirit of place', *RMIT Design Archives Journal*, vol 4, no 1, 2014, p11

<sup>5</sup> Stramit was invented during the early 1930s in Sweden. Its name derives from the Swedish word for straw. (Miles Lewis, '5.11 Building Boards', *Australian Building: A Cultural Investigation*, available online)



fabric (paper, hardboard, aluminium foil), which came in sheets 1.2m (4 feet) wide that were easily fixable to rafters. Like other designer/builders, Knox took advantage of the insulating strawboard from the Stramit system for rapid and economical roof installation. Less typically, he often covered it – as at *Vera Knox House* – with Malthoid matting and creek gravel (a more organic finish). The width of the Stramit boards informed the modularity of Knox's second phase and was carried through to the vertical components, such as window walls and doors.<sup>6</sup> It is not known whether any Stramit element remains at the place.



Melbourne advertisement for Stramit  
(Source: *Age*, 11 November 1963, p9)

The lightweight, more overtly modernist character of Knox's second phase houses was a departure from the heavy-set, rough, individualistic aesthetic of his preceding (and future) work in mud brick. Yet despite the more uniform appearance of the modular houses, most – like *Vera Knox House* – demonstrated his Wrightian/organic/modernist interest in responsive siting/orientation, natural light, indoor/outdoor flow, and minimalistic detail. Their generous glazing, often street-facing, can also be interpreted as Miesian influenced. These buildings epitomise an economical and valid attempt at engagement with a regionalised reading of the postwar modern movement. The underlying principles of Knox's second phase carried over into his later work, even as he returned to adobe, which solidified over the late 20<sup>th</sup>-century into his individualised philosophy of environmental building.

Separating *Vera Knox House* from the broader stream of timber and brick modular designs prepared by Knox during this period (around 40 a year) is its employment of Mount Gambier limestone. Such material is rare within Knox's work, reflecting its expense as a high-quality prestige stone (and bolstering the fact that it was reclaimed). The other key, known limestone Knox example, was erected around the same time as the subject building in the Hillcrest Estate (68 Lisbeth Avenue, Donvale), although its ratio of stone to window wall is reversed. The most notable use of Mount Gambier limestone in the wider district is *Heide II* at Bulleen (1964-67), a much-admired modernist design by the architect David McGlashan of McGlashan Everist.

<sup>6</sup> 'Design and Building Career', *Biography*, Alistair Knox Foundation, available online, <https://alstairknox.org/>



## 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.<sup>7</sup>

Sizable land parcels and absentee owners predominated over the 19<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> The present-day Main Road (initially called Eltham Road) was laid in 1869.<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup> 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'.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup>

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)

<sup>7</sup> '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)

<sup>8</sup> 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-19<sup>th</sup> century, which reduced its flow. Hoddle referred to it as the 'Yarra Rivulet'.

<sup>9</sup> The 1843 bridge was replaced in 1865 by the existing 'Old Lower Plenty Bridge' (HO106).

<sup>10</sup> Alan Marshall, *Pioneers & Painters: One Hundred Years of Eltham and its Shire*, Thomas Nelson, 1971, p84

<sup>11</sup> Alistair Knox, *We Are What We Stand On: a personal history of the Eltham Community*, Adobe Press, 1980

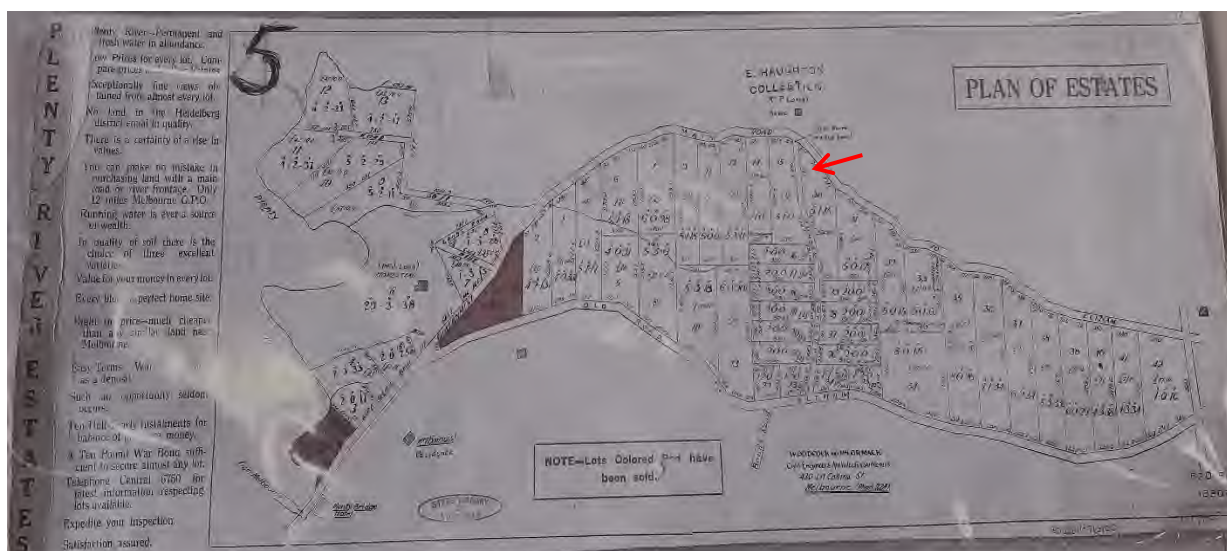
<sup>12</sup> The Lower Plenty and Montmorency were transferred to the newly formed City of Banyule in 1994. ('Lower Plenty', *Victorian Places*, 2014, available online; and Andrew Lemon, 'Lower Plenty', *eMelbourne*, The University of Melbourne, July 2008, available online; and Context, BTEH, p37)

<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> He had arrived in Sydney Town in 1837 as a Captain in the 50<sup>th</sup> (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.<sup>15</sup> In 1927, a large part of Portion 2 was acquired for use by the Heidelberg Golf Club.<sup>16</sup>

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*).<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> 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'.<sup>19</sup> As part of this subdivision, Panorama Avenue was established, although it remained an 'unmade road ... in a bad state' into at least the 1930s.<sup>20</sup>



Plenty River Estates, 1919

The approximate location of the subject land, part of lot 30, is indicated by the red arrow

(Source: SLV)

By 1937, the Investors Land and Finance Corporation Pty Ltd had purchased about 5 hectares on the north-eastern side of Panorama Avenue, re-subdividing it into more suburban-scaled lots, chiefly to the newly established Philip Street (originally, Elizabeth Street).<sup>21</sup> This action included the pegging out of the subject lot, no 20. Its unusual triangular shape a quirk of the surrounding subdivision pattern and street layout. Multiple transactions followed.<sup>22</sup> In December 1957, Vera Knox purchased lot 20, then thickly wooded with regrowth (see below).<sup>23</sup>

Vera (née James) (1891-1982) was the widow of William Dunn Knox (1880-1945), a 'distinguished member of the art and

<sup>14</sup> Refer to *Plan of the Parish of Nillumbik*, Office of Lands and Survey, 1866, SLV, available online

<sup>15</sup> 'Death of Captain Baxter: An Old Colonist and Pioneer', *Mornington Standard*, 19 May 1892, p3; and Marshall, *Pioneers & Painters*, pp82-4

<sup>16</sup> *Heidelberg Golf Club*, 'History', available online

<sup>17</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 289, folio 706

<sup>18</sup> 'Lieut.-Colonel G. G. McColl', *Argus*, 15 June 1938, p11; and Certificate of Title, vol 233, folio 523

<sup>19</sup> 'Advertising', *Herald*, 16 September 1912, p7; and 'Advertising', *Age*, 19 February 1919, p4

<sup>20</sup> 'Lower Plenty Progress Association', *Advertiser* [Hurstbridge], 7 March 1930, p4

<sup>21</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 6145, folio 934

<sup>22</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 6755, folio 863

<sup>23</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 8164, folio 440

business world' and founding member of the Australian Academy of Art.<sup>24</sup> Vera herself was also artistically interested and informed and had a particular eye for ceramics.<sup>25</sup> In the wake of her husband's death, she had remained at the substantial Arts & Crafts-style bungalow in Heidelberg/Eaglemont that William and Vera had commissioned in 1924 (still in existence, 16 Mount Street). She purchased the Lower Plenty property in her mid-sixties with the intention of a relaxed retirement. Such a goal likely explains the relatively small scale of the original footprint and the intimate nature of its internal plan.



1956 aerial photograph of the undeveloped subject place, approximate location indicated by the red star  
(Source: Landata, Project 2, Run 16A, Frame 53)

Vera engaged the then locally well-established designer/builder Alistair Knox (see below), who was well-known to her as a relative of her late husband.<sup>26</sup> Knox himself was probably familiar with the setting of Vera's property, having designed and constructed his first mud-brick building, *English House*, nearby at 50 Philip Street. At least one plan was produced by Knox's building company, 'Alistair Knox Pty Ltd', in January 1958, which is reproduced below. Vera was in occupation by 1960.<sup>27</sup>

The Mount Gambier limestone utilised for the walls of *Vera Knox House* was reputedly recovered from a large postwar house connected with the Knox family in what is now Bullen, near the intersection of Banksia and Bridge streets.<sup>28</sup> Such an exercise in salvage and re-use was core work for Knox, particularly over the 1960s and 1970s:

There is a spirit in re-used materials in the same way as there is poetry in some words, which when we use them recall other scenes. It's not corny. It's elemental experience and the stuff of life.<sup>29</sup>

The retrieval of the limestone from a site meaningful to the Knox family makes sense from a cost/practicability perspective. As a high status and costly material – imported by local agents from Victoria's border with South Australia – it would seem an unusual choice for even a well-off widow's retirement home in the placid Lower Plenty.

<sup>24</sup> Knox was the Manager of the Eagle and Globe Steel Company Ltd. His output of impressionist landscape artwork, while modest, is critically well-considered. (Allom Lovell & Associates, *Banyule Heritage Place Study: An Urban History*, vol. 1, July 1999, pp282-4; and 'Mr. William D. Knox', *Age*, 18 June 1945, p6)

<sup>25</sup> Personal correspondence with Edward family, March 2021

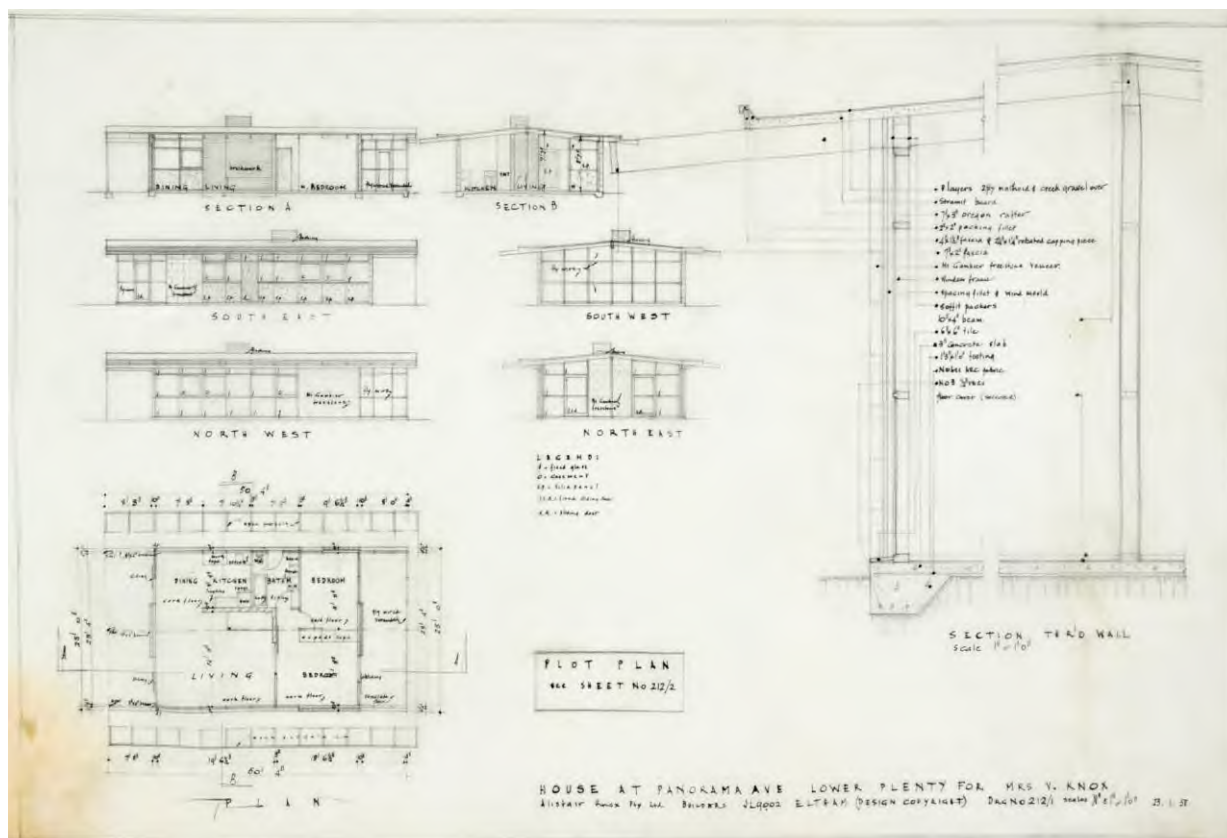
<sup>26</sup> William D Knox was the brother of Alistair Knox's father, Arthur Jean Francois Knox.

<sup>27</sup> 1960 Victorian electoral roll, Division of Deakin, Subdivision Eltham, p75

<sup>28</sup> Personal correspondence with Edward family, April 2021

<sup>29</sup> Knox, Alistair Knox, *Living in the environment*, Mullalya, 1978, chapter 67, available at the Alistair Knox website, <https://alistairknox.org/chapters/67>





Original footprint, elevations and wall sections

(Source: Alistair Knox Collection, *V Knox House, Lower Plenty*, 1958, RMIT Design Archive, Box 3, Job 212)

The 'alternative' and creative milieu that emerged in the Eltham area – a 'sleepy outer suburb surrounded by remnant bush' – over the postwar period also proved important in allowing for experimentation and engagement with earth structures.<sup>30</sup> In the aftermath of the war, the presence of affordable land in the locale (in which the Lower Plenty was included) and its semi-rural surroundings drew those interested in living 'simpler' lifestyles (many apparently influenced by Thoreau's *Walden*). Writers, artists, filmmakers, designer and others continued to head to Eltham after the war: 'We were young, enthusiastic idealists, keen to avoid becoming Thoreau's "men who lead lives of quiet desperation".'<sup>31</sup> Many of these new residents were interested in unconventional construction techniques or turned to them by necessity.

By the late 1950s, the 'alternative' and creative reputation of the Eltham area, was well-entrenched. Reminiscing, Knox often lionised the locale in this era:

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 there were still persona non grata in other localities.<sup>32</sup>

Vera Knox retained ownership of the place until her death in 1982. Her family sold it a couple of years later.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Gordon Ford in Ford with Gwen Ford, *Gordon Ford: the natural Australian garden*, Blooming Books, 1999, p9

<sup>31</sup> Ford, *Gordon Ford: the natural Australian garden*, p9

<sup>32</sup> 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>

<sup>33</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 8164, folio 440



1963 aerial photograph of *Vera Knox House* (red circle), enveloped by trees  
(Source: Landata, Project 4, Run 6, Frame 125)

#### 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 ...<sup>34</sup>

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 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>35</sup>

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.

<sup>34</sup> Anne Latreille, 'Awards for know-how and a flair for original', *Age*, 14 September 1982, p23

<sup>35</sup> 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

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.<sup>36</sup>

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.<sup>37</sup> 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.

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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].’<sup>38</sup> 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  
(*Australian Home Beautiful*, 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

<sup>36</sup> Knox, *We are what we stand on*, xiii and p47

<sup>37</sup> 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/>

<sup>38</sup> Goad, ‘Knox, Alistair’, p338



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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>39</sup> There are no other instances of limestone walls known in Banyule.

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

- *Brynning 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.<sup>40</sup> 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.
- *Lindsay Edward House*, 149 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty – a large flat-roofed mud-brick split-level with uncommon U-shaped, 'butterfly' plan, built between 1950 and 1952 for the artist Lindsay Edward. The most architecturally accomplished example of Knox's adobe work in the municipality.

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.<sup>41</sup> These places, dating from the late 1950s and 1960s, are relatively substantial and highly designed examples of a minority strain of progressive contemporary design that sought to respond to the local landscape and environmental conditions more explicitly than internationally-minded rationalist modernism. However, *Vera Knox House* is an example of a more unassuming, modular version of this effort, one likely more accessible to different income brackets and, in this case, differentiated by its employment of recycled limestone.

## 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 (limestone walls)
Internal Alteration Controls	No

<sup>39</sup> For instance: 43 Alexander Street, Montmorency (mud brick construction, façade of random stone cladding, 1950s); 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>

<sup>40</sup> 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.

<sup>41</sup> *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

Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

**Extent of Heritage Overlay**

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



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



## ENGLISH HOUSE

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<b>Address</b>	50-52 Philip Street, Lower Plenty
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1947
<b>Period</b>	Postwar
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*English House* at 50 Philip Street, Lower Plenty is significant. It was constructed in 1947 for returned serviceman, 'Frank' English, to a design by Alistair Knox. The 'foreman' of the building crew was the artist and mud-brick builder Sonja Skipper, then based at *Montsalvat* in Eltham. In the mid-1960s, new owners – the eclaté weavers Edith 'Mollie' Grove and Catherine Hardess/Hardress – engaged Knox to undertake timber additions, extending the dwelling to the west and north as well as providing an additional bay in the east. Around 1996, a new wing was constructed in the west and other alterations occurred, including the rebuilding or recladding of some mid-1960s walls in mud brick.

The significant element is the original (1947) footprint of *English House*, including the skillion profile of its roof, exposed timber beams, broad eaves, adobe chimney and rendered cap, walls and piers of mud brick/adobe, tripartite full-height and triple-leafed French windows (including those relocated), timber lintel (north elevation), original entrance (south elevation), and paved rear patio.

Internally, the mud brick/corbelled fireplace and inglenook, including benches and timber lintel are also significant.

Later additions are not significant, although the utilisation of mud brick for walling in the circa 1996 development complements the aesthetic of *English House*. The front and rear 'bush style' gardens enhance the setting of the place.



## How is it Significant?

*English House* is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

## Why is it Significant?

*English House* is of historical significance as the first mud brick building designed by Alistair Knox, an acclaimed practitioner of environmental building. The construction of *English House* was undertaken by a small amateur crew, including Knox, led by the talented Sonja Skipper, the only person involved in the project with hands-on experience with adobe. Her 'foreman' role was undoubtedly rare in the highly gendered building trade at the time. The small size and frugal/reductive character of the original *English House* is indicative of key postwar dynamics, especially austerity conditions, building restrictions and the gathering influence of the modern movement. Its mud-brick walls and utilisation of 'bush timber' attest to the problems faced by the aspirational postwar homeowner – a dire shortage of conventional materials. At completion, the small-scale *English House* attracted widespread public attention as a successful experimental model in unorthodox/austerity construction that allowed for a fluid, indoor-outdoor, 'modern' living environment. Such coverage was important in fuelling the wider mud-brick movement over the late 1940s and animating Knox's building career. More broadly, *English 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. This aspect is amplified by the long association of the noted eclarté weavers 'Mollie' Grove and Catherine Hardess, who are responsible for much of the tree planting at the property. (Criterion A)

*English House* is of aesthetic significance as a striking mud-brick design in the municipality, the original core of which remains broadly intact. Alistair's Knox's first attempt at mud-brick building reflects a bold experiment in challenging conditions dictated by lingering wartime rationing and a limited budget. At *English House*, Knox produced an inspired merging of the 'primordial' and robust aesthetic of handwork mud brick and 'bush timbers' with the core tenants of the postwar modern movement, such as careful siting, solar responsivity and a pared-down, 'honest' character. The result was a highly unusual design for the late 1940s, the underlying elements of which came to epitomise his later, influential concept of environmental building (informally, the 'Eltham style'). The bank of elegant timber-framed, triple-leafed French windows, flanked by thick mud-brick piers, are emphatic reflections of Knox's engagement with a then-nascent vein of regionalised Melbourne modernism that continued to evolve over the postwar period. The substantial adobe fireplace and inglenook at the heart of the original footprint is a noteworthy, increasingly rare feature. (Criterion E)

## Description

*English House* is situated parallel to the contour and off centre on a double allotment that falls progressively away from Philip Street. The building is located below the level of the street on a platform excavated from the hillside. The setback between the dwelling and street has been built up considerably since construction to align with the latter and the primary residence is now reached by descending stairs. The front garden is comprised of native vegetation, low rock and timber sleeper walls, and features two gravelled car parking spaces. Another path meanders to the east, providing access to a contemporary freestanding studio residence (no 52).<sup>1</sup>

As *English House* is largely concealed or obscured by its siting and orientation or screened by vegetation, this assessment depends in part on aerial photography, contemporary photographs and architectural drawings.<sup>2</sup>

*English House* has undergone three known phases of alteration and additions, each of which has expanded its original footprint. These are depicted in the annotated photograph below.

The first iteration of *English House*, constructed in 1947, had a small rectangular footprint of around 84 square metres that contained an open living area/kitchen, a bedroom (which could be curtained off) and a small bathroom (left of the entrance). This size and basic layout reflected postwar economic constraints and strict size restrictions.

The 1947 *English House* was capped by a skillion roof supported by five 7.6m 'yellow box tree trunks' sourced from the Diamond Valley (likely salvaged). These beams are housed centrally in mud-brick piers of the north elevation, sloping towards the south

<sup>1</sup> Richard Peterson and Bohdan Kuzyk, 'Alistair Knox (1912-1986): modernism, environment and the spirit of place', *RMIT Design Archives Journal*, vol 4, no 1, 2014, p5

<sup>2</sup> (Photographs) Alistair Knox website, <http://alistairknox.org/buildings/214>; (Available drawing) Alistair Knox, 'Additions and alterations to houses at Lots 17 & 18 (Elizabeth Street), Lower Plenty now 52 Philip Street for Miss E M Grove', *Collection of architectural drawings mostly for earth houses in Melbourne and Victoria*, SLV, YLTAD27 24; (Document) Llewellyn Pritchard (architect), *Specification of Materials to be used and worked to be performed: in the construction and completion of alterations and additions to existing residence at 52 Phillip [sic] Street Lower Plenty VIC 3093*, July 1993, provided by the City of Banyule (note the drawings referenced in the specification could not be located)

wall, and provide wide eaves. At least three of the original beams remain and continue to be visible both externally and to the interior. It is possible that the westmost beam may still be in situ. An original exposed short beam east of the entrance may also survive. Initially, the ceiling was of hardwood cross beams with nailed boards; however, this arrangement appears to have been replaced by new timber boards with batten-covered joints.



Close-up aerial photograph of *English House* with approximate extent of construction phases shaded

Red shading, 1947

Yellow shading, mid-1960s additions

Green shading, circa 1996 additions

(Source: Nearmap, March 2021)

The original skillion roof was covered in an insulating foil and three layers of Malthoid (bituminous felt) and creek gravel. This finish presumably deteriorated, probably due to UV exposure. The roof is now clad in metal decking with a standing seam, which continues to later skillion additions and extensions. A metal fascia of similar width to its timber predecessor and incorporating guttering is now evident (originally, *English House* only had downpipes).

In the south elevation of the original section, the projecting mud-brick chimney breast and fascia-breaking broad shaft with cement rendered cap has been retained.

The walls of the 1947 *English House* were constructed of adobe, colloquially mud bricks, with concrete footings.<sup>3</sup> These sun-dried bricks, dug and produced on-site, were larger (about 23cm thick) than conventional bricks and rectangular in shape. Initially, the bricks were rendered with a mixture of cow dung and 'loamy soil' with either distemper or whitewashed employed

<sup>3</sup> Mud brick methodology – 'Take mud mixed with water the day previously ... and mix with old straw ... to a consistency which will stand on its own. Compress this into an iron mould which can be removed immediately. Initial drying depends on the weather, and varies from one to three days, but they should stand for at least 14 days before being placed in the building ... One man, working an eight-hour day, can make 150 bricks ...' (Esmé Johnston, 'Built from the good earth', *Australian Home Beautiful*, June 1949, p29, 56)

inside. The 1993 *Specifications* note that both new and existing mud-brick walls were to be finished with 'mud brick render' prepared by Alan Grimes.<sup>4</sup> This new coat, which has presumably remained (or been renewed), allows for the rough appearance of the mud brick to remain appreciable.

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 19<sup>th</sup> century. During that period, in Victoria, adobe construction was especially common in the Central Goldfields and some of Melbourne's outer-suburban areas.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

The majority of the mud brick utilised in the construction of the 1947 *English House* endures. At least four of the five piers remain, as does the south elevation wall. The original external east wall became an internal partition in the mid-1960s and has been progressively removed to provide a larger opening to the new kitchen (mid-1960s east bay addition), but sizeable wall nibs remain visible in the interior. The original west external wall was also transformed as part of the mid-1960s new work into an internal wall and may still be present in some form. The partition wall that divides the entrance from the partly enclosed bedroom appears to have been preserved.

A defining attribute of *English House* is its largely 'open' north elevation, which capitalised on the elevated views available from the property and the solar cycle. In contrast to the solidity of the other walls, Knox's north elevation was formed from four bays created by five thick adobe piers (approximately 91cm x 61cm) infilled with full-height, triple-leafed French windows. The latter were timber-framed, with each leaf divided into three glazed units by slender bars. The lintel was a 'primitive' beam of 'bush timber' (now overpainted). Knox would later describe his repeated use of muscular piers alternating with large glazed openings as a means of capturing a 'natural' rhythm and providing a plane for the strong interplay of light and shadow. In combination with the pronounced eave overhang, it also reflects his 'reverence' for natural caves and the Wrightian/Griffins-influenced concept of 'primitive' shelter.<sup>7</sup>



Close-up of the original north (rear) elevation of *English House*, showing original scale: 'Piers accentuate depth of wall near French windows.' (Source: Johnston, 'Built from the good earth', *AHB*, June 1948, p29)

<sup>4</sup> Pritchard, *Specification of Materials*, p12, 14

<sup>5</sup> Julie Willis, 'Earth Construction', in Philip Goad and Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University, 2012, p220

<sup>6</sup> Miles Lewis, 'Section Three: Earth and Stone – 3.2 Adobe or Clay Lump', *Australian Building: A Cultural Investigation*, p19, available online

<sup>7</sup> Philip James Goad, *The Modern House in Melbourne 1945 – 1975*, PhD Thesis, Department of Architecture and Building University of Melbourne, September 1992, chapter 3, p58; Alistair Knox, *Living in the environment*, Mullaly, 1978, chapter 67, available at the Alistair Knox website, <https://alistairknox.org/chapters/67>

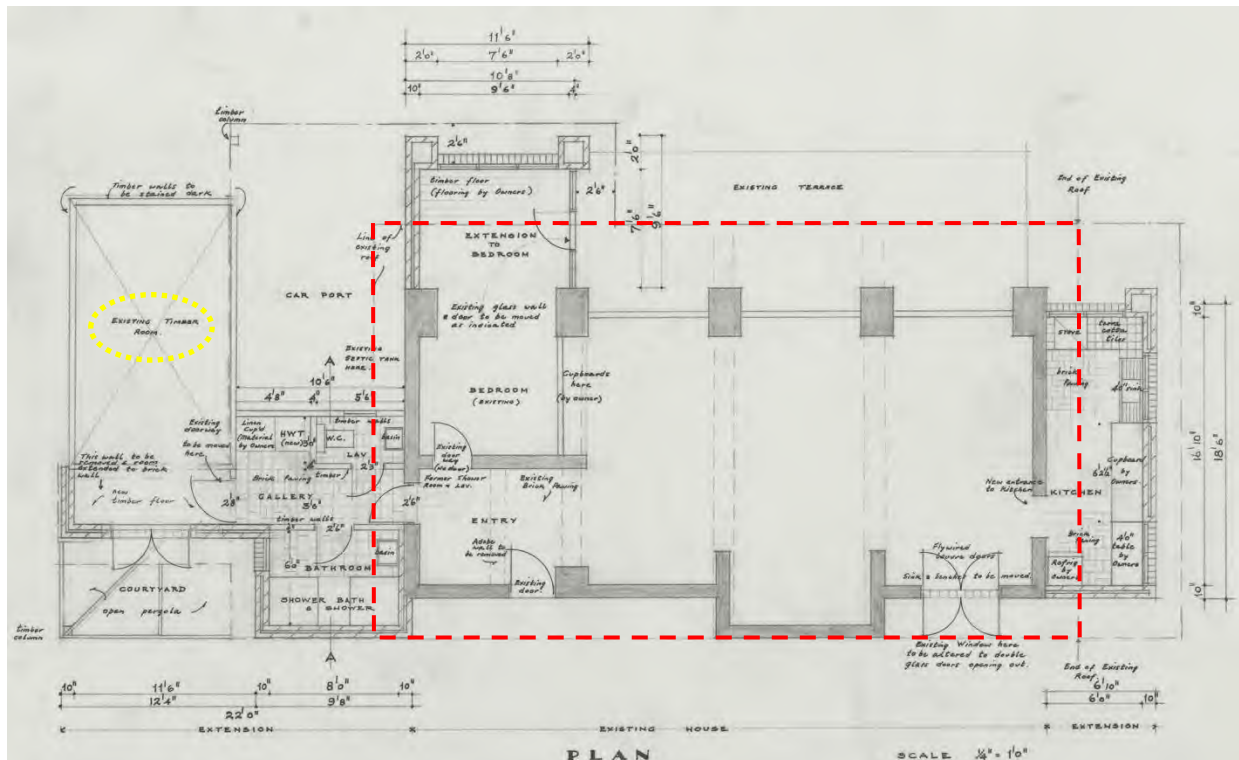


The north elevation connects to a raised patio paved with random stone pavers (likely basalt or slate), which is original.

Beyond the substantial chimney breast, the south elevation, 'the façade' of *English House*, was largely blank – only punctured by a deeply recessed door opening in the west and a square double window bank (probably casements) to the east. This entrance still functions as such, but it is unknown whether the solid timber boarded door remains. The eastern windows were extended towards the floor in the mid-1960s (see below). Otherwise, the 1947 extent of the south elevation is largely intact.

In the mid-1960s, new occupants – 'Mollie' Grove and Catherine Hardess – engaged Knox to undertake additions and alterations at *English House*. The floor plan for this work is reproduced below. Key changes included the provision of a new eastern bay with proportions similar to the existing (encompassing a kitchen) and the extension of the bedroom via a northern projection – both in timber weatherboard. The drawings show that the original tripartite French windows of the westmost bay were to be relocated into the east face of the northern extension (allowing access to the patio), which appears to have occurred, along with the provision of timber-framed toplights (non-original).

At this time, the house's footprint was also expanded in the west with a new bathroom, WC, laundry, gallery, courtyard pergola and carport. This new work was also clad in walls of timber weatherboard and extended the primary skillion or covered it with a separate skillion (since removed). The east internal wall of the original bathroom was deleted, incorporating this space into the entrance.



Extract from mid-1960s drawing showing alterations and additions to *English House* by Knox – north is top of image

Note some of the new work depicted was later modified or removed

The 'Existing Timber Room' (circled in yellow) west of *English House* was constructed after the mid-1950s and is no longer extant

The extent of the 1947 roof is outlined in dashed red

Dark shaded thick walls indicate mud brick

(Source: Alistair Knox, 'Additions and alterations to houses at Lots 17 & 18 (Elizabeth Street), Lower Plenty now 52 Philip Street for Miss E M Grove', *Collection of architectural drawings mostly for earth houses in Melbourne and Victoria*, SLV, YLTAD27 24)

Around 1996, *English House* underwent a third addition, designed by the Eltham-based architect Llewellyn Pritchard. A new volume was added to the west, extending the building's footprint right up to the property boundary. The mid-1960s carport and front courtyard appear to have been subsumed or rationalised as part of this development. The 1996 *Specifications* detail that this new wing was to have a base course of bagged brick with walls of mud brick ('to match the dimensions of the existing mud-brick walls from an approved manufacturer') in stretcher bond. Both new and existing mud bricks were to be rendered with 'an

approved mud render finish prepared by Alan Grimes'. New lintels were also noted as Oregon timber.<sup>8</sup> As part of this work, Knox's mid-1960s eastern timber bay was rebuilt or reclad in mud brick, an action that may have occurred to other mid-1960s timber walls, including (at least) the northern bedroom extension.

To the interior of *English House*, the 'massive' adobe fireplace remains a dominant feature within the 1947 footprint. This distinctive element comprises a corbelled fireplace and a rare remaining example of an inglenook (a recessed space beside a fireplace), which includes two timber/mud-brick benches and an exposed timber lintel.<sup>9</sup> Tiling to the hearth and deck appear to be later additions. Timber floorboards in the 1947 footprint may be original.

The back yard of *English House* slopes markedly towards the rear boundary. It accommodates numerous mature native/indigenous trees and rock/sleeper retaining walls. The place's 'natural' bush aesthetic likely stems from the residency, between the mid-1960s and early 1980s, of Grove and Hardess.<sup>10</sup> To the side and rear, the property is surrounded by a non-original high timber paling fence.



*English House* from Philip Street

As Knox's first mud-brick project, *English House* yields insight into an idiom later described by its designer as 'environmental building' – a multifarious concept that sought the close integration of structure and site and infused earth construction with rising contemporary interests in sustainability and informal/alternative modes of living.<sup>11</sup> Adobe was central to Knox's then-budding philosophy. A few years later, in what could have been a description of *English House*, he discussed his use of the material in the pages of the *Australian Home Beautiful*:

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 thick walls so that

<sup>8</sup> Pritchard, *Specification of Materials*, p12, 14

<sup>9</sup> Inglenooks were prominent features of the Arts & Crafts movement, a manifestation of traditional values associated with hearth and home. The majority of Knox's postwar mud-brick houses had inglenooks.

<sup>10</sup> The increased acceptance of native vegetation and the absence of lawns and formal layouts was marked from the mid-1960s; popularised by influential publications, such as Betty Maloney and Jean Walker, *Designing Australian Bush Gardens* (1966)

<sup>11</sup> Knox, *Living in the environment*, chapter 71, <http://alistairknox.org/chapters/71>; and Rachel Goldlust, 'Alistair Knox (1912-1986) and the Birth of Environmental Building in Australia', *Arcadia*, Autumn 2016, no 18, Rachel Carson Centre for Environment and Society, available online, para 1

they can cast deep shadows at the reveals; the use of simple masses... 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.<sup>12</sup>

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.<sup>13</sup> Latent within his concept of environmental building were the principles of organic architecture, as shaped by the work and writings of the American architectural 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.<sup>14</sup>

Knox 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).<sup>15</sup> 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 other respects, *English House* (at least both the 1947 and mid-1960s modification) is decidedly modernist.<sup>16</sup> The core doctrines of the postwar modern movement, ranging from sensitive site and solar orientation 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. Knox's ensuring ability over the late 20<sup>th</sup>-century 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', with which he was intimately related.

<sup>12</sup> Alistair Knox, 'Down to Earth Housing', Section 3, *Australian Home Beautiful*, January 1953, p14

<sup>13</sup> Goad, *The Modern House in Melbourne 1945 – 1975*, chapter 3, p58

<sup>14</sup> Alistair Knox, *We are what we stand on: A Personal History of the Eltham Community*, Adobe Press, 1980, p11

<sup>15</sup> Knox, *Living in the environment*, chapter 67, <https://alistairknox.org/chapters/67>; and Knox, *A Middle Class Man*, chapter 22

<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup>

Sizable land parcels and absentee owners predominated over the 19<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> The present-day Main Road (initially called Eltham Road) was laid in 1869.<sup>19</sup>

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.<sup>20</sup> 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'.<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup>

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.



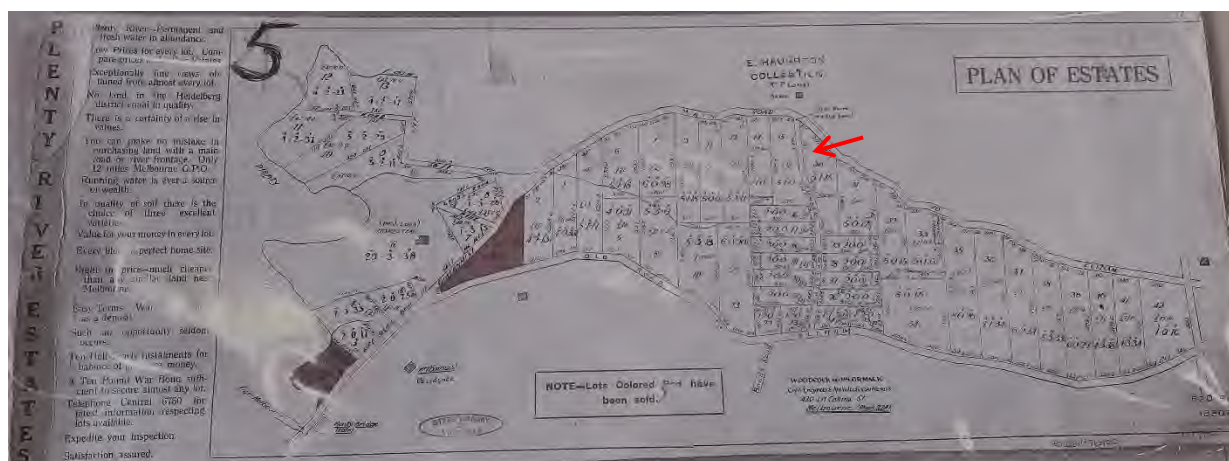
Photograph from a land sale brochure showing the rural landscape west from the old Lower Plenty Bridge, dated 1920s (Source: Eltham District Historical Society, *Victorian Collections*, 00180)

- <sup>17</sup> '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)
- <sup>18</sup> 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-19<sup>th</sup> century, which reduced its flow. Hoddle referred to it as the 'Yarra Rivulet'.
- <sup>19</sup> The 1843 bridge was replaced in 1865 by the existing 'Old Lower Plenty Bridge' (HO106).
- <sup>20</sup> Alan Marshall, *Pioneers & Painters: One Hundred Years of Eltham and its Shire*, Thomas Nelson, 1971, p84
- <sup>21</sup> Alistair Knox, *We Are What We Stand On: a personal history of the Eltham Community*, Adobe Press, 1980
- <sup>22</sup> 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)
- <sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> He had arrived in Sydney Town in 1837 as a Captain in the 50<sup>th</sup> (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.<sup>25</sup> In 1927, a large part of Portion 2 was acquired for use by the Heidelberg Golf Club.<sup>26</sup>

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*).<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup> 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'.<sup>29</sup> As part of this subdivision, Panorama Avenue was established, although it remained an 'unmade road ... in a bad state' into at least the 1930s.<sup>30</sup>



Plenty River Estates, 1919

The approximate location of the subject land, part of lot 30, is indicated by the red arrow  
(Source: SLV)

By 1937, the Investors Land and Finance Corporation Pty Ltd had purchased about 5 hectares on the north-eastern side of Panorama Avenue, re-subdividing it into suburban lots, with most addressing the newly established Philip Street (initially, Elizabeth Street).<sup>31</sup> This action included the pegging out of the two lots (17 and 18) that form the subject property. In 1946, these were purchased by a 'labourer' and his wife from South Kingsville. They sold the land on to Francis ('Frank') English in July 1947.<sup>32</sup> He was responsible for engaging a 35-year-old aspirational designer and builder, Alistair Knox, then working a day job as a bank clerk, to erect a small dwelling.<sup>33</sup>

Knox recounted the events around the building of *English House* in a number of his publications. He describes Frank English as a 'quiet' returned serviceman, then working as a nurse at the Repatriation General Hospital (Heidelberg), who had first-hand

<sup>24</sup> Refer to *Plan of the Parish of Nillumbik*, Office of Lands and Survey, 1866, SLV, available online

<sup>25</sup> 'Death of Captain Baxter: An Old Colonist and Pioneer', *Mornington Standard*, 19 May 1892, p3; and Marshall, *Pioneers & Painters*, pp82-4

<sup>26</sup> *Heidelberg Golf Club*, 'History', available online

<sup>27</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 289, folio 706

<sup>28</sup> 'Lieut.-Colonel G. G. McColl', *Argus*, 15 June 1938, p11; and Certificate of Title, vol 233, folio 523

<sup>29</sup> 'Advertising', *Herald*, 16 September 1912, p7; and 'Advertising', *Age*, 19 February 1919, p4

<sup>30</sup> 'Lower Plenty Progress Association', *Advertiser* [Hurstbridge], 7 March 1930, p4

<sup>31</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 6145, folio 934

<sup>32</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 6917, folio 265

<sup>33</sup> Knox, *We are what we stand on*, p12

experience of adobe buildings from his army service in the Middle East. While appreciating mud brick's 'inherent beauty', English (likely encouraged by Knox) also considered it a low-cost housing option for his newly acquired land in the Lower Plenty, 'which commanded a superb view of the Eltham Valley and the Dandenongs.' Knox agreed to a cost-plus contract, with both parties hoping that English's £600 savings in deferred military pay would cover the construction costs for a 'simple' house.<sup>34</sup>

The broader socioeconomic backdrop of late 1940s Melbourne was also instrumental in encouraging Knox and his client's interest in a 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. The 'crisis' was 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.<sup>35</sup>

The small scale of *English House* was a direct reflection of postwar size restrictions for domestic buildings. Between 1940 and 1952, Victorian houses were subject to fluctuating size regulations. During the time Knox was drawing up plans for *English House*, the maximum extent allowable for a non-timber framed dwelling (excluding brick veneer) under the *Building Operations and Building Material Control Act* (1946), was just 116 square meters.<sup>36</sup>

A further complication in the immediate postwar period 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 19<sup>th</sup>-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.<sup>37</sup> 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.'<sup>38</sup>

The 'alternative' and creative milieu that emerged in the Eltham area – a 'sleepy outer suburb surrounded by remnant bush' – over the postwar period also proved important in allowing for experimentation and engagement with earth structures.<sup>39</sup> In the aftermath of the war, the presence of affordable land in the locale (in which the Lower Plenty was included) and its semi-rural surroundings drew those interested in living 'simpler' lifestyles (many apparently influenced by Thoreau's *Walden*). Writers, artists, filmmakers, designer and others flocked to Eltham: 'We were young, enthusiastic idealists, keen to avoid becoming Thoreau's "men who lead lives of quiet desperation".'<sup>40</sup> Some of the community-members became interested in unconventional construction techniques or turned to them by necessity, as noted by Robin Boyd, many of the mud-brick builders 'had little money for building and they liked rustic simplicity. They looked to the earth for materials.'<sup>41</sup>

A carefree Knox lodged a plan for *English House* with the Eltham Shire Office in 1947, not expecting much resistance, as the locality had been 'wonderfully carefree and hillbilly' and had some familiarity with earth buildings. Ominously, however, the permit application coincided with the new appointment of the Shire's first professional engineer. Undeterred, Knox 'decided not to wait on officialdom, but rather to get on with the making of the bricks, the pouring of the footings, and the erecting of the walls.'<sup>42</sup> Then after weeks of 'sinister' delays, Knox heard news that his application was to be refused that day. A frantic effort to convince the councillors otherwise followed:

<sup>34</sup> Alistair Knox, *A Middle Class Man: An Autobiography*, undated, unpublished, chapter 32, available at the Alistair Knox website, <https://alistairknox.org/books/1>; and Knox, *We are what we stand on: a personal history of the Eltham community*, Adobe Press, 1980, chapter 42, available at the Alistair Knox website, <https://alistairknox.org/chapters/42>

<sup>35</sup> Goad, *The Modern House in Melbourne 1945 – 1975*, chapter 1, p1

<sup>36</sup> *Victorian Year-Book*, 1944-45, p386

<sup>37</sup> 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)

<sup>38</sup> Knox, *We are what we stand on*, chapter 45

<sup>39</sup> Gordon Ford in Ford with Gwen Ford, *Gordon Ford: the natural Australian garden*, Blooming Books, 1999, p9

<sup>40</sup> Ford, *Gordon Ford: the natural Australian garden*, p9

<sup>41</sup> Robin Boyd, *Australia's Home: Its Origins, Builders and Occupies*, Melbourne University Press, 1961, p201

<sup>42</sup> Knox, *A Middle Class Man*, chapter 32



There was a man named [George] Middleton who worked for the Experimental Building Station, a federal body situated in Ryde near Sydney. He had been conducting tests and gaining facts for some years, and had actually written about mud brick ... I realised how important it was to obtain copies of these official pamphlets in order to stimulate the six local councillors to agree to grant a permit ... The Council was to hold its monthly meeting on the very day these pamphlets were to become available in Melbourne ... I reached Tomb's Technical Bookshop around 11 a.m. and had to wait while the needed books were being unpacked. I bought a handful of copies and set off for Eltham once more ... My train arrived back at 2 p.m., and as I walked across the road I beheld some of the worthy city fathers standing at the entrance of the Shire Office.

As I came within earshot of them I heard one say, 'My daughter lives in one of them pise houses and it's quite all right, but I wouldn't have anything to do with them mud-brick ones'. Seizing opportunity by the forelock, I stepped forward and said, 'I overheard what you were saying about mud-brick building. I have applied for a building permit which I understand you will be considering today, and I thought these government documents might assist your deliberations.' I handed one to each councillor on the steps, and those who had already returned to the Chamber also rushed out to get their copies. I heard the next day, to my great relief, that the plan had been passed and that our four-foot-high walls would remain upright ... Eltham's retarded growth had opened a door for earth-building that the combined forces of progress, civic pride, and the new age could never again close.<sup>43</sup>

During construction of *English House*, Knox continued to work his day job at the State Savings Bank of Victoria (Swanston Street branch) and was only present at the site late in the day and weekends. To oversee the build, he engaged the 29-year-old Sonia Stark Gordon Skipper (1918-2008), a talented painter and sculptor, who he had met at *Monsalvat* (her family were foundational members).<sup>44</sup> In reminiscing about her appointment, Knox believed Skipper to be the 'first female foreman the trade had ever known in Australia'.<sup>45</sup> Accuracy of this assertion aside, Skipper was instrumental in the construction of *English House* as she was the only person present at the site who had practical experience and proficiency in adobe building. Skipper, who worked on a few of Knox's later projects, described her involvement at the subject place in her memoir:

Conventional materials were short so it ended up that many people wanted mud brick houses. Later they become the trendy type of house to live in. Knox got a team together and started the mud brick building boom. He did a great deal to promote mud brick building in the area and put a great deal of energy and inventiveness into it. The "environmental building boom" was born. I worked for him for about three years from 1947, though for the last year I mostly did the inside finishing, plastering and colouring the walls, and whitewashing the outside.

The [*English House*] job was a rather strange experience. At the beginning I was the overseer. The fellows were often difficult. I would sometimes come back to the site and find the walls all of out of square or bricks piled up in the opposite place to where I had requested. All this was rather confusing. Alistair, who was still working at his bank job, would come up late in the day to see how things were progressing and shout at me for not having got things done in the way we had planned at the weekend, as though it was my fault. I would tell him that those boys he had working for him were either perverse or plain stupid. Of course I realise now it was the gender problem. They just didn't like taking orders from a female, no matter how reasonable those orders might be. At the time I didn't know to handle the problem, in fact I didn't know what the problem was ...



Sonia Skipper at *Monsalvat*, undated  
(Source: *Australian Regional Building*, Alistair Knox website, <http://alistairknox.org/chapters/372>)

<sup>43</sup> Knox, *A Middle Class Man*, chapter 32

<sup>44</sup> Sigmund Jorgensen, 'Painter who left her mark at Montsalvat', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 July 2008, available online; and

<sup>45</sup> Knox, *A Middle Class Man*, chapter 32

The rest of the £1-a-day workforce were all returned servicemen: Larry Stevens, Tony Jackson and Gordon Ford. They 'regarded the building of the English house as a halfway stage between a holiday and a part-time health cure' and their 'knowledge of building construction was very limited, but the house was simple in design and Sonia was able to keep some sense of order and development'.<sup>46</sup> Ford (1918-1999), who continued collaborating with Knox, became a celebrated landscape designer and advocate of the 'bush style' garden.

The building of *English House* appears to have taken a few months, likely due to the laborious process of mud-brick production, but more so than expected, and English's savings were eventually 'exhausted' with the dwelling 'only four-fifths finished'. To Knox's incredulity, English refused to come up with additional funds in light of some of the lackadaisical/amateur efforts he had witnessed on occasion from the male workers. Knox ended up bridging the cost gap himself.<sup>47</sup>

It is likely the publicity generated by *English House*'s completion outweighed any immediate financial loss for Knox: 'I received letters from many parts of the world concerning it and earth building generally. The stir it caused attracted a new group of people to move to Eltham'.<sup>48</sup> Confident in this path as a designer/builder, Knox resigned from the bank, and a series of mud-brick dwellings followed over the late 1940s, many noteworthy.<sup>49</sup>

A year or so after *English House* was finalised, the widely distributed *Australian Home Beautiful* (AHB) ran a feature article on the project, written by Esmé Johnston. Photographs depicting the building in various states of construction accompanied the piece:

At the cost of £770, a house with an overall area of 900 square feet has been built at Eltham (Vic.) — from earth. It was designed for Mr. Frank English by Mr. Alistair Knox, and a women — Miss Sonia Skipper — was works' "foreman," with a working crew of three men. They were Laurie Mayfield (foreman carpenter), Gordon Ford, also building his own earth-house at week-ends, and Tony Jackson taking a spell from his normal sailorly calling.

This unusual home is built on a lightly-timbered hillside with a pleasant view of hill and valley. Its main materials were mud bricks made from the earth excavated on the house site, and bush timbers, which eliminated waste, yet produced a sound building economically and from a material known and esteemed for hundreds of years.

A mile or so away stands a mud-brick house built 98 years ago. It is in remarkably good condition, and it creates an ancient local precedent for mud brick building.

Asked why he built with mud bricks rather than pise (rammed earth) Mr. Knox said he preferred mud bricks, because they were a more flexible form. In technical words they were modular rather than monolithic like a wall of rammed earth. They were more malleable and allowed greater variety of form ... "In addition, pise construction requires a sand-clay proportion of about 70 to 30; adobe about 30 per cent. sand and 70 per cent. clay. Eltham soil has a preponderance of clay." Mud bricks are an answer to the building problem, Mr. Knox thinks, and they fit admirably into the Australian landscape.

His foundations are of standard construction — concrete footings, stumps, bearers and joists. The walls are really of mud brick pier and bush timber beam construction, with 9in. filling walls of mud. The piers between the glass doors are 3ft. by 2ft. This develops a sense of depth in the walls.

The rendering, of cow-dung and loamy soil, has a natural bonding quality. Floors are timber and most of the joinery work was done on the job. Twenty-five-foot long yellow box poles from Diamond Creek make effective ceiling beams. The secondary roof beams are of 5in. x 2in. hardwood. On this is a 6in. x 1in. decking. A covering layer of insulating foil reflects the sun's rays, keeping the building cool in summer and warm in winter.

Three layers of malthoid are laid as a mat over the whole roof. These are bonded together with hot bitumen and stuck to the decking at the edges only to allow for movement. A final covering is water-worn creek gravel, floated in bitumen.

The roof has a fall to the corners for drainage, which is caught in down-pipes, with a happy absence of unsightly guttering. The chimney exterior has a concrete coping for protection. "This roof will defy the elements for a lifetime," said Mr. Knox. "You could even play games on it with impunity."

The ground plan is a simple one. There is a living room 40 feet long out of which is cribbed a bedroom which can be curtained off at will. The kitchen is in an alcove beside a huge open fireplace (also built with mud bricks). Bathroom and main entrance are at the other end of the oblong layout.

Mud brick construction is so strong, says Alistair Knox, that doorways can be cut through without the need of a lintel. But, except in one instances, interior walls have been eliminated from this house, other than the bathroom surround. The front door is of rough sawn hardwood planks, suitable and weatherproof.

Practically the whole of one wall is composed of huge French windows with an east-north-west catchment of the sun. These are inlet between the substantial piers giving great depth and solidity of appearance.

<sup>46</sup> Knox, *A Middle Class Man*, chapter 32

<sup>47</sup> Knox, *A Middle Class Man*, chapter 32

<sup>48</sup> Knox, *We are what we stand on*, p28

<sup>49</sup> 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); *Murphy's Creek Homestead*, 1949; and *Edwards House*, 149 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty, 1950-52

In the mud brick department Miss Sonia Skipper, art student and old hand at this form of construction, had a word to say. "Mud bricks are even more impervious to rain water than concrete," she said, "except for one thing. A constant dripping of water on one specific place will effect them. That's why you must keep the head and feet of your building dry with wide-spread eaves, and terraces rather than a built-up garden... Apart from that... you can leave your bricks out in the open during building operations and the weather won't affect them much. Earth containing more than 50 per cent. of clay is most suitable for mud bricks and the soil here is ideal."<sup>50</sup>



*English House near completion, from Philip Street (Source: Johnston, 'Built from the good earth', AHB, June 1948, p29)*



'Gordon Ford stamps mud into a brick mould, while Laurie Mayfield (left), Miss Sonia Skipper, Alistair Knox and Tony Jackson look on.' North (rear) elevation of *English House* in the background  
(Source: Johnston, 'Built from the good earth', AHB, June 1948, p28 – courtesy of Miles Lewis, *Australian Building: A Cultural Investigation*)

<sup>50</sup>

Esmé Johnston, 'Built from the good earth', *Australian Home Beautiful*, June 1949, pp28-29 and 56





'Roof and floor construction shows in this progress shot.'  
(Source: Johnston, 'Built from the good earth', AHB June 1948, p29)



'Fireplace has cosy ingle seats of hewn bush timber.'  
(Source: Johnston, 'Built from the good earth', AHB, June 1948, p29)



Internal view to fireplace/inglenook with original kitchen beyond,  
facing east (Source: Knox, *We are what we stand on*, p27)



Internal view to French windows, facing north  
(Source: Knox, *We are what we stand on*, p27)

In early 1948, Robin Boyd – an acquaintance of Knox – highlighted the emergent mud-brick phenomena in his 'Small Homes' column in *The Age*, likely with *English House* in mind:

Adobe construction is so old, it is in danger of being considered new fangled ... Earth walls are cheap, strong, weatherproof, and highly insulating... It seems that you can't dabble in adobe. Those who use it once are apt to drop all thought of building houses in timber or bricks ... Because it is so easy to make terrible puns about it (mud construction is old as the hills, cheap as dirt, and down to earth) some people prefer not to take it seriously. While no one is likely to want to use it in the strictly geometrical inner suburbs, its great possibilities lie in the country and in outer parts of the bigger cities ...

The more sympathetic councils doubtless will be swayed by the glowing reports recently issued by Australia's foremost authority on building techniques. The thorough, wary Commonwealth Experimental Building Station in Sydney produced last year a report on pise, and now has published its blessing on adobe ...

One architect who is building a few places with a small team of experienced adobe builders reports that fully fitted houses are working out at about £90 a square. This is roughly half the cost of orthodox construction. 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.<sup>51</sup>

However, a few years later, in the same column, Boyd declared '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':

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.

<sup>51</sup> Robin Boyd, 'Make it of mud!', *Age*, 17 March 1948, p3. See also Boyd, 'Outer suburbs ban mud construction', *Age*, 5 May 1948, p4

Four years ago the big problem was the shortage of material, rather than labor. Adobe ingredients were on the site, and the finished cost of the house turned out to be less than timber. He built several houses and designed many more for construction by their owners. The last adobe house he built cost £4000, well over the equivalent in timber. And even if owners consider that the extra comfort was worth the extra cost, banks generally did not agree. It was difficulty in obtaining finance which finally killed commercial adobe.<sup>52</sup>



1956 aerial photograph of *English House*, circled in dashed red, depicting original footprint  
(Source: Landata, Project no 2, Run 16A, Frame 53)

English sold the property in late 1949. It passed largely unaltered through two occupancies before its purchase by Edith 'Mollie' Grove in 1965 (then identified as 52 Philip Street).<sup>53</sup> A freestanding hipped roof 'timber room' had been constructed west of the mud-brick house (since demolished). Soon after, Grove commissioned Knox to design and undertake timber additions and alterations to *English House*, providing a new kitchen (east) an extension to the bedroom (north), new bathroom and gallery (west), and carport.<sup>54</sup> Grove remained in occupancy, initially with her personal companion Catherine Hardess (sometimes 'Hardress'), into the early 1980s.<sup>55</sup>

Grove (1909-96) and Hardess (1889-1970) had met during the interwar years at Swinburne Technical College and spent time working and sojourning in Europe over the 1930s. Upon returning to Melbourne in 1940 they held a successful exhibition of their fabric at the Hotel Australia and registered a weaving business: eclarté Pty Ltd. Their stylish hand-made eclarté materials, which interwove national motifs and themes, were widely popular, especially among the Australian couturiers. Their studio became 'the most successful of the mid-century studio-weaving enterprises', 'combining Grove's excellent technical skills and Hardess's design acumen'.<sup>56</sup> By the late 1950s, then working out of an 'old mill at Heathcote' and concentrating on designing and producing furnishing fabric, the pair were awarded a string of government and large-scale commissions and collaborated with other avant-

<sup>52</sup> Robin Boyd, 'The "Free" Material That Costs Too Much', *Age*, 13 November 1951, p4 – this appears a moment of peak frustration for Knox, who evidently did continue adobe construction.

<sup>53</sup> William Roy Fletcher Harris, 'Gardner', and Bertha May Harris, owned the subject place between October 1949 and December 1965. Robert Hijner, a 'salesman', acquired it on 2 December 1965, transferring it to Grove a few days later. (Certificate of Title, vol 6917, folio 265)

<sup>54</sup> Alistair Knox, 'Additions and alterations to houses at Lots 17 & 18 (Elizabeth Street), Lower Plenty now 52 Philip Street for Miss E M Grove', *Collection of architectural drawings mostly for earth houses in Melbourne and Victoria*, SLV, YLTAD27 24

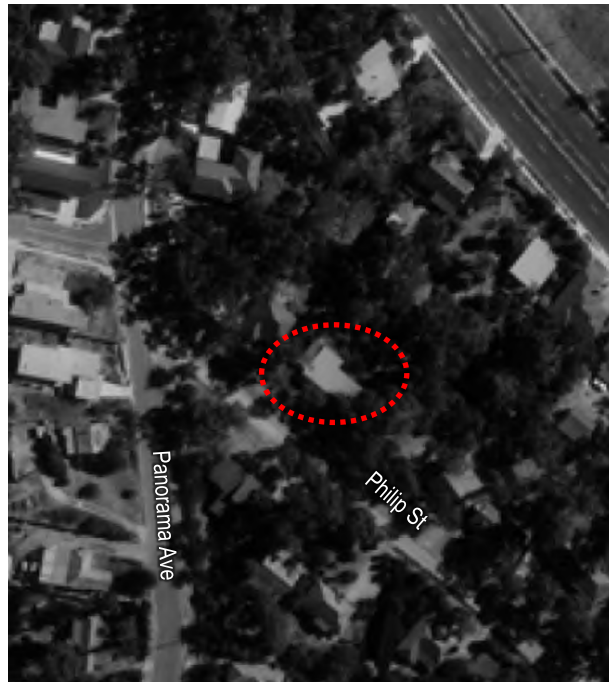
<sup>55</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 6917, folio 265

<sup>56</sup> Harriet Edquist, 'eclarté and the transformation of studio weaving in Victoria', *RMIT Design Archives Journal*, vol 4, no 2, 2014, p29

garde period designers, such as Fred Ward, Boyd and (Sir) Roy Grounds.<sup>57</sup> After economic setbacks resulted in the closure of eclarté in 1962, Grove and Hardess moved into *English House*. They appear to have been responsible for extensive tree plantings in the back yard.<sup>58</sup>



Hardess (left) and Grove (right) with 'Prince', eclarté's mascot, photographed in 1956 at the opening of their large-scale production facility in Dandenong (Source: NAA, Item ID 11868711)



1975 aerial photograph of *English House*, outlined in dashed red. Note the addition of the western wing and thick tree canopy (Source: Landata, Project no 1243, Run 24A, Frame 147)

At least one other phase of alterations and additions is known to have occurred directly to *English House* around 1996.<sup>59</sup>

### 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 ...<sup>60</sup>

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.<sup>61</sup>

Knox, born and raised in Melbourne within an evangelical context, 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 in 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 Tech. Weary of the bank, his postwar ambitions turned to building and design.

<sup>57</sup> John McPhee, 'Hardess, Catherine (1889-1970)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1996, available online

<sup>58</sup> Knox describes 'a Miss Hardess and a Miss Groves, the Eclarte weavers' occupying it and making 'fairly extensive alterations' (Knox, *We are what we stand on*, chapter 45). See also, Edquist, 'eclarté and the transformation of studio weaving in Victoria', p33

<sup>59</sup> Llewellyn Pritchard (architect), *Specification of Materials to be used and worked to be performed: in the construction and completion of alterations and additions to existing residence at 52 Phillip [sic] Street Lower Plenty VIC 3093*, July 1993, provided by the City of Banyule (note the drawings referenced in the specification could not be located)

<sup>60</sup> Anne Latreille, 'Awards for know-how and a flair for original', *Age*, 14 September 1982, p23

<sup>61</sup> 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



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.<sup>62</sup>

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 in earth construction in Eltham.<sup>63</sup> 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.

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 influences 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].'<sup>64</sup> 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:

<sup>62</sup> Knox, *We are what we stand on*, xiii and p47

<sup>63</sup> 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/>

<sup>64</sup> Goad, 'Knox, Alistair', p338

- 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>65</sup>

*English House*, namely its 1947 core, is remarkable within Knox's total output by being his first mud-brick design. Its completion proved influential for his career trajectory and proved a catalyst in the postwar mud-brick movement.

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

- 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.<sup>66</sup> Since modified.

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

- Lindsay Edward House*, 149 Old Eltham Road, Lower Plenty – a large flat-roofed mud-brick split-level with uncommon U-shaped, 'butterfly' plan, built between 1950 and 1952 for the artist Lindsay Edward. The most architecturally accomplished example of Knox's adobe work in the municipality.
- Vera Knox House*, 46 Panorama Street, Lower Plenty – a single-storey house of modular design, constructed between 1958 and 1960, from likely salvaged Mount Gambier limestone and window walls as a retirement home for a relative of Knox by marriage. Illustrative of Knox's second phase of work, although set apart by its rare use of limestone.

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.<sup>67</sup>
- 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.<sup>68</sup>

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.<sup>69</sup> These places, however, date from the late 1950s or 1960s, at least several years after *English House*. They also seek to evoke a

<sup>65</sup> 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>

<sup>66</sup> 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.

<sup>67</sup> Robin Boyd, 'Small Homes Section: A Lesson From Montmorency', *Age*, 28 December 1949, p4; and *Australian Home Beautiful*, January 1950, pp23-5

<sup>68</sup> 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

<sup>69</sup> *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

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 (1947 footprint)

## Previous Assessment

- RBA Architects + Conservation Consultants, *Banyule Heritage Study 2020: Stage 1 report*, Banyule City Council, August 2020 – High priority, recommended for Stage 2
- Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018 – identified as a 'place of potential heritage significance'
- Heritage Alliance, *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria*, Stage 1, vol 2, October 2008, 027-026, p115 [NB – some details are incorrect, including address]

## Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls

External Paint Controls	Yes (walls of mud brick only and exposed timber)
Internal Alteration Controls	Yes (mud-brick fireplace and inglenook)
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

## Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



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



## UGLOW HOUSE (WYLDEFELL)

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<b>Address</b>	79 Buena Vista Drive, Montmorency
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Date</b>	1955-56
<b>Period</b>	Postwar
<b>Date Inspected</b>	January 2021



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

*Uglow House* at 79 Buena Vista Drive, Montmorency is significant. It was designed by Robin Boyd of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd and constructed during 1955-56 for the medical doctor Arthur G R Uglow and his wife, Enid.

The significant element is the original plan, which comprises the eastern two-thirds of the house, including its form, skillion roof clad in metal sheeting, timber framing including exposed beams, brickwork (side walls) and window walls to the long elevations. The garage is also significant, particularly its likely original door with timber boards above. Internally, the original timber linings and joinery/cabinetry to the living area are significant.

Non-significant elements include the likely mid-1980s additions at the north-west end, the ensuite addition to the east side, the 1989 carport, and front fence.

#### How is it Significant?

*Uglow House* is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

#### Why is it Significant?

*Uglow House* is of historical significance as being designed by Robin Boyd, one of postwar Australia's foremost architect and leading commentators on design/cultural matters, when he was a principal of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd. The clients, Arthur

and Enid Uglow, had engaged Boyd before settling on the property in September 1955, indicating their keenness for the project. More broadly, the construction of *Uglow House* reflects the surge in growth that transformed the previously semi-rural locale of Montmorency from the early 1950s. Notable in this emergent suburban environment was the progressive design influence of the postwar modern movement, of which Boyd was a brilliant advocate. (Criterion A)

*Uglow House* is of aesthetic significance as a mostly intact and fine example of Robin Boyd's output during the mid-1950s. In its rectangular footprint, open plan, extensive use of the window wall, response to site conditions and solar orientation, the original design reflects the major tenets of postwar modernism, particularly the variant known as the International Style. *Uglow House* also demonstrates Boyd's interest at the time in emphasising residential roofs; in this case, extending the skillion forth to both long elevations and 'hovering' it over the garage. In conjunction with the exposed timber framing (continuous across the building's width), such a composition facilitates a blurring of the exterior and interior. The internal timberwork, joinery and cabinetry, was integral to the overall design and some of these original elements remain in the kitchen and living area. (Criterion E)

## Description

*Uglow House* is located centrally on a large but irregularly shaped block on a bend in Buena Vista Road, with an area of 1505m<sup>2</sup>. The house has limited visibility from the public domain due in part to both the non-original high slatted timber fence to the front boundary and the slope, which falls about 6 metres across the length of the site. In addition, the house is set back some 27 metres from the street. The original garage, however, is more noticeable as it is located forward of the house. There is also an asphalted driveway to the frontage, a later carport to the west side (partly visible), and a non-original shed to the east side (not visible). Planting to the front yard includes some mature trees, both exotic and native, garden beds with various shrubs, and areas of lawn.

Due to the lack of visibility from the public realm, this assessment is largely reliant upon historic documentation and contemporary real estate images.<sup>1</sup>

*Uglow House* has an elongated footprint, initially rectangular but splayed at the northern end where it has been enlarged, though, in combination with the garage, the overall footprint is L-shaped. The original detailing has been largely reproduced for the northern extension. A small ensuite has also been added to the south side, whose roof sits below the eaves of the main section.

The main part of the house has a skillion roof clad in sheet metal, which follows the slope of the site and extends forward of the front and rear elevations to create unusually wide eave overhangs (about 1.8 metres or 6 feet). The roof is pierced by two flues. The attached garage also has a skillion roof of the same pitch and partly sits beneath the soffit allowing for a clerestory/highlight band above to the room behind.

The side walls of the house and garage are painted brick, with those to the house including a central grille section, which may have been removed with the additions at both side walls. According to the specification, the bricks were to be red and painted, though the colour was not identified; however, it may have been 'eggshell' (off-white), which was nominated for the internal window and door frames.<sup>2</sup> The garage door is likely original, probably from the 'Glideaway' company as noted on the drawings.

One of the most distinguishing aspects of the design is the expressed structure consisting of beams at centres of about 2.5 metres (8 feet, 4 inches), which slot into the posts of the long elevations and extend from the exterior through the entire width of the house. As such, the beams are visible both beneath the wide soffits to the front and rear and much of the ceiling of the interior (where they are not concealed within walls). The lining detailing to the exterior (soffits) and interior (ceiling) is also consistent, continuous and comprised of battened sheeting ('Caneite' was specified) in a rectangular grid.

As was typical of much of Boyd's work during the late 1940s and 1950s, an elongated footprint was employed at *Uglow House*. This plan included minimal openings to the narrow brick sidewalls, which contrasts considerably with the predominantly glazed long elevations. This format was in part practical given the typical configuration of allotments in Melbourne as well as reflective of the typical postwar modernist approach. At the *Uglow House*, the only disruptions, or deficits in the glazing to the original extent of the long elevations relate to the garage to the front and two panes of Masonite to the rear. Behind the latter, was located the laundry and kitchen joinery.

<sup>1</sup> '79 Buena Vista Drive, Montmorency', JellisCraig, 2019, [www.jellisrcraig.com.au/property-details-79-Buena-Vista-Drive-Montmorency-3094/830906](http://www.jellisrcraig.com.au/property-details-79-Buena-Vista-Drive-Montmorency-3094/830906)

<sup>2</sup> *Grounds, Romberg and Boyd collection*, MS 133363, box 24/2 [SLV]

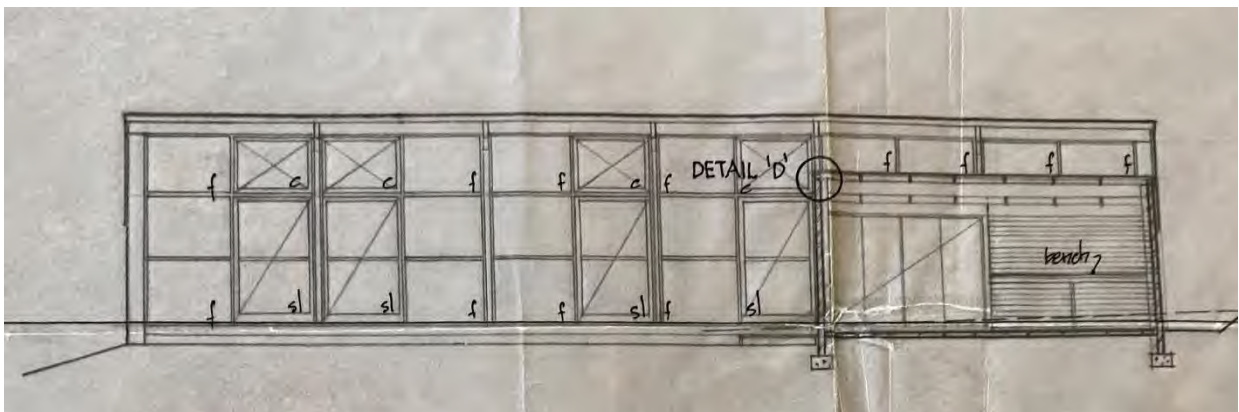


The long elevations, or window walls, feature rigorous geometry. They are divided into three bands and are organised in bays, each two units wide – with the bays separated by the posts into which the beams slot. As such, there are six panes to each bay, with doors incorporated into the lower two bands. The windows were to be manufactured by 'Stegbar' though bespoke window sashes were specified with square-cut sections.<sup>3</sup>



The original footprint of *Uglow House*, including garage, is shaded red  
(Source: Nearmap, April 2020)

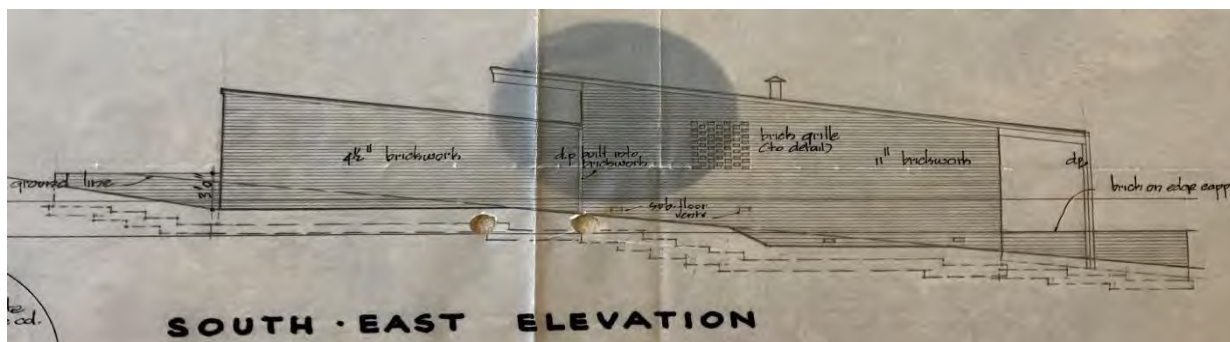
The façade was originally six bays wide and the configuration of this section remains intact with three doorways – a main entry as well as two rooms. The extent of the northern extension is readily identified by the differing format, in that the lower band has sheeting (that is, is solid rather than being transparent). The front wall opens onto a secluded courtyard with random stone ('crazy') paving, although gravel was identified on the original drawings.



Section of *Uglow House*, through garage, showing original extent of façade, dated 1955

<sup>3</sup> *Grounds, Romberg and Boyd collection*, MS 133363, box 24/2, [SLV] (In a letter dated 17 February 1956, Boyd chastised the builder for installing standard frames with moulded internal edges.)





Original side elevation (southeast) of Uglow House, dated 1955  
(Source: SLV, *Grounds, Romberg and Boyd collection*, MS 133363, box 24/2)

Although single storey, the floor plan was split across two levels, according to the slope of the site, with a central corridor/walkway. Given the site's orientation, the living areas were stretched across the lower, rear level facing north east with bedrooms to the front, upper level. Nonetheless, a high degree of privacy was retained for the front rooms due to the large setback and a walled courtyard, which seems to have been demolished.<sup>4</sup>

Internally, stained timber boards lining the walls, with a matching finish to other cabinetry and joinery, survive throughout the original section of the house. The joinery includes built-in shelving and cupboards to the living areas and the kitchen. Cupboards have circular metal handles, which Boyd employed in other houses. The extant tiles may not be original as white generally, and cream in the kitchen (likely all 6 inches square, about 15.2cm) are noted in the specification.<sup>5</sup>

*Uglow House* displays Boyd's, and many other modernist architects, contemporary interests in structure and the module. The module was an oft employed tool of the modernist movement, seeking a rational and efficient approach to design at a time when the economic strictures of the postwar period remained a consideration and future additions were often allowed for/expected. As noted by the architectural historian Philip Goad, the 'ordering system of the module was explored' from attention to post and beam construction and had the advantage of providing 'long spans and a free plan beneath' and capacity to 'insert lightweight non-structural planes between'.<sup>6</sup>

The framing associated with the module was either steel or timber. In this case, the framing is timber and the mostly exposed beams extend continuously under the front soffit through the house to the rear soffit. Such a design device was purposefully expressed to emphasise the roof, as Boyd did on other occasions, most famously at *Pelican*, his 1955 house for Kenneth Myer at Mt Eliza (since demolished). In the latter example, the truss beams of the roof dominated the modular house below.

<sup>4</sup> *Grounds, Romberg and Boyd collection*, MS 133363, box 24/2 [SLV] – letter dated 6 June 1956. The letter suggests the garden wall had been constructed by this time.

<sup>5</sup> *Grounds, Romberg and Boyd collection*, MS 133363, box 24/2 [SLV] – specification, page 10, hand written note for cream tiles to the kitchen and laundry.

<sup>6</sup> Philip Goad, 'Modern House in Melbourne 1945-1975', PhD Thesis, University of Melbourne 1992, p5/30

## History

### Context

Banyule City Council covers the unceded Country of the Wurundjeri-William people, who inhabited and managed the landscape for millennia and remain culturally connected. The undulating terrain of Montmorency, in the Parish of Nillumbik, was cloaked in string-bark forests and bordered in the west by the Plenty River, where Aboriginal people gathered seasonally to harvest 'murnong' (yam daisy root) and migrating eels.<sup>7</sup>

Much of this area, surveyed in the late 1830s, was pegged out as large agricultural holdings. The suburb's name derives from the earliest farm, known as the 'Montorenci Estate',<sup>8</sup> which had been established by Stuart A Donaldson, the first premier of New South Wales. The name of the estate is said to have derived from the French fief and former town, now a suburb of Paris, which was the base of the noble Montmorency family.<sup>9</sup> It was offered for private sale as early as March 1840, after which its name became increasingly associated with the area.<sup>10</sup>

Montmorency remained sparsely populated and rural well into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, characterised by small-scale holdings, orchards, poultry farms and dairies. In the wake of the opening of the Montmorency railway station in 1902, a small township developed progressively over the interwar years. By 1950, the population had risen to about 600 but grew rapidly over the remainder of the decade and into the 1960s.<sup>11</sup> Much of this residential construction reflected or was influenced by modernist design.



View of the train tracks running besides the township of Montmorency, early 20<sup>th</sup> century  
(Source: SLV, H1076)

<sup>7</sup> Maureen Jones, *Montmorency: the farm on the Plenty*, 2015, p8

<sup>8</sup> The spelling initially used in the 1840s and 1850s was 'Montorenci'. This spelling is employed for the names of localities in Indiana and South Carolina in the USA. There is a large gap in readily available newspaper articles until the 1910s when the current spelling 'Montmorency' was being employed.

<sup>9</sup> Jones, *Montmorency: the farm on the Plenty*, pp12, 15

<sup>10</sup> 'Montorenci', *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 28 March 1840, p3

<sup>11</sup> Dianne H Edwards, *The Diamond Valley Story*, Greensborough 1979, p173

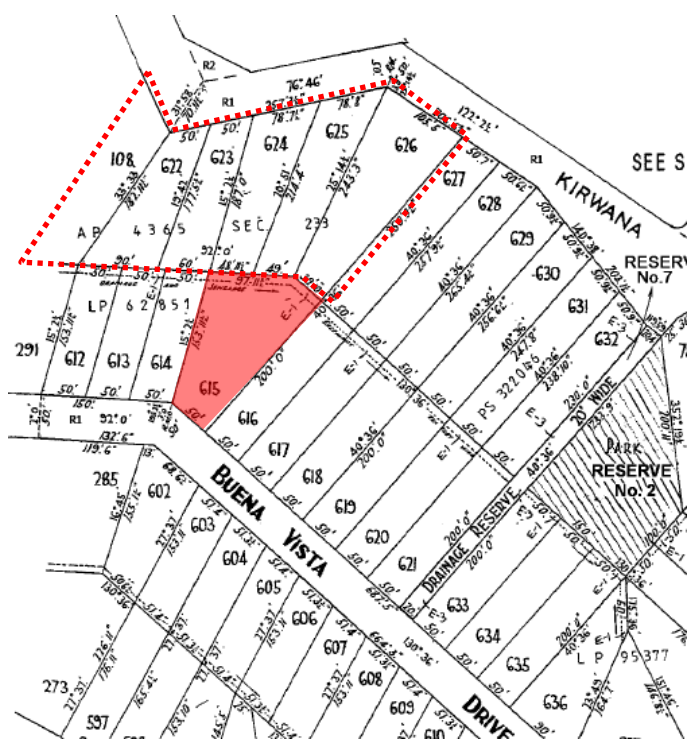
### Site-specific

The subject land derives from the roughly 384-hectare purchase (Portion 2, Parish of Nillumbik) made in 1840 by the Corkonian, Benjamin Baxter.<sup>12</sup> He had arrived in Sydney Town in 1837 as a Captain in the 50<sup>th</sup> (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.<sup>13</sup> In 1927, a large part of Portion 2 was acquired for use by the Heidelberg Golf Club.<sup>14</sup>

The subject allotment was pegged out as part of the 'Panorama Heights Estate' subdivision, which had been proposed from at least 1929 as noted in the late 1930 mention of Buena Vista Drive in relation to a decree by the Eltham Council regarding the proposed shop allotments in the Panorama Heights Estate:

That only shops, or shops and dwellings combined, which are of brick, stone or concrete, shall be permitted to be erected on any blocks of less frontage than 50ft., as shown on plan sealed by this council on the 5th day of August, 1929, in portions of Bonne Vue Boulevard, Reicheldt Ave., Buena Vista Drive, and Mitchell Ave., Panorama Heights Estate, Montmorency, and that buildings erected thereon shall have an enclosed back yard or open space of at least 500 sq. feet, exclusive of any building erected thereon.<sup>15</sup>

John Quinn, an investor then residing in North Melbourne, officially acquired the extensive holdings which constituted the estate in eight parcels during December 1931 and April 1932.<sup>16</sup> Soon after the subdivision plan consisting of 945 lots was on lodged 25 May 1932.<sup>17</sup> The large estate was bound by Main Road (south), Looker Road (west), Buena Vista Drive and Belmont Crescent (north), and Bolton Street (east). John Quinn & Co – land and estate agents, Melbourne – held other properties in the area, including 'Orr's paddock' of 250 acres.<sup>18</sup>



LP13612, sheet 5, subject site shaded, and other holdings initially held by C L Heywood highlighted (Source: Landata)

<sup>12</sup> Refer to *Plan of the Parish of Nillumbik*, Office of Lands and Survey, 1866, SLV, available online

<sup>13</sup> 'Death of Captain Baxter: An Old Colonist and Pioneer', *Mornington Standard*, 19 May 1892, p3; and Marshall, *Pioneers & Painters*, pp82-4

<sup>14</sup> *Heidelberg Golf Club*, 'History', available online

<sup>15</sup> 'Notice of Motion', *Advertiser* (Hurstbridge), 5 December 1930, p6 – NB Bonne Vue Boulevard was renamed Grand Boulevard(e) in 1962 (LP13,612, sheet 3)

<sup>16</sup> Certificates of Title, vol. 5781, folios 001+ 002; vol. 5796, folios 103 to 108

<sup>17</sup> LP13,612

<sup>18</sup> *Advertiser* (Hurstbridge), 22 January 1932, p2



In late 1932, Quinn challenged Eltham Council's dramatic increase in rates since the subdivision was formalised:

John Quinn; asking that the council give further consideration to its decision to rate his property, Panorama Heights Estate, at ten times the amount at which it was rated when he acquired it.<sup>19</sup>

One of the earliest sales in the Panorama Heights Estate included the subject place, as in April 1932, Caroline Louise Heyward of Belgrave acquired seven adjoining lots in the subdivision – the subject site and six in Hogan Avenue (lot nos 108, 622-626) – comprising over 2 acres.<sup>20</sup>

The following 1945 aerial reveals that minimal development had occurred in the subdivision and Montmorency more broadly by this time. A few roads had been established in the area, though presumably unsealed. Buena Vista Drive was one such road and there was a house nearby to the west, at what is now either no. 73 or 77.



1945 aerial photograph, approximate location of subject place is circled in red  
(Source: University of Melbourne, Yan Yean 839c3d)

The seven lots were held together from 1941 to 1955 by the subsequent owner, Gwendoline Louise Loh of Murrumbeena. However, following their transfer to Joan Baxter of Yan Yean Road, Lower Plenty in July 1955, their sale began in earnest, with the subject property the first sold, in September 1955, to Arthur and Enid Uglow.<sup>21</sup>

Dr Arthur George Rongo Uglow (medical practitioner) was born in 1898 in Wellington, New Zealand, to Arthur Robert and Agnes (*nee* Pringle).<sup>22</sup> In 1922, he was identified as a fourth-year medical student who 'with much pluck' set out at night with a friend to retrieve the bodies of three who had drowned in a boating accident on Laker Tyers in Gippsland.<sup>23</sup> The year after completing his medical degree at the University of Melbourne in 1924,<sup>24</sup> he married Enid Frances Fyson, born 1901, who was a trainee (nurse) at the Alfred Hospital.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> 'Panorama Estate', *Advertiser* (Hurstbridge), 9 December 1932, p1

<sup>20</sup> Certificate of Title, volume 5803, folio 525

<sup>21</sup> Certificate of Title, volume 5803, folio 525

<sup>22</sup> BDM, registration 21564/1971. He died in 1971 in Vermont at the age of 73

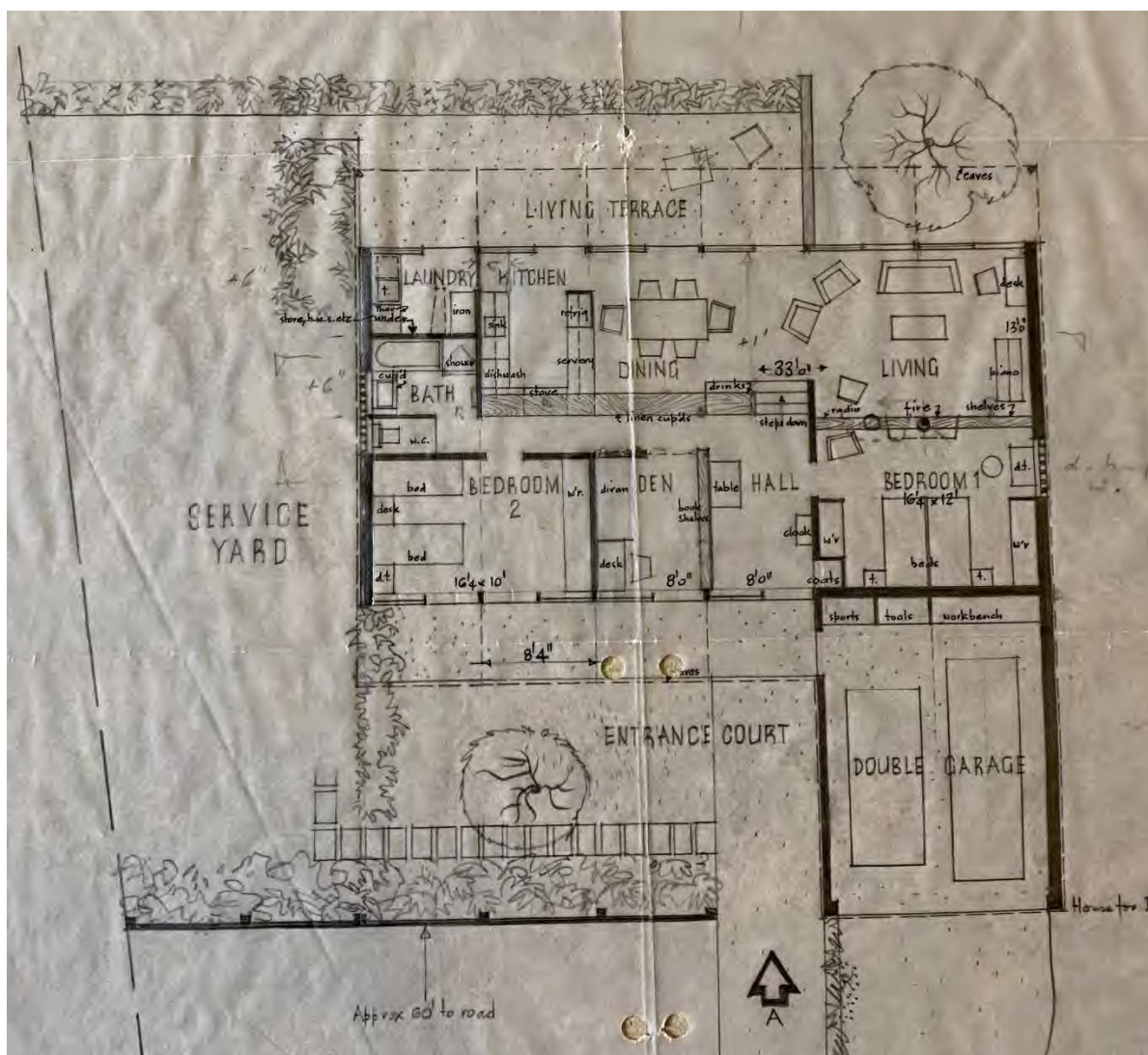
<sup>23</sup> 'Terrible boating accident', *Weekly Times*, 7 January 1922, p9

<sup>24</sup> *Age*, 16 September 1924, p14.

<sup>25</sup> 'Tea time gossip', *Herald*, 10 October 1924, p10; BDM, registration 10654/1925

The Uglovs had three children and resided in regional Victoria for over two decades, including Rutherglen during the late 1920s, Colac between the early 1930s and late 1940s, and from 1954 Mt Eliza (where conceivably, they noticed Boyd's *Pelican* design).<sup>26</sup> During this time, the Uglovs were noted in the newspapers on multiple occasions as either attending or hosting various 'social' events, as well as in regard to medical cases Uglov was involved with. Uglov served in RAAF medical corps during both world wars, and during the latter he was a Flight Lieutenant and Squadron Leader.<sup>27</sup>

Prior to the Uglovs officially acquiring the subject property, they had engaged the leading architectural firm of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd to design the extant house as the firm prepared sketch plans dated July 1955 and working drawings dated 1 September 1955, entitled 'Residence at Eltham for Dr & Mrs A G R Uglov'.<sup>28</sup> These drawings reveal that the house was initially smaller and included what is now the eastern two-thirds of the building and the double garage. It was also situated more centrally across the width of the block with a service yard to the northwest. Initially, there was to be a brick screen wall in line with the front of the garage to create an entrance courtyard. Other detailing evident on the drawings include a brick grille to both side elevations and Canite ceilings (deriving from sugar cane).



Uglov House, original plan, dated 1955  
(Source: Grounds, Romberg and Boyd collection, MS 133363, box 24/2, SLV)

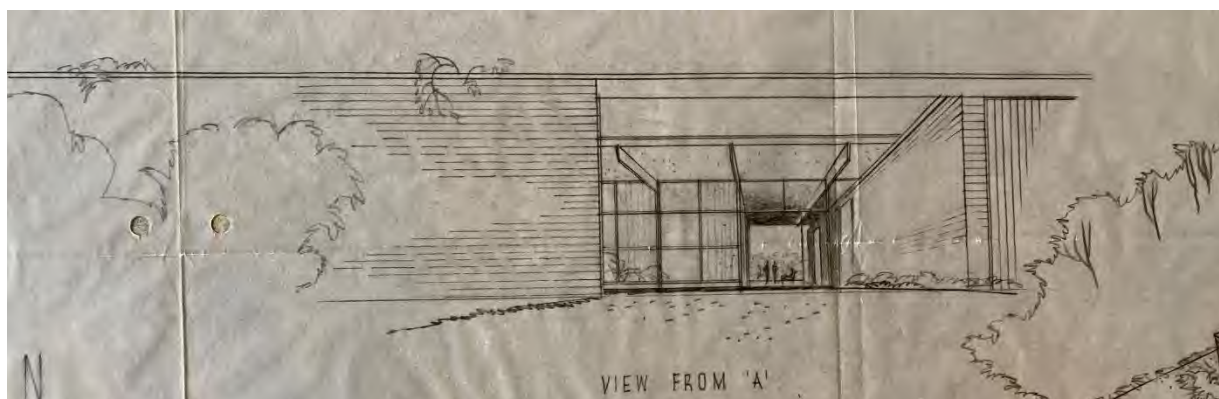
<sup>26</sup> Electoral Roles: 1927, Subdivision of Rutherglen, p29; 1933, subdivision of Colac, p35; 1949, Corangamite, p95; 1954, subdivision of Frankston, p194

<sup>27</sup> NAA, Uglov A G R, Series B2455, WWI, service no. 2918; Series A9300, WWII service no. 251196

<sup>28</sup> Grounds, Romberg and Boyd collection, MS 133363, box 24/2 [SLV]. The initials P W are included in the title box.

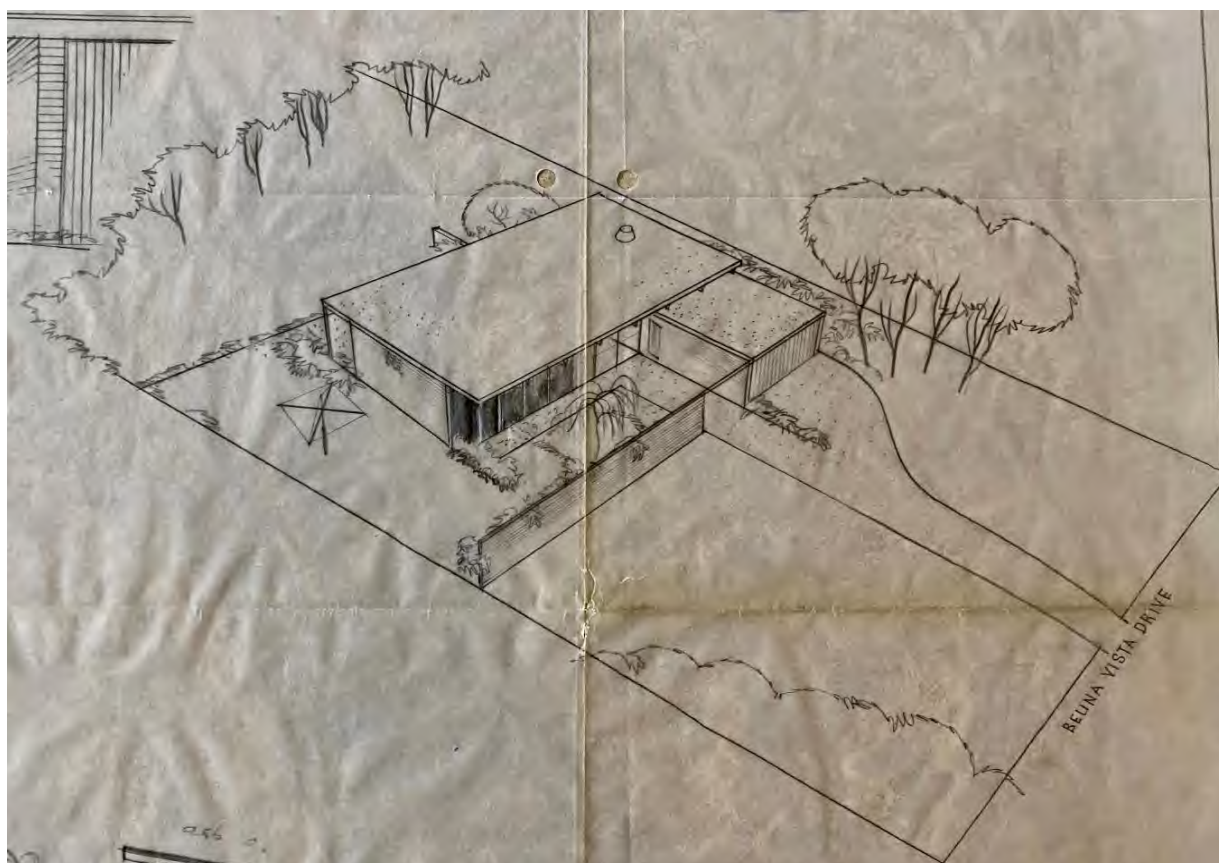


According to archival correspondence, Boyd was the principal in charge and the builder was Raymond Horne of Heidelberg. The contract was signed on 18 October 1955, with expected completion on 18 May 1956. The construction was delayed about a month and was not ready for occupation until mid-June 1956. The final certificate was issued in December 1957, costing £6722-10-0 in total.<sup>29</sup> The house was named *Wyldefell*, which was also the name of the Uglow's previous house at Mt Eliza.<sup>30</sup>



Front elevation, behind entrance court wall, dated 1955

(Source: Grounds, Romberg and Boyd collection, MS 133363, box 24/2, SLV)



Perspective, dated 1955

(Source: Grounds, Romberg and Boyd collection, MS 133363, box 24/2, SLV)

<sup>29</sup> Grounds, Romberg and Boyd collection, MS 133363, box 24/2 [SLV]. A specification survives in the archive.

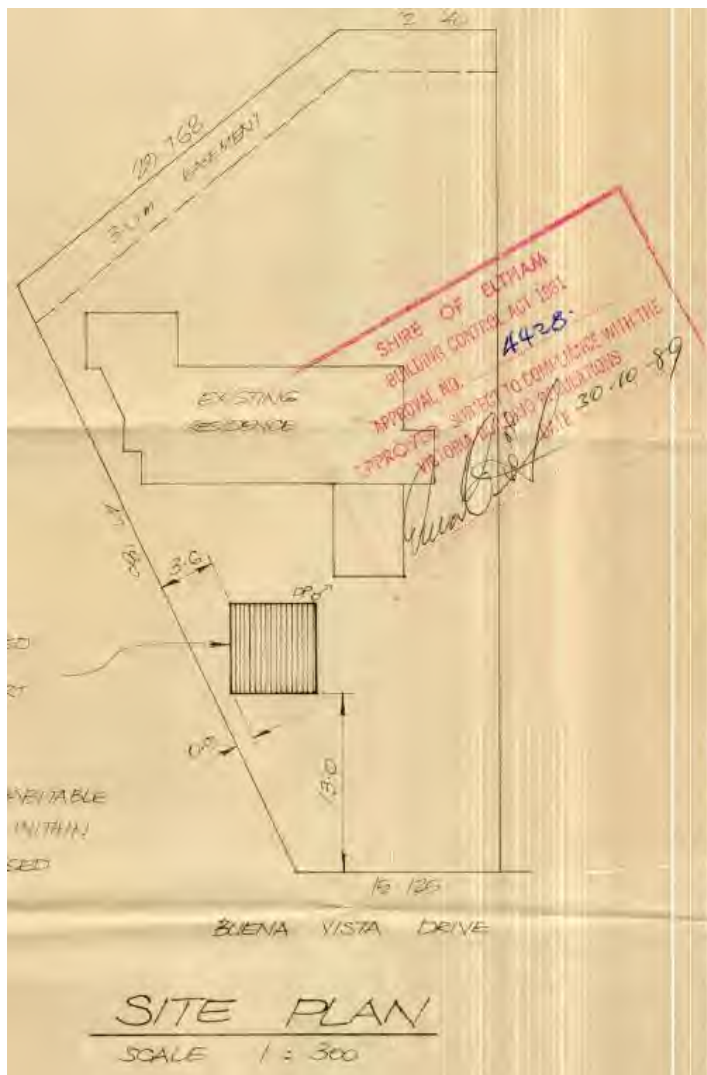
<sup>30</sup> 'Christening', *Herald*, 28 November 1953, p15



Research has determined little about the builder, Horne (1892-1982), other than he worked in Civil Constructional Corps during the Second World War, when his profession was identified as a carpenter.<sup>31</sup>

While the Uglows were occupying the site from 1956, they were not listed in the *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria* until after 1960.<sup>32</sup> They lived at the property for about twelve years before selling it in October 1968 to Colin George Frederick Millington, office administrator, and Joy Beryl Millington of Northcote.<sup>33</sup>

The northern extensions/additions are not evident on a 1973 aerial photograph and, although difficult to interpret, not on another dated 1981.<sup>34</sup> They had been completed by 1989 when the extant timber-framed carport was approved by the Eltham Council, as a site plan shows the current footprint of the house.<sup>35</sup> As such, it is most likely that the northern extensions were constructed during the late 1980s. The northern extensions included two additional bedrooms, relocated laundry and a rumpus room to the rear.



1989 site plan

(Source: Banyule Council archives)

<sup>31</sup> NAA, Series B4218, CV no. 122,469

<sup>32</sup> *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria*, various. Uglow was listed in the 1965 and 1970 editions.

<sup>33</sup> Certificate of Title, vol 8094, folio 2

<sup>34</sup> Landata, 1973 (Project 1043, Montmorency, run 2, frame 123) and 1981 (Project 1716, Western Port Foreshores, run 1, frame 149)

<sup>35</sup> Council property file

## Robin Boyd (1919-71)

Robin Gerard Penleigh Boyd was one of Australia's pre-eminent architects, cultural critics and public educators. His prominence and influence were such that he was one of the few architects to have become a household name during and after the postwar period, attaining a reputation – rare for his profession – as a public intellectual. His life and work have been subject to comprehensive academic review.<sup>36</sup>

Born into the famous Melbourne artistic family, Boyd's father Penleigh was a highly regarded landscape painter who designed and built the family home, *The Robins*, in North Warrandyte in 1913. His mother Edith Susan (*née* Anderson) was also an accomplished artist, especially at drawing.<sup>37</sup>

After Boyd's father's death in 1923, the family moved to a flat in Toorak then a brick bungalow in East Malvern from where he undertook his secondary school education. He studied architecture at Melbourne Technical College (now RMIT) and the University of Melbourne before being articled to the leading practice of A & K Henderson. Boyd's burgeoning interest in modernism often put him at loggerheads with the conservative forces in the profession, especially through his nascent critiquing activities in *Smudges*. Boyd worked as an assistant for (Sir) Roy Grounds during the late 1930s.

In 1941, Boyd married Patricia (*née* Madder) and served in Queensland and Papua New Guinea during the Second World War. Subsequently, he began solo practice and entered into a short-lived, unofficial partnership with Kevin Petherbridge and Francis Bell as Associated Architects. Between 1947 and 1953, he became the founding director of the pioneering and inventive RVIA Small Homes Service, which provided contemporary architectural outcomes to the public at an affordable price. The services support by the *Age* newspaper provided Boyd with a popular weekly column and, over hundreds of pithy but pointed articles, he projected his vision of urban design, taste and 'modern' living into the public discourse.<sup>38</sup> At this time, Boyd designed his first house in Camberwell in 1947 and published the first of several provocative books, *Victorian Modern*. Other publications now regarded as classics include *Australia's Home* (1952) and *The Australian Ugliness* (1960).

In 1953, Boyd formed the partnership of a generation – Grounds, Romberg & Boyd – with Roy Burman Grounds and Swiss-trained émigré architect Frederick Romberg, though they tended to work separately. This resolutely modernist practice dissolved in 1962 with the bitter wrangle over the National Gallery of Victoria and Cultural Centre commission, which was taken by Grounds. Romberg & Boyd continued until Boyd's sudden death.<sup>39</sup> His awards and honours were numerous.

Boyd's celebrated architectural output was prodigious and was almost exclusively residential. Several of his houses are seminal modernist works and he explored a range of ideas about enclosure with them. He is famed for the singularity of many of his designs, including his second home in Toorak of 1957, which has been purchased as museum/design foundation.

## 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

Four houses designed by Boyd are currently included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in Banyule. Three of these heritage places date to the mid-1950s when he was part of the practice of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd (HO110, HO148, HO160). The other, *Featherston House* (HO65), was constructed in 1968 and represented a different phase of his output. Boyd's other known projects in the municipality are shop/supermarket at 73 Haig Street, West Heidelberg (1954, since demolished) and *Burgess House*, Ivanhoe (1965), which alterations have severely compromised.

<sup>36</sup> The literature on Boyd is extensive - Serle, *Robin Boyd: A Life* is the definitive biography; see also 'Robin Boyd: Special Issue', *Transition*, no 38, 1992; and Goad, 'Boyd, Robin', in Goad and Julie Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp100-2

<sup>37</sup> Marjorie J Tipping, 'Boyd, Theodore Penleigh (1890–1923)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1979, available online

<sup>38</sup> Neil Clerehan, 'Boyd, Robin Gerard (1919–1971)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1993, available online

<sup>39</sup> Philip Goad, 'Grounds, Romberg & Boyd', *Melbourne Architecture*, 1999, pp250-1

The following HOs are broadly comparable to *Uglow House*:

- *Victor & Peggy Stone House*, 22 Mount Eagle Road, Ivanhoe, 1954 (HO110) – obscured from the street with a garden designed by Ellis Stones, this two-storey house is also located on a sloping site. Much of the façade is blank with a combined entry canopy and carport. The brickwork was bagged and there were brise-soleil (sunscreens) to the large rear window wall, which took in the views to the east.
- *Holford House*, 14 Hardy Terrace, Ivanhoe, 1955 (HO148) – also located on a steep slope, *Holford House* explored a combination of key ideas or formats he explored at this time, encompassing a parasol roof with a U-shaped pod beneath about a central courtyard. This house similarly has a carport to the front and incorporates breeze block grille/screens into the bagged brick walls.
- *Joseph Simpson House*, 35 Douglas Street, Rosanna 1958 (HO160) – located on a tapering corner site and partly obscured, it similarly has an elongated form with salmon brick walls to the most visible parts of the site and is largely glazed otherwise. The beams of the roof framing are less prominent, with a fascia across their ends and a panel to the upper part of the wall so while the walls are tall, they are not full height and have a different unit configuration.
- *Featherston House*, 22 The Boulevard, Ivanhoe (HO65) – designed by Robin Boyd in 1968 for Grant and Mary Featherstone, notable industrial and furniture designers, it received a posthumous citation in the RIAA (Victoria) awards of 1972. This iconic house of tan brick with reinforced concrete floors is defined by a series of elevated platforms to a large 'garden room' featuring a full, double-height window wall to the rear. From the street, it has an unassuming presence, with a garage effectively screening it.

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'.

## Intactness

Largely 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 (brickwork and timber)
Internal Alteration Controls	Yes (timber linings and joinery in living area)
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or fences	No



## Extent of Heritage Overlay

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



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