

# **CITY OF MAROONDAH HERITAGE STUDY REVIEW**



## **VOLUME TWO: CITATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL HERITAGE PLACES & HERITAGE PRECINCTS**

**Prepared for the City of Maroondah  
FINAL: 8 March 2024**



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<b>Schedule of Issues</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>Draft citations for places and precincts</i>	30 July 2018
<i>Amended with revisions suggested by Council including two new appendices</i>	21 March 2019
<i>Reformatting report into separate stand-alone volumes for TEH and citations</i>	21 June 2021
<i>Consolidate and update all citations</i> <i>Update methodology</i> <i>Update draft heritage overlay schedule</i>	11 May 2022
<i>Update citations for Wicklow Hills Precinct and Contemporary Homes Group Listing</i>	28 July 2022
<i>Update citation for War Service Homes Precinct</i> <i>Update draft heritage overlay schedule</i>	9 August 2022
<i>Minor corrections to addresses</i>	16 August 2022
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<i>Minor updates to individual citations</i> <i>Relocation of citation for Wicklow Hills Precinct</i>	3 March 2023
<i>Amendments to Statements of Significance as per departmental directions</i>	14 April 2023
<i>Amendments as directed following planning panel hearing for Amendment C148maro</i>	29 February 2024
<i>Minor changes as directed by Council.</i>	8 March 2024



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# A: INTRODUCTION

## A1 Project Background & Brief

### Background

The areas that comprise the City of Maroondah, created in the mid-1990s by the amalgamation of the former municipalities of Ringwood and Croydon, have a long and multi-layered history that encapsulates many different phases of human settlement and interactions. While some parts of the City of Maroondah provide physical evidence dating back as far as the 1870s (eg Jenkin's Cottage in Croydon), most of the study area is strongly characterised by twentieth century development and, in the cases of areas such as Heathmont, Bayswater North, Warranwood and Croydon Hills, by post-WW2 development.

In 1998, the City of Maroondah commissioned its first heritage study: the *Maroondah Heritage Identification Study*. Completed by Richard Peterson with Peter Barrett, this study was limited to "historic places of well-recognised heritage significance", and ultimately identified 52 places. In 2003, a more extensive heritage review was undertaken by the same team, the two-part *City of Maroondah Heritage Study*. Stage One involved the preparation of a thematic history for the municipality, and the identification of post-contact places of potential significance, while Stage Two involved the more detailed investigation and assessment of those places. While the *Maroondah Heritage Study: Stage Two* provided citations for many individual places and precincts, not all of these were incorporated into the heritage overlay schedule when the study was adopted as part of Planning Scheme Amendment C42, gazetted in November 2011.

Since 2003, some of the unprotected places identified in the study have been demolished or significantly altered. In parallel, numerous other places, not recorded in the study, have been flagged as potential heritage places by members of the local community or by Council's Heritage Advisor. Some of these places have been subject to one-off heritage assessments and subsequently added to the HO schedule.

### Brief

The purpose of the current project was to address a number of recommendations that had been made by the panel during Amendment C42. The brief identified the following four key components:

- Assessment of places identified in 2003 Heritage Study and not included in the Heritage Overlay;
- Assessment of heritage significance of properties within activity centre areas namely Ringwood, Croydon, Ringwood East and Heathmont;
- Undertaking of thematic history of Post-1945 places and identify places of potential heritage significance and prioritise places to be investigated;
- Assessment of heritage significance of Pre-1945 places of high heritage potential with the municipality.

The intent of the current project was to review places identified in the *Maroondah Heritage Study* but not yet added to the HO schedule, as well as those that had been flagged in other studies such as Heritage Alliance's *Survey of Post-War Built heritage in Victoria: Stage One* (2008) and Context's *Jubilee Park Heritage and Neighbourhood Character Study* (2017), and in Council's own Section 29a watch-list (a register of places with potential heritage significance). It was also to identify new places and areas of potential heritage significance through a process of desktop research, stakeholder consultation and windscreen survey of the entire municipality. To underpin the project, a supplementary Thematic Environmental History (TEH) was also prepared, covering the period from 1945 to 2000.

## A2 Study Team

The study was undertaken by Simon Reeves, director and principal of Built Heritage Pty Ltd.

## A3 Acknowledgements

During the process of engaging with key stakeholders, a number of individuals, most of which were affiliated of local or state organisations, generously responded with useful information, nominations, research leads, and even copies of historic maps and photographs. We would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their contributions, on behalf of the groups that they represented:

Mr Russ Haines	<i>Ringwood &amp; District Historical Society</i>
Ms Lyn Lynch	<i>Croydon Historical Society</i>
Mr Gerry Robinson	<i>Heathmont History Group</i>
Ms Karen Heywood	<i>Jubilee Park Residents Group</i>
Ms Liz Sanzaro	<i>Croydon Conservation Society</i>
Ms Susan Bailey	<i>Cheong Park Committee of Management</i>
Ms Felicity Watson	<i>National Trust of Australia (Victoria)</i>
Mr Tony Lee	<i>Founder of the Robin Boyd Foundation</i>
Mr Robin Grow	<i>Art Deco &amp; Modernism Society</i>

A number of interested local residents also responded to Council's online request for information and nominations, and we would like to thank them all, particularly Mr Michael Galimany (an officer with Heritage Victoria) and Ms Marisa Yeaman (a professional genealogist). Council's Heritage Advisor, the late Ms Willys Keeble, provided useful information as well as invaluable feedback on an early draft of the Thematic Environmental History. Mr Richard Peterson, author of the original *Maroondah Heritage Study*, kindly responded to some specific questions about his research and findings.

We would also like to thank those individuals who, directly connected with buildings that were assessed for the study, were able to provide valuable first-hand accounts of their design and construction. Mr James Burns, long-time Croydon resident and pharmacist, provided some crucial information about the house and medical clinic that his father, Dr W J Burns, erected in 1940-41. Others who helped in providing information relevant to specific properties included Ms Peta McGinley, Ms Fiona Austin and Mr Russ Haines.

Special thanks to those architects who were contacted especially for this project: Peter Brook, Dennis Carter, John Reid, Frank Secomb and the late Don Hendry Fulton, who died in June 2018, just two weeks after being interviewed about his work in the City of Maroondah. During research, we were also able to draw from interviews previously undertaken with Hank Romyn and the late David Caldwell.

## A4 Findings

During the initial stage of this project in 2018-2019, citations were prepared for 20 individual places and four precincts. These were duly supplemented by citations for another 18 individual places prepared in 2020.

The total 38 individual citations comprised nine places that had been identified in the *Maroondah Heritage Study* (2003), four from the *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria: Stage One* (2008), four nominated by stakeholder groups, with the remainder identified by the consultants via desktop research and/or fieldwork. The places mostly dated from the post-WW2 period: five places from the later 1940s, ten from the 1950s, eight from the 1960s, two from the 1970s and one from the 1980s. The lesser proportion of pre-WW2 places comprised one from the early 1940s, one from the 1930s, four from the 1920s and one from the 1910s. Almost two-thirds of the total places were private dwellings, with remainder comprising three retail premises, three churches, two factories a bank branch, a kindergarten, a scout hall, a public hall, an ice skating ring and a vintage neon sign. The 38 places were spread evenly across the historic core of the study area, with eleven examples each in Croydon and Heathmont, six in Ringwood, four in Croydon North, two in Ringwood North, two in Bayswater North, and one each in Ringwood East and Croydon South.

The total number of individual citations was reduced to 36 following the removal of two places (both large non-residential buildings on the Maroondah Highway at Ringwood) for which redevelopment proposals were already in progress. A third citation, for a residential property in Rouseglen Court, Ringwood North, was removed due the building's demolition in 2019.

The four precincts for which full citations were prepared were all residential in nature, and were split evenly between the pre-war and post-war periods. They included groups of houses in Ringwood, Ringwood East, Croydon and Heathmont. The two pre-war precincts comprised a small group of houses in Bedford Road, Ringwood, that represented a rare and early example of standard dwellings offered by the War Services Homes Commission (c.1920), and a group of more prepossessing inter-war bungalows along Alto Avenue, associated with Croydon's prestigious pre-war residential address, the *Wicklow Hills Estate*.

The post-war precincts include a group of standardised modular dwellings off Canterbury Road in Heathmont, erected in the late 1950s by Contemporary Homes Pty Ltd, the company that effectively introduced project housing into Victoria, and a group of three architect-designed project houses in Rawson Court, Ringwood East, built in 1967 as a high-end display village for Fulton Constructions Pty Ltd.

During 2022, it was resolved that the Contemporary Homes Precinct would be more appropriately protected as a group listing rather than a precinct, and the Ringwood Shopping Centre as a precinct rather than an individual heritage place. The respective citations were re-formatted accordingly. Also in 2022, an individual citation was prepared for the Ringwood Uniting Church in Station Street, Ringwood, which represented an updating, expansion and reformatting of a citation that had previously been prepared in 2016 by Council's heritage advisor, the late Willys Keeble.

In 2023, the proposed heritage overlay for the Wicklow Hills Estate Precinct was reconsidered thus:

*Although heritage protection of the Wicklow Hills Estate was part of the pre authorisation amendment proposal, this precinct has been excluded from the authorised Amendment as part of the conditional Authorisation from the Minister for Planning. The rationale for the exclusion at this stage relates to the dual application of a Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO) and Heritage Overlay within some properties in the precinct.*

*Due to the area's unique character Council will progress to further strategic work to identify the most suitable planning tool to protect the neighbourhood character and heritage fabric for the Wicklow Hills Estate.*

*Maroondah City Council will address the protection of the heritage and neighbourhood character of the Wicklow Hills Estate under a separate amendment process.*

The citation for the proposed Wicklow Hills Estate Precinct can be found in the Appendix.

Thus, as of March 2023, this study ultimately recommends heritage overlay protection for 36 individual places, three precincts and one group listing.

The prioritised master-list flagged a number of other places and areas that could conceivably be assessed as part of a future project, simply to act as an updated Section 29a watch-list.



## A5 Draft Heritage Overlay Schedule to Clause 43.01

### Individual Places

No	Heritage Place	External Paint controls apply?	Internal controls apply?	Tree controls apply?	Solar energy system controls apply?	Outbuildings or fences not exempt under Clause 43.01.3	Included on the Victorian Heritage Register?	Prohibited uses may be permitted?	Name of incorporated plan under Clause 43.01-2	Aboriginal heritage place?
HO149	Jope Residence (former), 1/30 and 2/30 Bayswater Road, Croydon	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO150	Hume-Cook Residence (former); <i>Keera</i> , 3-5 Braemar Street, Croydon	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO151	State Savings Bank of Victoria (former) 196 Canterbury Road, Heathmont	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO152	British Nylon Spinners / Fibremakers Factory (former), 254 Canterbury Road, Bayswater North	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes (Heritage buildings only)	-	No
HO153	Romyn Residence and Studio (former), 129; 131-133 Dorset Road, Croydon	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO154	Alsop Residence (former); <i>Darley Dale</i> , 161 Dorset Road, Croydon	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO155	Pethebridge Residence (former), 82 Hull Road, Croydon	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO157	Dioguardi Residence (former); <i>Villa Rotonda</i> , 67 Loughnan Road, Ringwood	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO158	Lawson & Carrington / Waltons Shop (former), 141-145 Main Street, Croydon	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO159	Burns Residence and Clinic (former), 4 Mount View Street, Croydon	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO160	Kotzman Residence (former), 17 Malcolm Court, Ringwood East	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO161	Neon signage (Beaurepaires / Yarra Valley Tyre), 50 Maroondah Highway, Ringwood	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO162	Fitzpatrick Residence (former) 3 Parsons Street, Croydon	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO163	Lovig Residence (former), 90 Richardson Road, Croydon North	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO165	Heathmont Pre-School and Kindergarten; Heathmont Community Centre (former) 39-41 Viviani Crescent, Heathmont	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO166	Heathmont Methodist Church (former), 89 Canterbury Road, Heathmont	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO167	TLC (Truth & Liberation Concern) Church, 265 Canterbury Road, Bayswater North	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO168	Melba Hall; Melba Recreation Hall (former), 25-27 Exeter Road, Croydon North	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No

HO169	Myers Residence (former), 114-116 Exeter Road, Croydon North	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO170	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 58-64 Hewish Road, Croydon	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO171	Croydon Central Scout Hall; 33 Kent Avenue, Croydon	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO173	Finch Residence (former), 8 Possum Lane, Heathmont	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO174	Smith Residence (former), 4 Swain Court, Heathmont	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO175	Doctor's Residence and Clinic (former); <i>Calmora</i> , 61 Wicklow Avenue, Croydon	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO176	Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church/School, 8-16 Bedford Road, Ringwood	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO178	Gill Residence (former); <i>Rosedale; Three Gates; The Farmhouse</i> , 89-91 Yarra Road, Croydon Hills	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO180	Secomb Residence, 122-124 Heathmont Road, Heathmont	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO184	Ringwood Uniting Church 30-32 Station Street, Ringwood	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No

## Precincts and Group Listings

No	Heritage Place	External Paint controls apply?	Internal controls apply?	Tree controls apply?	Solar energy system controls apply?	Outbuildings or fences not exempt under Clause 43.01.3	Included on the Victorian Heritage Register?	Prohibited uses may be permitted?	Name of incorporated plan under Clause 43.01-2	Aboriginal heritage place?
HO186	<i>War Service Homes Precinct</i> 1/110, 116, 120, 122, 124, Bedford Road, Heathmont	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No
HO187	<i>Sunbower Display Village Precinct</i> 20, 22, 24 Rawson Court, Ringwood East	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	-	No

## B: METHODOLOGY

### B1 Identification of places of potential cultural significance

The brief required that places of potential significance be identified through the following four means:

- Thematic Environmental History (TEH), including the source material consulted during research
- Registers, inventories, studies and reports (ie, desktop identification)
- Community groups, historical societies and individuals
- Fieldwork surveying

Research for the TEH, which was the first component of the project to be completed, did identify a number of specific places and areas deemed to be of potential significance, and these were added to the master-list.

The desktop identification phase commenced with a review of previous heritage studies, principally Richard Peterson's *Maroondah Heritage Study: Stage 2* (2003) but also a draft of the more recent *Jubilee Park Heritage & Neighbourhood Character Study* (2017). The former was found to include over one hundred places that, although already individually assessed, had not yet been added to the HO overlay schedule and could thus be considered as candidates for future re-assessment. The Jubilee Park study, which documented several heritage precincts in Ringwood, also flagged a few individual sites as potential heritage places.

Several in-house council documents were consulted. These included the existing Section 29a watch-list, although this was found to consist mostly of places already documented in the *Maroondah Heritage Study* but had not yet added to the HO schedule. Council also provide the consultants with several individual assessments recently prepared by heritage advisor Willys Keeble, and a document that provided a desktop review of places within the MARC precinct in central Ringwood

Heritage Alliance's *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria* (2007), which flagged places of potential state significance across all of Victoria, identified twelve places within what is now the City of Maroondah:

- Fibremakers (former British Nylon Spinners factory), 254 Canterbury Road, Bayswater North
- Pethebridge House/Studio, 82 Hull Road, Croydon
- Project housing (Contemporary Homes Pty Ltd), Adrian Court, Heathmont
- Caldwell House, 6 The Outlook, Heathmont
- Iceland Ringwood, 28 Maroondah Highway, Ringwood
- ANZ Bank, 91 Maroondah Highway, Ringwood
- Neon sign, 50 Maroondah Highway, Ringwood
- Ringwood Cultural Centre, Wilson Street, Ringwood
- ASA Sectional House, Ringwood
- Kotzman House, 17 Malcolm Court, Ringwood
- Emery House, 50 Pine Crescent, Ringwood North
- Rudolf Steiner School, 213 Wonga Road, Waranwood

The Heritage Alliance report indicated that half of the twelve places had been identified by reference to the *Maroondah Heritage Study: Stage 2*. Two since been added to the City of Maroondah's HO schedule: the Emery House in Ringwood (HO119) and the Rudolf Steiner School (HO133). The street address of the ASA Sectional House, not recorded by Heritage Alliance, had to be confirmed by further research. The house, which represented a display model of a Swedish-made prefabricated dwelling, stood at 2 Georges Road (corner of Maroondah Highway).<sup>1</sup> However, as it had been demolished since the 1980s, it was eliminated from further consideration as a potential heritage place. The nine remaining places identified in the Heritage Alliance survey were added to the master-list for this project.

1 'New pre-fab', *Argus*, 6 November 1952, p 7. The house was opened for public inspection for two weeks.

Desktop identification included reference to the consultant's own in-house database of post-war Australian architecture. This database, which can be filtered according to suburb, revealed over 300 references to places within what is now the City of Maroondah, arranged as follows:

Ringwood	108 entries	Bayswater North	4 entries
Croydon	87 entries	Croydon South	1 entry
Heathmont	67 entries	Croydon Hills	1 entry
Croydon North	7 entries	Warranwood	1 entry

Where database references provided sufficient information for a project to be fully located, its address was added to the master-list. There was inevitable overlap, with some of the database entries pertaining to places that had already been flagged in either the *Maroondah Heritage Study* or the Heritage Alliance survey.

Reference was also made to the online register of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). This was found to contain eleven places in the City of Maroondah, comprising six buildings, two historic pipe organs and three significant trees. All of the buildings, however, were already included on the heritage overlay schedule. Other sources consulted during the desktop identification phase included a number of published monographs, unpublished thesis (where readily available in digitized form) and online resources that referenced the work of individual architects of the post-WW2 era. One particularly useful online resource was the fine collection of slides of architect-designed buildings, taken in the 1950s and '60s by the late Peter Wille, which forms part of the Picture Collection at the State Library of Victoria.

The process of seeking nominations from community groups and other stakeholders commenced in February 2018, when initial email contact was made with representatives of the Ringwood & District Historical Society, the Croydon Historical Society and the Heathmont History Group. All three of these groups responded positively to the project and indicated that nominations would be submitted in due course. A considerable amount of information had been forwarded to the consultants by the end of April 2018. Information, including nominations of specific places and areas for possible consideration, was also received from members of other groups (namely the Croydon Conservation Society, the Jubilee Park Residents Group and the Cheong Park Committee of Management) and a number of interested local residents that included a professional genealogist and a staff member at Heritage Victoria.

Consultation with stakeholders was expanded beyond the local context to include groups with a broader remit such as the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), the Art Deco & Modernism Society of Australia (which is based in Melbourne) and the Robin Boyd Foundation. Contact was made with the consultant's prior contacts at the National Trust and the Art Deco Society. After checking their respective files and registers, both reported back that they had no specific places to nominate within the City of Maroondah. Tony Lee, founder of the Robin Boyd Foundation, generously provided a list of some thirty buildings in the study area that covered examples of the work of Robin Boyd (including a newly-discovered early house from Boyd's pre-partnership era in the late 1940s) as well as others designed by Boyd's former associates Frank Bell and Kevin Pethebridge, both of whom lived in Croydon and were professionally active there in the 1950s.

Concurrently with the period in which nominations were sought from interest groups and individuals, a windscreen survey was undertaken of the entire municipality. In preparation, all of the places and areas that had been identified to date were plotted onto a copy of the existing HO map (thus helpfully indicating which places and areas were already included on the HO schedule). Carried out over a period of four weeks in April 2018, the windscreen survey had a twofold purpose: to confirm the current status of those places identified through desktop research and consultation, and to identify any additional places that had not previously been flagged by other means.

During fieldwork, a number of places included on the master-list were found to have been demolished, and others significantly altered to the point that they would no longer be considered potential candidates for further assessment. Several other places could not be located in the field due to insufficient address information. Approximately one hundred new places (ie, not previously flagged via desktop research, consultation or other means) were identified during the field phase.



## B2 Review of master-list

With the completion of desktop research, consultation and fieldwork by the end of April 2018, the master-list was consolidated and reviewed. For the sake of providing a complete picture, and also to assist in future comparative analysis, the master-list initially included all of the places that fieldwork confirmed to have been demolished, significantly altered or unlocatable, as well as those already included on the HO schedule or recommended for inclusion by other consultants or Council's Heritage Advisor.

In this draft form, the master-list ran to almost forty pages, with more than 600 individual places of potential significance, and seventeen potential precincts or group listings. Eliminating those places that were no longer considered as candidates for further assessment (ie, those demolished, unlocated or already on the HO schedule), the remaining places on the list were given nominal grading (high, medium or low priority) based on a *prima facie* case for their likelihood of meeting the threshold for local significance. An indication was also given of those individual places in proximity (eg in the same street or adjacent streets) that might conceivably be considered for protection as a precinct or group listing. The master-list was then submitted to Council for consideration.

During subsequent discussions with Council, it was resolved the places and areas selected for detailed assessment would not necessarily have to reflect any particular diversity in their geographic location (ie, spread evenly across the study area), date of construction or building typology. It was also resolved that the places on the master-list that were council-owned should be collectively considered a lower priority by default, as they were less at risk of demolition or redevelopment.

The Consultant identified the properties with the highest priority and recommended where a HO would be justified. The initial filter of the master-list had identified almost fifty individual places deemed to represent a high priority, along with five potential precincts. The five potential precincts were as follows:

- Wicklow Hills Estate Precinct: Alto Avenue, The Terrace and Glen Avenue, Croydon;
- Anzac/Mount View Precinct: Anzac Avenue, Mount View Street and Mena Avenue, Croydon;
- Contemporary Homes project houses: various streets off Canterbury Road, Heathmont;
- Fulton Constructions' *Sunbower* display village: 20-24 Rawson Court, Heathmont;
- War Services Homes: 110, 116 and 120-126 Bedford Road, Heathmont

While the original fee proposal had allowed for the preparation of five precinct citations, it had otherwise only budgeted for twenty individual citations. As such, a more rigorous system of filtering needed to be applied to further prioritise individual places. The following criteria were used to assist in this filtering process:

- Places identified in the Heritage Alliance survey were automatically considered higher priorities (with the exception of one that had been demolished and another that had been altered);
- Places that, at face value, appeared to be intact and notable works by eminent post-WW2 architects (eg Robin Boyd, Chancellor & Patrick, Charles Duncan and McGlashan & Everist)
- Places that, at face value, appeared to be unique, rare or especially unusual in the municipality, whether they be unusual typologies (eg a purpose-built ice skating rink or a vintage neon sign) or a uncommonly potent manifestation of a particular theme (eg immigrant settlement or industry).
- Places that were considered to be vulnerable (private residences, especially those dating from the post-WW2 period, are generally considered to be more at risk of demolition than, say, churches, schools or other public buildings)

Generally speaking, the fact that a place had been nominated by a local interest group or individual was not considered, in isolation, to be sufficient to elevate that place to a higher priority. Rather, a cumulative approach was adopted, whereby local nomination was deemed to add further weight to those places that had otherwise been acknowledged in two or more other sources (ie, the 2003 heritage study, the Section 29a watch-list, the Built Heritage database, the Peter Wille slide collection or other desktop research).

Ultimately, the following twenty places were shortlisted as the highest priorities for further assessment:

- Humphrey Law Factory, 22-26 Armstrong Road, Heathmont (1948-49)
- Houses, 1/30 and 3/30 Bayswater Road, Croydon (Robin Boyd, 1948-49)
- House, 3-5 Braemar Street, Croydon (R S McCulloch, 1947-49)
- Former State Savings Bank, 196 Canterbury Road, Heathmont (Keith & John Reid, 1971-72)
- Former Fibremakers Factory, 254 Canterbury Road, Bayswater North (Stephenson & Turner, 1955)
- Houses, 129 and 131-133 Dorset Road, Croydon (Hank Romy, 1964) – *architect's own house*
- House, 161 Dorset Road, Croydon (Ruth Alsop, 1939) – *architect's own house*
- House, 82 Hull Road, Croydon (Kevin Pethebridge, 1947-48) – *architect's own house*
- House, 52 Loughnan Road, Ringwood North (Royce Bennett, 1957-60) – *engineer's own house*
- House, 63 Loughnan Road, Ringwood (1959-61)
- Shop, 141 Main Street, Croydon (Kurt Popper, 1953-54)
- House, 17 Malcolm Court, Ringwood East (Douglas Alexandra, 1952-53)
- Ringwood Ice Arena, 28-30 Maroondah Highway, Ringwood (1969-70)
- Neon signage, 50 Maroondah Highway, Ringwood (1964)
- Midway Arcade, 1-15 Midway Arcade, Ringwood (Peter Jorgensen, 1954-55)
- House, 3 Parsons Street, Croydon (Chancellor & Patrick, 1959-60)
- House, 90 Richardson Road, Croydon North (Charles Duncan, 1966-68)
- House, 6 Rouseglen Court, Ringwood North (McGlashan & Everist, 1955-56)  
– *this place has been removed from the list as it was demolished prior to finalising the study*
- House, 6 The Outlook, Heathmont (David Caldwell, 195-59) – *architect's own house*
- Heathmont Pre-School, 39-41 Viviani Crescent, Heathmont (Frank Secomb, 1950-52)

During preliminary assessment of potential precincts, one of the areas (a group of inter-war timber houses centred on Anzac Avenue and Mount View Street in Croydon) was found to be less significant than originally surmised, and was demoted to a lower priority. Instead, an extra individual citation was prepared for the one element of the proposed precinct that was deemed to be significant in its own right: the former doctor's house and clinic at 2-4 Mount View Street.

Another high-priority individual place was a house at 35 Alto Avenue, Croydon, which significantly represented the first residential commission ever undertaken by award-winning architect the late Peter Corrigan. This property was ultimately assessed as an individual place instead of being identified as a significant place within the broader *Wicklow Hills Estate* precinct, in which it was located. Since the preparation of this study, the listing of this individual property has been processed separately due to the risk of demolition and a Heritage Overlay has been introduced ahead of the *Wicklow Hills Estate* controls.

### **B3 Preparation of citations**

Citations for individual places and precincts were researched using a stand of standard primary and secondary sources. While the published local histories consulted during preparation of the Thematic Environmental History (eg the books by Hugh Anderson and Muriel McGivern) were of some use, further investigation was invariably required. Primary sources included the usual telephone and post office directories, electoral rolls, certificates of title and land subdivision plans. Rate books proved to be of limited use in researching pre-war places, as the volumes for the former Shire of Lillydale (covering present-day Croydon) were unhelpfully arranged in alphabetical order by owner surname, rather than geographical order by street name. Virtually all of the post-WW2 buildings identified as highest priority were well documented in contemporary newspaper and magazine articles, most of which were sourced from the consultant's in-house database. Building permit files held by the City of Maroondah, which typically included copies of architectural drawings, correspondence and permit application forms for the original building and subsequent alterations or additions, proved to be an invaluable resource.

Comparative analysis was underpinned by reference to places and precincts already on the HO schedule or documented in the *Maroondah Heritage Study* (2003), as well as innumerable others that were identified by the consultants during the fieldwork component of the project.

Each citation for an individual heritage place included the components of historical overview description, comparative analysis and Statement of Significance, in the standard tripartite format citing the relevant HERCON criteria. A recent photograph of each place was included and, where considered useful, a historic image such as an earlier photograph, architect's perspective drawing or floorplan. Citations for heritage precincts included more photographic material (both current and historic) as well as a map that showed the location and proposed boundary of the precinct, and a list of which properties were considered to be significant and non-contributory.

## **B4 Review of Thematic Environmental History**

Following completion of the citations, the TEH was reviewed. The purpose of this review was to allow for various corrections, updates, additions or revisions that resulted from new information obtained during fieldwork and the more detailed research and investigation undertaken for the citations.

The TEH review also addressed a number of comments and suggestions that were made by Council's Heritage Advisor, Willys Keeble, after reading the earlier draft version. These suggestions included clarifying the relationship with the 2003 thematic history, minimising the coverage of manifestations beyond the year 2000, and expanding the number of 'representative places' for each thematic discussion.

## **B5 Review of draft report**

In March 2019, the draft report was updated to include a number of mostly minor corrections and revisions suggested by Council, including amending maps and street address to correspond with GIS data.

This revision also included the addition of two appendices. The first appendix contains two citations that were completed during the course of the study but were subsequently removed from further consideration due to pending redevelopment applications. Consequently, these two places have also been deleted from the proposed Heritage Overlay Schedule. The second appendix includes two citations that were prepared by Council's Heritage Advisor, the late Willys Keeble.

## **B6 Additional citations (2020-21)**

In April 2020, the consultants were engaged to prepare an individual citation for the house at 35 Alto Avenue, Croydon. This house, designed by architect Peter Corrigan, had been designated as a high priority place on the initial master-list<sup>6</sup>, but it was subsequently decided that it be incorporated into the *Wicklow Hills Estate* Precinct, in which it was considered as a contributory element. Following a change of ownership in late 2019, and the subsequent application for demolition, it was considered that an individual citation was required to underpin a request for an interim heritage control. The citation was completed and the property was subject to its own planning scheme amendment, C142maro. A panel hearing took place in 13 April 2021, and ministerial approval for the heritage control was granted in September. For this reason, the citation for 35 Alto Avenue does not appear in this volume.

In April 2020, Council also instructed the consultants to prepare additional citations for individual places from the master-list. Places that had been initially designated as a medium or high priority were subject to a desktop review, involving partial research and/or comparative analysis to determine if there was still a strong basis for local significance. Consequently, priorities were updated where considered necessary: some places flagged as high priorities were demoted to medium priority, and some medium priority places were upgraded to high priority. It was established that some of the higher-priority places could not be adequately researched and/or inspected because of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions in place at that time. As such, the list of candidates for further individual citations remained in flux for some time before the following places were ultimately selected:

- Our Lady Church/School, 8-16 Bedford Road, Ringwood
- Heathmont Uniting (Methodist) Church, 81-89 Canterbury Road, Heathmont
- TLC Church, 265 Canterbury Road, Bayswater North

- House, 2A Dirkala Avenue, Heathmont
- Melba Hall (former), 25-27 Exeter Road, Croydon
- House, 114-116 Exeter Road, Croydon
- House, 122 Heathmont Road, Heathmont
- LDS Church, 58-64 Hewish Road, Croydon
- Croydon Scout Hall, 33 Kent Avenue, Croydon
- House, 22 Lucille Avenue, Croydon South
- Drive-in shops, 86 Maroondah Highway, Ringwood
- FLER project house, 8 Possum Lane, Heathmont
- House (I J Smith) 4 Swain Court Heathmont
- House, 3 The Boulevard, Heathmont
- House, 4 Wendy Court, Heathmont
- House (former clinic) 61 Wicklow Avenue, Croydon
- House, 9-11 Wonga Road, Ringwood North
- House (*Three Gates*), 89 Yarra Road, Croydon

Full citations were then prepared for these places, adopting the same methodology outlined in Section B3.

## **B7 Finalisation of report (2022)**

The finalisation of the report included the following tasks:

- Review of feedback from the City of Maroondah's Heritage Reference Group, with a number of minor corrections and revisions incorporated where deemed appropriate;
- Consolidation of all citations into a single sequence, arranged in alphabetical order by street name;
- Update citation for the Contemporary Homes Estate in Heathmont, reflecting Council's decision to re-consider it as a group listing rather than a heritage overlay precinct;
- Update citation for the Ringwood Drive-in Shopping Centre in Ringwood, reflecting Council's decision to re-consider it as a heritage overlay precinct rather than an individual heritage place;
- Update methodology, acknowledgements and draft heritage overlay schedule

## **B8 Revision following Planning Panel Hearing (2023-24)**

Following finalisation of the report, its recommendations were to be incorporated into the planning scheme through Amendment C148maro. A planning panel hearing took place in November and December 2023, with the panel report subsequently released on 7 February 2024. The panel report recommended:

- revision of Statements of Significance for citations for one precinct and seven individual places;
- amendment of mapping of extent of heritage overlay for one individual place;
- revision to heritage design guidelines for one individual place;
- deletion of citations for one precinct, one group listing and eight individual places;

The present report was subsequently amended to reflect the recommendations of the panel report. .

## **C: CITATIONS FOR PLACES**





<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HOUSES	<b>Citation No</b>	HO149
<b>Other name/s</b>	Joep Residence (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	50 H5
<b>Address</b>	1/30 and 2/30 Bayswater Road CROYDON	<b>Date/s</b>	1948-49 1968 (conversion into two flats)
<b>Designer/s</b>	Robin Boyd Frank Bell (1968 conversion)	<b>Builder/s</b>	John Jamison; Stephen Joep



*Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, April 2018*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential buildings (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Good
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Good (sympathetic additions)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Place History

The house at 30 Bayswater Road, Croydon, was erected in 1949 for Stephen and Betty Joep, and was designed by architect Robin Boyd during what proved to be his only stint as a sole practitioner.

The only son of a labourer, Stephen Richard Joep was born in Hawthorn on 18 May 1918. Barely six months after his twenty-first birthday, he enlisted with the Australian Army and served with the First Australian Nav Bomb Group until he was discharged in October 1945. The year before, he had married Miss Betty Veronica Buck, an artist who trained at the prestigious George Bell School. Resuming civilian life, Joep began working as a mechanic. He and Betty took up residence in Surrey Hills, where they shared a house with Joep's widowed father Norman, who had moved there from Yea after the death of his wife in 1935. For the young couple, however, the prospect of building a house for themselves loomed large.

In January 1946, Stephen Jope acquired the title to a block of vacant land on the east side of Bayswater Road at Croydon. However, more than a year passed before the couple gave serious thought to building a house there. Aware of the new Small Homes Service that had commenced in July 1947 as a joint venture of the RVIA and the *Age* newspaper, the Jopes met with its inaugural director, an up-and-coming young architect by the name of Robin Boyd (1919-1971). Failing to find a suitable design amongst the service's range of standard house plans, the Jopes engaged Boyd directly to design one especially for them.

At the time, Boyd had only recently established sole practice after several years working in partnership with ex-army colleagues Kevin Pethebridge and Frank Bell. All three men had commenced architectural studies before WW2 but, after enlisting with the Australian Army, found themselves working together in the 3rd Field Survey Company (along with several others who went on to become architects, such as Neil Clerehan). After collaborating on an entry in an architectural competition in June 1945, Boyd, Bell and Pethebridge decided to enter into partnership on resuming civilian life. By the end of the year, they had set up private practice under the name Associated Designers (later Associated Architects). The venture proved a modest success before Boyd resigned in 1947 to take up the irresistible offer to front the new Small Homes Service. He proceeded to re-establish private practice as Robin Boyd, architect, working from his home office in Riversdale Road, Camberwell. This would represent the eminent architect's only stint as a sole practitioner, ending when he entered into partnership with Roy Grounds and Frederick Romberg in 1953 (and then, after Grounds withdrew, continuing as Romberg & Boyd until his death in 1971).

Robin Boyd's drawing for the Jope Residence, dated 22 November 1948, depicts a modest gable-roofed timber dwelling laid out on a carefully zoned L-shaped plan with living room and kitchen in the east-west wing and three bedrooms, bathroom and laundry in the north-south wing. Construction duly commenced with the involvement of John Jamison, a local builder who lived nearby in Bayswater Road, although Jope subsequently took over and completed much of the work himself.

The Jopes, who had two daughters, remained living in the house for nearly two decades. During that time, they made a few minor changes to the house, including some additional rooms built onto the living room wing and the enclosure of the verandah. They moved out in the later 1960s, returning to the inner eastern suburbs to live in a Federation-style villa in Canterbury. Initially the couple retained ownership of the Croydon house and, in 1968, engaged local architect Frank Bell (coincidentally, a former associate of Robin Boyd) to convert it into two flats. The two original wings of the house were thus enlarged and re-configured to become a semi-detached pair of dwellings. The property was strata-titled in 1974, with the two dwellings placed on separate titles (each with a portion of the back yard) and the front yard as common space.

### **Physical Description**

The former Jope Residence at 1/30 and 2/30 Bayswater Road, Croydon, is a single-storey timber building that, while designed, built and occupied as a single residence, has been converted into two semi-detached dwellings. The extent of the original house, comprising two rectangular gable-roofed blocks on an L-shaped plan, can still be readily interpreted. The former living room wing, running west-west, retains the original recessed front entry porch and kitchen window but has been extended further south side by a narrow addition (containing two bedrooms and a bathroom) with a flat-roofed carport projecting towards the street. The original bedroom wing, running north-south, retains its original fenestration to the street facade, with three large timber-framed sash windows and a narrower four-bay window to the bathroom. The living room and kitchenette, added in 1968, was built onto the rear and is thus not visible from the street.

### **Comparative Analysis**

As an architect, Robin Boyd was notably active in what is now the City of Maroondah. However, most of the buildings that he designed there date from the latter phase of his career, when he was in partnership with Frederick Romberg (from 1962 until his death in 1971). Houses in the study area that were designed under the auspices of Romberg & Boyd include the Miller Residence at 15 Banksia Court, Heathmont (1963), the Versteegen Residence at 125 Warrandyte Road, Ringwood (1964-68) and the Hegarty Residence at 20 Byways Drive, Ringwood East (1969-72). Of these, the Miller Residence is a relatively unremarkable design and has been since been much altered, while the Versteegen Residence was demolished in 2016. The Hegarty House, of academic interest as the last project Boyd completed before his death, is included in the heritage overlay schedule as HO89. Luther College in Plymouth Road, Croydon (1962-64), a substantial non-residential commission for Romberg & Boyd, is also on the heritage overlay schedule, as HO122.



By contrast, the earlier phases of Boyd's career are not well represented in the City of Maroondah. The only local examples of his work in partnership as Grounds, Romberg & Boyd, between 1953 and 1962, are some houses that were built to standard designs he had prepared for project housing companies. These include some scattered examples of his modular *Peninsula* house (c.1956), designed for Contemporary Homes Pty Ltd, which can still be found (in various states of intactness) at 50 Ruskin Avenue, Croydon, 17 Stoda Street, Heathmont and 3 Lee Court, Heathmont. A notably intact example of his later FLER House, designed for the furniture company of that name, still stands at 8 Possum Lane, Heathmont (c.1958). Research to date, however, has not located any other examples of Boyd's work in the City of Maroondah that date from his early period in sole practice, from 1947 to 1953. Although he designed numerous buildings during that time, very few of these remain standing. The Joep Residence must therefore be considered a rare survivor of his early work, not just on a municipal scale but on a broader metropolitan scale.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is significant?*

The former Joep Residence at 1/30 and 2/30 Bayswater Road, Croydon, is a single-storey timber house on an L-shaped plan (since divided into two flats) with low-pitched roof, weatherboard cladding and varied fenestration. Erected in 1948-49 for Stephen and Betty Joep, it was designed by noted architect Robin Boyd, who was then director of the Small Homes Service and operating (for the only time in his life) a sole practice.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house(s). Specific elements of significance include the weatherboard cladding, low gabled roofline and simple repetitive fenestration with timber-framed sash windows.

### *How is it significant?*

The former Joep Residence satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics
- Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Maroondah's history.

### *Why is it significant?*

The former Joep Residence is significant for the following reasons:

The building is significant as an important early example of modernist residential architecture in the City of Maroondah. Dating from 1948, the house prefigures the maturing modernism of the 1950s through its carefully zoned planning, with living spaces and bedrooms articulated as separate wings, and with varied fenestration that similarly responds to the functions of spaces within. (*Criterion E*)

The Joep Residence is significant as an early residential project by Robin Boyd, one of Australia's most eminent architects (and architectural writers) of the post-war era. While Boyd is well represented in the City of Maroondah by several buildings dating from the later phase of his career, including the last house he ever completed before his death in 1971, the Joep House remains as important evidence of the opposite end of his illustrious career when he made his first forays into private practice after the Second World War. While Boyd designed numerous houses during this early phase, many have been demolished or altered beyond recognition. The Joep Residence is one of few surviving pre-partnership Boyd houses for which the original form, finishes and fenestration remain strongly evident (notwithstanding some changes). (*Criterion H*)

## References

Certificate of Title, Volume 5547, Folio 346, created 23 May 1929.

Robin Boyd, 'House for Mrs & Mrs S R Joep at Lot 7, Bayswater Road, Croydon', drawings dated 22 November 1948. Courtesy Tony Lee.

Francis R Bell, 'Alterations & additions to Residence, 30 Bayswater Rd, Croydon: conversion to two flats for Mr & Mrs S R Joep', drawings dated 24 June 1968. Courtesy Tony Lee.

Tony Lee, notes of interview with Sally Joep, 13 July 2009. Courtesy Tony Lee.

**Originally identified by**

Tony Lee (founder, Robin Boyd Foundation).



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP CHURCH/SCHOOL	<b>Citation No</b>	HO176
<b>Other name/s</b>	Our Lady of Perpetual Succour; St Mary's church/school	<b>Melway ref</b>	49 H9
<b>Address</b>	8-16 Bedford Road RINGWOOD	<b>Date/s</b>	1929 (church/school) 1957 (school); 1961, 1990 (church)
<b>Designer/s</b>	A A Fritsch (1929) Burrowes & McKeown (1957, 1961)	<b>Builder/s</b>	"Mr McRowan" (1929)



*Photographs by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, June 2020 (Bedford Road frontage inset)*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Religion	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Church	<b>Intactness</b>	Good/fair (some changes)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External paint controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior alteration controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls		

### Place History

This group of buildings at 8-16 Bedford Road, Ringwood, was developed from the late 1920s to the early 1960s as the core of a Roman Catholic church and school complex, which still operates from the site today. Roman Catholic settlers are recorded in the study area as early as the 1870s, but it was not until 1893 that a purpose-built place of worship was provided for them: a small timber church erected on half an acre of donated land on Whitehorse Road, near the junction of Mount Dandenong Road. Dedicated as St Mary's, the fledgling church fell within the vast Parish of St Patrick, Lilydale, until October 1920, when a separate entity was formed: the Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Ringwood, extending from Box Hill to Mooroolbark, with Father Michael Finan as the first parish priest. He was duly succeeded by Father John Keown (1923) and then by Father John Donovan (1926).

During the 1920s, the present site was acquired on the south-west corner of Bedford Road and the then newly-formed Willana [sic] Street. An existing house, fronting Bedford Road, was adapted as a presbytery, and plans for a new building on Wilana Street, for dual use as a church and a school, were drawn up by Augustus Andrew Fritsch (1866-1933). Melbourne's pre-eminent Roman Catholic architects of the early twentieth century, Fritsch was nearing the end of a long and prolific career that saw him design countless churches, schools, presbyteries, convents and the like, from the vast St Mary's Church in Bairnsdale (1913) to the celebrated Newman College at the University of Melbourne (with Walter Burley Griffin, 1916-1918).

In February 1929, it was reported that "very soon, a fine church-school will be available for the Catholics of Ringwood. Already the plans have been prepared and Father Donovan expects to lay the foundation stone within a month or two" (*Advocate* 28/02/1929:16). While that failed to transpire, the building was noted to be "in the course of erection" in August. (*Advocate* 08/08/1929:16). Completed at a cost of £3,764, the hall was blessed and opened on 24 November 1929 by Archbishop Daniel Mannix. The milestone prompted a feature article in Melbourne's Roman Catholic newspaper, which noted: "Built on a very advantageous site, the new church-school at Ringwood adds greatly to the architectural setting of that important suburb. The construction and design of the building, which is built of brick, is in keeping with the excellence of its situation" (*Advocate* 28/11/1929:18). There was also coverage in the Melbourne dailies, with one noting that the building was "constructed of brick, with a tiled roof of harmonious tones" (*Herald* 27/11/1929:17), and another that "the building is of brick and is of pleasing design. It will be used as a church and school for time, but it is proposed to build a separate church later" (*Argus*, 25/11/1929:18). The *Herald* elaborated on how the building would accommodate its dual purpose: inside, two separate spaces (each 25 x 30 feet) could be divided by concertina doors for use as classrooms, or thrown open for worship, with the sanctuary discretely concealed behind folding doors at one end. The building also provided "two roomy outside porches, priest's vestry and two cloak rooms for boys and girls" (*Herald* 29/11/1929:17).

Despite such early reports, the premises (dubbed St Mary's Hall) was used only for religious services for its first few years, due to difficulty in securing teaching staff. In 1931, Father Donovan was succeeded as parish priest by Father Adrian Hughes, who was keen to expand facilities. He arranged for the congregation's old timber chapel on Whitehorse Road to be removed and re-sited to Wilana Street (between the presbytery and St Mary's Hall) for use as a meeting-place for church-related organisations. After Hughes obtained teaching staff from the Sisters of Mercy Convent at Lilydale, St Mary's School began operation on 25 January 1932. Commencing with 75 pupils, the school grew at a rapid rate and the adjacent timber chapel was duly pressed into service as an additional classroom. For the next quarter century, St Mary's, Ringwood, remained the only Roman Catholic school in the district, attracting students from as far afield as Mitcham, Croydon, Warrandyte and Bayswater.

The school experienced further pressures and changes in the early post-WW2 period, when the district underwent unprecedented residential expansion. In December 1953, plans were prepared for an elongated single-storey building, providing four classrooms and sundry facilities, to be erected at the far south end of the Wilana Street frontage. Completion of this building allowed for the original brick hall to be given over for exclusive use as a church; it was renovated and redecorated accordingly during 1954. This period also saw the demolition of the original presbytery at 14 Bedford Road, and its replacement by a new one. It was perhaps seen as a fitting reflection of the freshly upgraded church and school complex that, in 1955, its name was officially changed from St Mary's to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour.

Coinciding with the appointment of Father J W Scarborough as parish priest, further expansion took place from 1957, when architects Burrows & Keown were engaged to undertake various works. At the time, this firm had only just been founded, by established sole practitioner Peter Burrows (born 1921) and the younger Gerald McKeown (1924-1996), a former employee of Bates, Smart McCutcheon. Among the fledgling firm's earliest commissions, the work that Burrows & McKeown executed at Our Lady's, Ringwood, commenced with a scheme for a covered walk along the north side of the existing classroom block, for which drawings are dated February 1957. Two months later, the architects prepared plans for a two-storey building, to be built on Wilana Street between the original school/church hall and the existing classroom block. Connected to the latter by a single-storey link (containing an entry hall, office and staff room), the new building was a progressive modernist structure of steel-framed construction, designed to provide three classrooms at the upper level, with toilet facilities and a large open hall-like space (designated on the plans as a "shelter"), at ground level. The downstairs hall proved a short-lived luxury; soon after completion of the building, the space was subdivided to create two additional classrooms as a response to ever-increasing enrolments.

In 1960, responsibility for running the school was transferred from the Sisters of Mercy (who had been there since 1932) to another order, the Dominican Sisters. While the Sisters of Mercy had commuted daily between the school and their convent in Lilydale, the Dominican Sisters (relocating from Adelaide) were to be accommodated onsite at Ringwood, in a former residence at 10 Bedford Road.

Like A A Fritsch before them, Burrows & McKeown went on to design other Roman Catholic buildings across Melbourne, including the new church/school of St Francis de Sales in Ringwood East (1958), which was an offshoot of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. Gerald McKeown settled in the area himself, designing his own house in Linden Road, Ringwood North (1959), followed by several others in that vicinity. It is not surprising, then, that Father Scarborough should turn to the same architects in 1960, when it was proposed to replace the parish's pre-war church building with a larger modern counterpart. Drawings, dated October 1960 and referring to the building as "Our Lady's Church Hall", depict a large portal-framed structure on a rectangular plan, with stark brick walls, a low-pitched roof and a projecting narthex (ie entrance lobby) to Bedford Road. Big enough to accommodate 600, the new church was completed at a cost of £25,000 and was blessed and opened by Bishop Fox on 15 September 1961 (*Age* 15/09/1961:17). Two years later, McKeown executed what appears to be his final project for the Parish of Our Lady of Succour: the documentation of projecting sun louvres over the windows of the classroom block, for which drawings are dated June 1963 (and, incidentally, bear the title block of Gerald McKeown & Associates, as the partnership of Burrows & McKeown had ceased during the intervening few years).

The church/school complex appears to have remained largely intact into the 1960s and '70s, retaining the relocated timber chapel (latterly used as a classroom for prep students), the brick church/school hall (1929), two classroom blocks (1953 and 1957), the presbytery (1953) and convent (1960) fronting Bedford Road, and the new church (1961) on the corner. From the early 1980s, when the Dominican Sisters left and the first lay Principal was appointed, the site underwent several phases of upgrade and redevelopment, including the removal of the timber hall that had been the district's original Roman Catholic chapel. Later changes have included the substantial reconfiguration and rebuilding of the earlier classroom block (1987), renovation of toilets (1995), and provision of additional classrooms and a new administration area (2001). In 1990, the church underwent a major refurbishment by architect Jack Clarke, which included gutting the original interior and adding a new spire/entry porch to the Bedford Road, in a lively post-modernist style.

### Physical Description

The Wilana Street frontage of the school/church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help is occupied by three detached buildings: from north to south, these comprise the second and current church (1960-61), the original church/school hall (1929), and the two-storey classroom block (1957). The last of these also includes a single-storey flat-roofed wing that extends further south, connecting with what remains of the earlier classroom block (1953), which has otherwise been substantially altered and engulfed by later additions.

The original church/school hall (1929) is a single-storey red brick building on an elongated T-shaped plan, with a flat roof (evidently not original). It has a symmetrical façade to Wilana Street, with a projecting central bay containing a round-arched doorway with rendered soffit and moulded architrave with square bosses. The doorway contains a pair of panelled timber doors with matching timber infill to the arch spandrel. The central bay is flanked by tall rectangular windows with rendered lintels and sills, and timber-framed sashes. Underneath the window to the right (north) side is the inscribed foundation stone. There are similar but taller window bays along the south side of the building; the original elevation to the north, however, is now obscured by a red brick addition that appears to date from the late twentieth century. The original appearance of the building has otherwise been somewhat compromised by the apparent removal of its original tile-clad hipped roof and rendered gabled parapet above the front porch (both of which are shown in the 1929 perspective drawing)

The classroom block (1957) is a two-storey skillion-roofed modernist building of steel-framed construction. Its elevation to Wilana Street is divided by steel columns into eight regular bays, each of which contains a full-width bay of multi-paned windows to each level, separated by a solid spandrel that is enlivened by a chequerboard pattern of beige and pale orange rectangles. The end walls are of brick veneer construction, each with a full-height recessed panel to the west side that is patterned with rows of projecting bricks and contains a window bay at the upper level. While the south elevation is partially concealed by the projecting single-storey link, the north side remains fully visible. It has an off-centre doorway and, at the upper level, a prominent logo based on a shield and three Latin crosses, with the words OUR LADY'S SCHOOL.



Occupying the corner site, the church (1960-61) is a large hall-like brick building with a flat roof. Its Bedford Road façade is mostly blank, with two expanses of face brickwork flanking a central entry. The original metal-screened narthex (as shown on the 1960 drawings) was replaced in 1990 by the present configuration: a rectilinear steel-framed tower with hipped roof and inset glazed panel depicting the Virgin Mary. At ground level, the tower is integrated into a semi-circular court defined by a palisade fence of metal posts and panels, with a pair of metal gates. The Wilana Street elevation is also plain, with an off-centre recessed strip window (partially screened by an inset Latin cross) flanked by four bays of rendered wall that are enclosed by a plain brick garden wall. At the south end, there is a larger expanse of face brickwork with another Latin cross expressed in projecting brick, along with the words OUR LADY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH.

### Comparative Analysis

Although Roman Catholic presence in the study area dates back to the late nineteenth century, no physical evidence appears to survive from that period. The small timber chapel erected on Whitehorse Road in 1893 was, as noted, relocated to Wilana Street in 1931, but, after serving as a classroom for five decades, vanished in the early 1980s. In its absence, the brick church/school hall, erected in 1929 to a design by A A Fritsch, is now the oldest remaining Roman Catholic building in the City of Maroondah. Its nearest counterpart is the former Sacred Heart Monastery at 35 Wicklow Avenue, Croydon (HO134), which, dating from 1937-39, is the only other Roman Catholic building in the study area completed prior to WW2. Designed by Lionel San Miguel (like Fritsch, a prolific Roman Catholic architect), the monastery was built as a training college for the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. It comprises a large two-storey cream brick building on a U-shaped plan, with a detached chapel in the middle. While the chapel and spaces set aside for teaching (library, lecture rooms, etc) might be broadly comparable to the church/school building in Wilana Street, the scale, style and ultimate purpose of the monastery complex is quite different.

As a focus for local Roman Catholic worship and primary education, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour can be more pertinently compared with counterpart church/school complexes elsewhere in the study area. Four of these were established, all dating from the latter half of the twentieth century. The earliest was St Edmund's, Croydon, which developed on the south side of Lacey Street with school buildings (1953) and a purpose-built church (1963). The intervening period saw the opening of St Francis de Sales, Ringwood East (1958), which occupied a combined church/school building at the corner of Patterson and Bona Streets. The early 1970s brought the establishment of the Holy Spirit Parish in Ringwood North, which developed a school and church on Oban Road. In the 1990s, the earlier church/school complexes in Croydon and Ringwood East both ceased operating and their congregations were consolidated at the monastery site (defunct since 1985), where the existing chapel was enlarged to create a parish church, and a new primary school constructed. The former school building in Bona Street was retained, albeit altered and adapted as office space, while the old St Edmund's site in Lacey Street was entirely cleared and then redeveloped for housing.

With the demolition of original parish school buildings at Croydon (1953), the two-storey classroom block in Wilana Street (1957) is now the oldest surviving purpose-built Roman Catholic school building in the City of Maroondah; it not only predates the similar building erected in Ringwood East a year later (which, while extant, has been much altered) but also the first phases of Aquinas College in Great Ryrie Street, Ringwood (1960-61). In much the same way, the loss of St Edmund's Church in Croydon (1963), means that the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour in Ringwood (1960-61) is not only the oldest purpose-built Roman Catholic church in the City of Maroondah, but also the only survivor of two that date from the 1960s.

Given its rarity as the one of only two pre-WW2 examples of Roman Catholic architecture in the City of Maroondah, it is no surprise that the original school/church hall in Wilana Street is the only recorded local example of the work of prolific ecclesiastical architect A A Fritsch. By contrast, the two-storey classroom block (1957) and new church (1960-61) were the work of an architectural firm, Burrows & McKeown, known to have designed several other buildings in the region. These include Gerald McKeown's own house at Linden Avenue, Ringwood North (1959), and two other houses that he designed in that area, at Panorama Avenue (1960) and Adolphson Street (1961). While all three, with their flat roofs and modernist expression, have elements in common with the buildings along Wilana Street, by far the most obvious and pertinent comparator would be the former St Frances de Sale classroom block at 4 Bona Street (1958). Designed by Burrows & McKeown one year after its counterpart on Wilana Street, it was very similar expressed with low-pitched roof and modular façade of full-width windows alternating with solid spandrels. However, the building is now considerably less intact, having been converted to offices in the 1990s.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is significant?*

The buildings at 8-16 Bedford Road, Ringwood, comprise three discrete structures associated with Our Lady of Perpetual Help: the original church/school hall (A A Fritsch, 1929), the two-storey classroom block (Burrowes & McKeown, 1957) and the new church (Burrowes & McKeown, 1960-61). The oldest building, is a simple red brick structure on an elongated plan with (non-original) flat roof and projecting central entry bay with arched doorway. The classroom block is a skillion-roofed steel-framed modernist building with repetitive façade of modular bays infilled with full-width windows and chequerboard-patterned spandrels. The new church is a portal-framed flat-roofed modernist building of hall-like form with stark walls of face and rendered brickwork, and a later post-modernist spire to Bedford Road (Jack Clarke, 1990).

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of these three buildings along Wilana Road. Specific elements of significance include the following:

- 1929 church: red face brickwork, front entrance (round arch with rendered architrave, drip mould, panelled spandrel and matching doors with metal hardware) and original fenestration to east and south elevations (masonry lintels and sills, with timber-framed sashes);
- 1957 classroom block: modular street façade (fin-like piers, multi-paned windows and chequerboard spandrels); cream brickwork with projecting headers and Latin cross/shield motif (north elevation);
- 1961 church: stark block-like form, face brickwork, concrete spandrels with recessed bays, Latin cross motifs (east elevation), strip windows (west elevation) and 1990 metal-framed spire (north elevation)

All other non-original additions to these buildings, as well as the other school buildings west of the Wilana Road frontage, are not considered to be significant.

### *How is it significant?*

The buildings along the Wilana Street frontage of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Ringwood, satisfy the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history;
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics
- Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.

### *Why is it significant?*

The buildings are significant for the following reasons:

The buildings are historically significant, not only as the oldest Roman Catholic church/school complex in the City of Maroondah, but also as the only one established prior to WW2, and the only intact (and still operating) of three established before 1960. An important focus for the local Roman Catholic community for over ninety years, the buildings on Wilana Street provide evidence of the parish's humble pre-WW2 origins and more ambitious post-WW2 expansion. They are not only significant collectively, but also individually: although altered, the original church/school building (1929) is a unique pre-WW2 specimen its type, while the classroom block (1957) and church (1960-61) as the oldest surviving examples of their respective types amongst other Roman Catholic infrastructure in the City of Maroondah. (*Criterion A, Criterion B*)

The buildings are aesthetically significant as a distinctive non-residential streetscape made up of elements that, while linked by a common origin as ecclesiastical/education buildings for the Roman Catholic Parish, otherwise demonstrate variety of forms, styles and finishes, all evocative of their respective eras. Although altered, the original church/school hall (1929) is typical of the conservative approach to such buildings at that time, with its plain red brickwork and simple symmetrical facade punctuated by an unexpectedly grand round-arched doorway. The classroom block (1957) is an fine and substantially intact example of post-WW2 modernism, with rectilinear massing and a repetitive façade that deftly merges the fads for structural expression and modular infill with decorative touches, such as patterned brickwork and especially the eye-catching chequerboard spandrels, hinting at the emerging trend for a more playful "Featurist" approach. The stark hall-like church (1960-61) illustrates a return to more reductive modernist style, with even bolder rectilinear massing, stark walls of face brick and render, and minimal windows, enlivened by the new spire that was added in 1990 in a fashionable and eye-catching post-modernist style. (*Criterion E*)

The classroom block (1957) and church (1960-61) are architecturally significant as examples of the work of the firm of Burrows & McKeown, which, while relatively short lived, fostered a reputation as designers of Roman Catholic churches and schools in the late 1950s and early 1960s. As the partnership was founded in 1957, the same year that it was engaged by Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the work undertaken there stands out as one of its earliest known commissions. The firm's subsequent and ongoing association with the site, which continued until the early 1960s, demonstrates both historical and architectural cohesion, enhanced by the knowledge that co-founder Gerald McKeown settled in the area in 1959, designing his own house in Ringwood North, as well as other houses and one other denominational school. (*Criterion H*)

## References

Public Building File 7,210. Unit 855, VPRS 7882/P1, Public Record Office Victoria.

"Roman Catholic School at Ringwood", *Herald*, 27 November 1929, p 17.

"Church-School opened at Ringwood", *Advocate*, 28 November 1929, p 18.

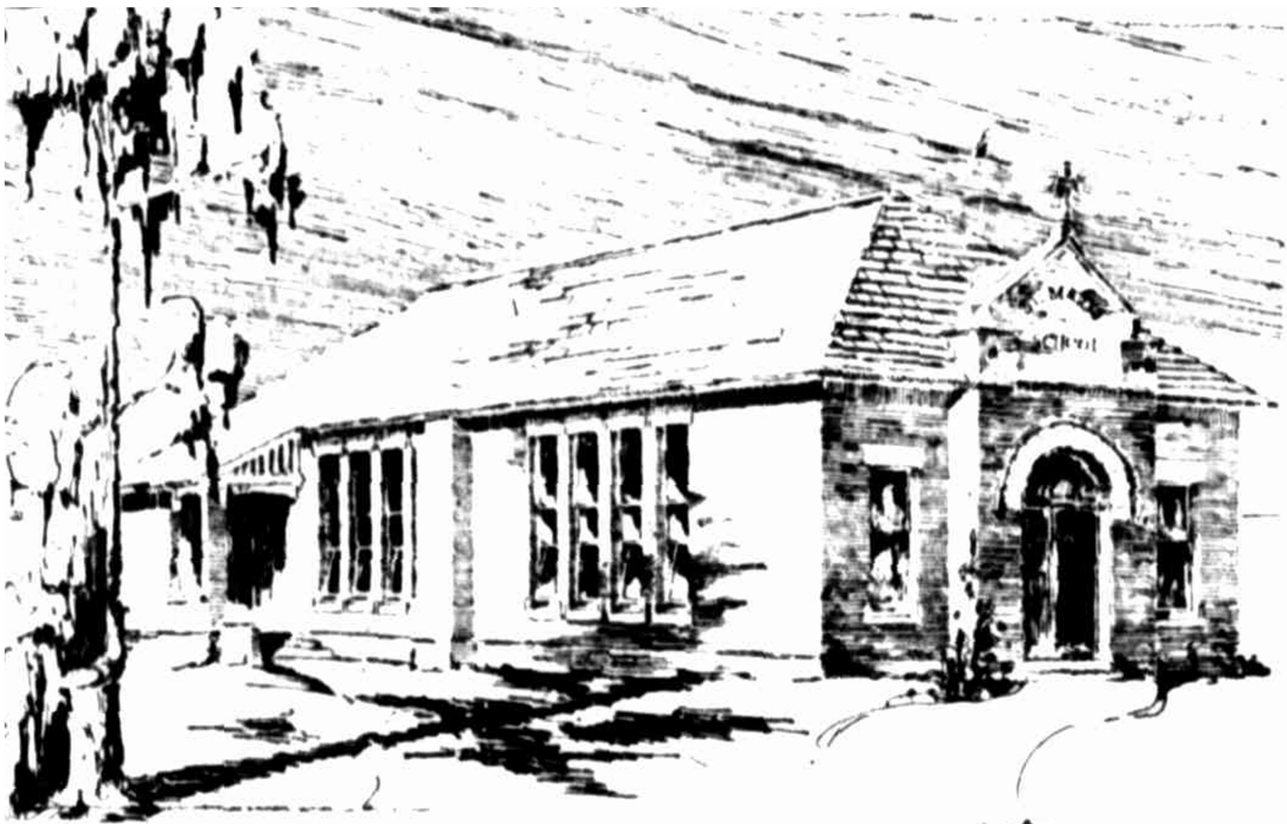
Hugh Anderson. *Ringwood: Place of Many Eagles* (1988), pp 94-96.

Built Heritage Pty Ltd, "Burrows & McKeown", *Dictionary of Unsung Architects*, [www.builtheritage.com.au](http://www.builtheritage.com.au).

Brian du Bois, "School history", *Our Lady's Ringwood*, [www.olringwood.catholic.edu.au/history](http://www.olringwood.catholic.edu.au/history)

## Originally identified by

Richard Peterson with Peter Barrett, *Maroondah Heritage Study: Stage Two* (2003), Volume 2.  
[addressed as 14 Bedford Road, Ringwood]



Architect's perspective drawing of the original church/school hall;  
note tile-clad roof and gabled porch parapet, both since removed.  
Source: *Herald*, 29 November 1929





*Bedford Road frontage, 1970; note original entry porch, prior to alterations in 1990  
Source; Ringwood & District Historical Society (via [www.victoriancollections.net.au](http://www.victoriancollections.net.au))*



*Wilana Street frontage, 1973; note church/school hall with hipped roof already removed, and relocated timber chapel at extreme right side.  
Source: Ringwood & District Historical Society (via [www.victoriancollections.net.au](http://www.victoriancollections.net.au))*



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HOUSE	<b>Citation No</b>	HO150
<b>Other name/s</b>	Hume-Cook Residence (former); <i>Keera</i>	<b>Melway ref</b>	51 B1
<b>Address</b>	3-5 Braemar Street CROYDON	<b>Date/s</b>	1947-49
<b>Designer/s</b>	Roy S McCulloch	<b>Builder/s</b>	Unknown



*Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, April 2018*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential buildings (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Good
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Good (sympathetic additions)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Place History

The house at 3-5 Braemar Street, Croydon, was erected in 1949 for Keith and Cora Hume-Cook, and was designed by Brisbane-born architect Roy S McCulloch, formerly of Sydney.

Born in 1903, Keith Hume-Cook was one of two sons of James Hume-Cook (1866-1942), a New Zealander who migrated to Australia in 1881 and, after working as an estate agent, went on to a career in politics. Retiring from politics in 1913, Hume-Cook lived with his wife and children in Brighton. His son Keith, who began working for Commonwealth Oil Refineries Ltd in the 1920s, remained living in the family home after he married Miss Cora Helen Blackmore in 1929. During the Second World War, Hume-Cook served with the RAAF, attached to the AHQ in Egypt, until his discharge in October 1945. Returning to civilian life, he took up the position of public relations officer to the Victorian Division of the Liberal party.



Intending to build a house of their own, Keith and Cora acquire the title to vacant land on the north side of Braemar Street in Croydon. To design the house, they engaged architect Roy McCulloch (1906-fl.1972). Born in Brisbane, Roy Stuart McCulloch had settled in Sydney by the early 1920s, when he was studying at Tempe Technical College. Registered as an architect in NSW in August 1933, he subsequently entered into partnership with Frank Broomfield. Styled as Bloomfield & McCulloch, the practice undertook a string of mostly residential projects, some of which were published in newspapers and magazines. The partnership ended with the onset of WW2, when McCulloch enlisted with the RAAF and served with the 206 GRP until his discharge in September 1945. He and his wife Minna (whom he married in Sydney in 1934) then settled in Melbourne, where he obtained work in the notable city office then known as Marcus Martin & Tribe.

Keith Hume-Cook and Roy McCulloch, who both lived in Hawthorn, had become acquainted by January 1946, when the former's signature appeared as a referee on McCulloch's application to become registered as an architect in Victoria. Over a year later, in June 1947, Hume-Cook acquired the title to the land in Braemar Street. Realisation of the project, however, was not without problems. Firstly, McCulloch's Melbourne career came to a premature end after his marriage failed in 1947, whereupon he returned to Sydney. The Hume-Cooks, keen to complete the house to McCulloch's design, engaged an (unidentified) Melbourne architect to supervise construction. However, the local building inspector refused to approve the design on the grounds that the flat roof (at the time, a feature rarely seen in domestic architecture in Melbourne) might leak. The Hume-Cooks appealed to the Shire of Lilydale to no avail, and it was only after initiating legal action, reportedly "backed by some expert outside opinion", that the project proceeded. Due to these delays, the house was not finished until 1949. Soon afterward, the story caught the attention of Robin Boyd, who reported the saga in his newspaper column under the provocative heading "The house that was banned".

Back in Sydney by 1948, Roy McCulloch worked in the office of leading architect John R Brogan; in the mid-1950s, he returned to his native Brisbane with his second wife, Doris, and took a position with the Commonwealth Department of Works. For their own part, Keith and Cora Hume-Cook remained living in their controversial Croydon house (which they named *Keera*, as a merging of their respective first names) for only a brief period. In April 1952, the property's title was transferred to Keith's widowed mother, Nellie Hume-Cook, who was then residing in St Kilda. By 1954, Keith and Cora had relocated to Mount Cotton in Queensland, where Keith turned his hand to farming. He was still living in Buderim at the time of his death in 1984. Meanwhile, his former residence in Croydon was acquired in 1966 by chemist Athol Crane, who was to remain living there until his own death in 1991.

### Physical Description

Occupying a wide but relatively narrow allotment, the house at 3-5 Braemar Street, Croydon, is a single storey skillion-roofed weatherboard house on a long rectilinear plan. Its elongated street frontage is asymmetrical, with an off-centre front entrance and a projecting bay to the left (west) end with a separate entrance to one side with french doors opening onto small skillion-roofed porch. Fenestration is irregular and comprises a triple bay of wide double-hung timber sashes, a narrower horizontal strip window with timber spandrels between three awning sashes, and, on the projecting wing, another tripartite row of small windows with ribbed glazing. The low-pitched roof, clad in metal tray deck, has narrow eaves and is penetrated by a stone chimney. To the rear of the house, in alignment with the projecting front wing, is a partial second storey addition of relatively recent origin; although visible from the street, the addition is considered to be discreet and sympathetic in design.

### Comparative Analysis

By its very nature as an early flat-roofed house, this notably early flat-roofed house is difficult to place in a local context. When recounting the story of the house in his 1949 newspaper article, Robin Boyd remarked in passing that, although flat-roofed houses had reportedly been banned in the Shire of Lilydale, "there are several buildings in Croydon with low single-pitch roofs, built since the war". While his discussion then focuses on the case study of the Hume-Cook House, he later commented that "the few other monopitch roofs in Croydon were all won by their owners in the same way". Unfortunately, Boyd does not provide any further identifying details, such as street names or client names, which might allow these contemporaneous examples to be conclusively located. It can be safely assumed that one of houses Boyd was referring to was the skillion-roofed house in Hull Road that architect Kevin Pethebridge (a friend of Boyd's, with whom he was briefly in partnership between 1945 and 1947) designed for himself in 1947-48.

Ultimately, the Hume-Cook Residence must be considered in the broader context of Australian houses of the 1940s that, with their unusual forms and “controversial” skillion roofs, represented the first tentative stirrings of post-war modernism applied to domestic architecture. In 1952, only a few years after writing about the Hume-Cook House in his weekly newspaper column, Robin Boyd discussed this broader theme in his book, *Australia’s Home*. Referring to the phenomenon of architects whose progressive house designs caused problems with municipal councils, Boyd fleetingly mentioned several case studies. He not only cited the two aforementioned examples at Croydon, by Roy McCulloch and Kevin Pethebridge (both dated 1948), but two others elsewhere in Melbourne: architect Leslie Mitchell’s own home in Riversdale Road, Camberwell (1940) and a house in Barwon Heads that Roy Grounds designed for Lady Rutherford (1947). Boyd also mentioned three additional examples in New South Wales: two houses by Sidney Ancher at Kuring-gai and Warringah (both 1948) and one by Harry Seidler, also in Warringah (1949).

## Statement of Significance

### *What is significant?*

The house at 3-5 Braemar Street, Croydon, is a single-storey skillion-roofed timber house on an elongated rectangular plan. Erected for Keith and Cora Hume-Cook, it was designed in 1947 by Sydney architect Roy McCulloch but not completed until 1949 due to McCulloch’s premature return to Sydney and problems in securing building approval from the Shire of Lilydale, which was troubled by the innovative skillion roof.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house, excluding recent rear addition. Specific elements of significance include the elongated expression of the street façade, low gabled roofline and stone chimney, broad weatherboards, regular fenestration with timber-framed sashes, and cursive metal sign.

### *How is it significant?*

The former Hume-Cook Residence satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

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

### *Why is it significant?*

The former Hume-Cook Residence is significant for the following reasons:

The building is significant as one of the first skillion-roofed houses to be erected in Melbourne after the end of the Second World War. Although many flat-roofed houses had been built in Melbourne in the 1930s and ’20s (and even earlier), the re-introduction of the skillion roof in post-war residential architecture was seen as a controversial issue, with a number of local councils (including the Shire of Lilydale) refusing to allow such houses to be built. The Hume Cook-House was one of a number of such houses that could only be constructed after prolonged pressure (and threatened litigation) from the client. Breaking new ground in post-war modernist residential architecture, and paving the way for innumerable skillion-roofed houses of the 1950s, this pioneering example demonstrates a high degree of creative achievement (*Criterion F*).

## References

Certificate of Title, Volume 7218, Folio 550, created 6 June 1947.

Robin Boyd, “Freedom to build the unusual”, *Age*, 29 March 1950, p 4.

Robin Boyd, *Australia’s Home*. (Parkville: Melbourne University Press, 1952), p 190.

ARBV membership file on Roy Stuart McCulloch. Unit 9, VPRS 8838/P2, PROV.

## Originally identified by

Built Heritage Pty Ltd.





<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HEATHMONT UNITING CHURCH	<b>Citation No</b>	HO166
<b>Other name/s</b>	Heathmont Methodist Church (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	50 B12
<b>Address</b>	89 Canterbury Road HEATHMONT	<b>Date/s</b>	First church/hall: 1951-52, 1956 Second church/hall: 1966-67, 1979
<b>Designer/s</b>	Frank Secomb (all buildings) Roy Colomb (1966-67)	<b>Builder/s</b>	N L Pincote (1951-52) S H McCorkell Pty Ltd (1966-67)



*Photographs by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, June 2020 (showing 1966-67 church and 1979 hall, with earlier 1951-52 church inset)*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Religion	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Church	<b>Intactness</b>	Good (sympathetic changes)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External paint controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior alteration controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls		

### Place History

The church complex at 89 Canterbury Road, Heathmont, was developed by the local Methodist (later Uniting) congregation, commencing with a small timber hall (1951-52) that was extended (1956) and then superseded by a new and larger church (1966-67), later expanded with a youth hall (1979).

Methodist presence in the study area dates back to the 1870s, when two Ringwood men opened a Sunday School in a converted house on Whitehorse Road. The first church, a modest timber edifice near Ringwood Lake, opened in 1887. After the unification of Methodist denominations in 1902, a larger church building was obtained from Blackburn and re-erected near Ringwood station in 1906. This, in turn, was superseded by a new brick building on another site at the corner of Station Street and Greenwood Avenue, which opened in 1916. The old timber building was also moved there to serve as a Sunday School.

A Methodist congregation at Heathmont emerged in the early post-WW2 era as an offshoot of the existing one in Station Street, Ringwood. In April 1949, the title to vacant land on the north side of Canterbury Road was transferred in the names of three men who were trustees of the mother church, including longtime Borough councillor (and two-term Mayor of Ringwood) Edward Purser. The Heathmont site, purchased for £360, comprised Lots 37 and 38 of a 157-lot residential subdivision created in 1928 from the former orchard property of local pioneer Hermann Pump. Two years passed before the fledgling congregation formed its own board of trustees, and plans were drawn up for a modest building to be erected on Lot 37. A surviving sheet of blueprints (undated, but with a stamp confirming approval by the Borough of Ringwood Building Surveyor on 18 July 1951) depicts a gable-roofed timber hall with projecting front porch, evocative of the humble pioneer churches of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The builder of record was Norman Leslie Pincote, of Arlington Street, Ringwood. While no architect is named in the documentation, it has been confirmed that the church was designed by Frank Secomb, a local architect and a parishioner.

Born in 1918, Francis Newton Secomb studied architecture at the Melbourne Technical College and the University of Melbourne and became an associate of the RIAA in 1942. He and his wife settled in Heathmont in the late 1940s, and resided there for over forty years. At the time that he was registered as an architect in 1950, he was employed with the office of Stephenson & Turner. In 1955, he transferred to the office of A S & R A Eggleston, which had then recently relocated from the city to Grattan Street, Carlton. Dating back to the pre-war practice of Alec Eggleston (1883-1955), the firm was reconfigured and re-branded after WW2 under Alec's son Robert Eggleston (1911-2000). Secomb and another young colleague, Roderick Macdonald (1922-2014), were admitted as partners in the new firm known thence as Eggleston, Macdonald & Secomb. Rising to become one of Melbourne's most respected practices, it was best known for large-scale institutional projects including major buildings at all three university campuses, as well as factories, hospitals and office buildings. Secomb would remain with the firm until his retirement in 1983.

Correspondence between the Department of Health and the Borough of Ringwood, dated 6 December 1951, records that the building was then "in course of erection". A subsequent file note, prepared after a site visit on 11 January 1952, confirms that the hall was nearing completion, while toilet facilities at the rear were "in course of erection". Work was finished a week later, when Leonard Hartshorn, chairman of the Heathmont Methodist Church Trust, sought approval for the new building to be opened for public use. Completed at a reported cost of £3,500, the hall was opened on 3 February 1952, dedicated by the Reverend Dr A H Wood, President-elect of the Methodist Conference and principal of the Methodist Ladies College. It was reported that 300 people were in attendance "and many more could not gain admittance" (Age 04/02/1952:2). At first, the new hall was leased by the Education Department for use as a primary school during the week. This hybrid function, however, was discontinued in early 1953, when the school relocated to a group of prefabricated classrooms at the corner of Francis Street and Balfour Avenue.

Heathmont's Methodist congregation grew rapidly and, within only a few years it was evident that further space was required. A scheme to enlarge the existing hall was prepared by Frank Secomb in his capacity as the church's Honorary Architect. His drawings for the rear additions, dated September 1956, proposed to create a gable-roofed Sunday School hall by consolidating two skillion-roofed timber buildings previously used by the Ringwood Methodist Church (reportedly, forming part of its original timber church of 1906, latterly relocated to Greenwood Avenue for use as a Sunday School), and adding a new kitchen as a link. Four years later, Secomb prepared plans for a small detached toilet block, which consolidated the somewhat rudimentary facilities that had been erected in 1951-52.

By the late 1950s, plans were afoot for the original Heathmont Methodist Church building to be superseded by a new and larger counterpart. Secomb's drawings for the toilet block, dated November 1960, show that a broader masterplan had already been developed by that time, extending along Canterbury Road. The site plan indicates the outline of "new buildings" on Lot 39, comprising a church with a hexagonal nave ("Stage One") and a rectilinear rear wing ("Stage Two"). Lot 40 was set aside as a "recreation area and future car park", and Lot 41 for a parsonage (ie, minister's residence). Construction of the parsonage was underway in early 1963, and ownership of the site was transferred to the church trustees in September; the Certificate of Title names no fewer than fourteen individuals as joint proprietors, including Secomb. Almost a year later, in August 1964, the same group of congregants acquired the titles to Lots 39 and 40. The project for a new church could now proceed in earnest. While Secomb had already formalised the site masterplan and design concept for the new church as early as 1960, he did not consider it appropriate for him, as a member of the church's Building Committee, to prepare the documentation in a professional capacity. Instead, this task was entrusted to another architect, Croydon-based Roy Colomb, working alongside Secomb.

Born in England in 1927, Spencer Roy Colomb married in 1949 and migrated to Australia four years later with his wife and infant daughter. Arriving in Fremantle in November 1953, the family lived in Perth for some time but had moved to Melbourne by 1956, when Colomb became registered as an architect in Victoria. At the time, he worked in the office of Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell, transferring thence to Bates, Smart & McCutcheon, by 1958. By the early 1960s, he had joined two other architects to form the partnership of Colomb, Scanlon & Jorgenson, which seems to have operated from the home of R C “John” Scanlon, in Viviani Crescent, Heathmont. The firm was responsible for the design the new Christ Church Anglican church on Canterbury Road (1963), although Colomb soon left to open his own practice as Roy Colomb & Associates, based in Railway Parade, Croydon. This continued until the late 1970s, when Colomb took a position as Director of Architecture with the Keith Wilson Group Pty Ltd, a project management firm specialising in design and construction of hospitals, factories and commercial projects.

Colomb’s working drawings for the new Heathmont Methodist Church, dated October 1966, depict a building on a footprint that corresponded to Secomb’s site plan from six years earlier: a church with a hexagonal plan (containing a centrally-planned nave and projecting wedge-shaped vestry) and a rectilinear rear wing (containing a capacious foyer, fellowship room and kitchen). Of concrete block construction, the church was starkly expressed with few windows to the street, and a distinctive roofline with low pyramidal hip surmounted by a lantern and tapering steel-framed spire. Construction, undertaken by the well-known building firm of S H McCorkell Pty Ltd, appears to have proceeded swiftly, and the new church was officially opened less than twelve months later, in August 1967.

In 1975, the church was rebadged as the Heathmont United Church, reflecting a partial amalgamation when a number of local Presbyterians (based, since 1958, in a church building on Waterloo Avenue) transferred to the Methodist congregation. This anticipated the more significant amalgamation that took place two years later, when the entire Methodist Church of Australasia merged with most of the member churches of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and the Congregational Union of Australia, forming a new entity known as the Uniting Church in Australia. Thereafter, the church on Canterbury Road was known as Heathmont Uniting Church, with the new denomination’s distinctive logo affixed to the exterior.

This period also saw the last major addition to the church reserve: a large hall that infilled the vacant area between the rear wings of the old and new churches. Plans for the hall, dated April 1979, bear the title block of Eggleston, Macdonald & Secomb. A flat-roofed building with glazed façade opening onto a covered way, it provided a large hall space with toilets and storage at a half-basement level. Referred to as the “youth hall”, the building was deemed of sufficient architectural interest for it to be included in a list of projects in a slender monograph (c1982) devoted to the work of Eggleston, Macdonald & Secomb.

In 1982, ownership of the five allotments occupied by the former Methodist Church, encapsulating the original timber church hall, the rear Sunday School hall, the new church, the youth hall, carpark and parsonage, became collectively vested in the Uniting Church in Australia.

### Physical Description

Occupying five allotments at 81-89 Canterbury Road, the Heathmont Uniting Church site comprises a group of discrete buildings spanning a period of thirty years: the original church hall (1951-52) with a rear addition for the Sunday School (1956), the parsonage (1963), the new church (1966-67) and adjacent youth hall (1979). The churches and halls are arranged in a U-shaped configuration to the west side of the site, while the parsonage is at the east edge, separated by a carparking area that extends all the way back to Stoda Street.

The original church hall, located on Lot 37 (89 Canterbury Road), is a simple gable-roofed timber-framed building with a projecting central front porch. Its relatively steep roof is clad with red Marseilles pattern terracotta tiles and has narrow eaves with guttering that returns at the corners. Walls are clad with six-inch Baltic pine weatherboards (painted white) and there are large rectangular windows along the side walls, and to the front porch. The original doorways, to each side of the porch, have been infilled; a new entrance has been inserted into the front wall, to the right side of the porch. The Sunday School hall, added to the rear in 1956, is also of weatherboard construction, but with a broader gabled roof with wide timber-lined eaves, and large multi-paned window bays.

The parsonage, on Lot 41 (81 Canterbury Road), is a hip-roofed brick dwelling with a double-storey rear section and a single-storey front section. It appears to be a representative example of residential architecture of the period, rather than an especially unusual or outstanding one.



The main church, located on Lot 39 (85 Canterbury Road), is a large building of beige-coloured concrete brickwork, variously with a smooth or textured finish. It comprises several discretely articulated volumes: a nave on a centralized hexagonal plan, with a projecting wedge-shaped vestry to one side, and a rectilinear rear wing. The nave has projecting fin-like piers at the corners, with vertical strip windows to the side wall, alternating with solid wall. The Canterbury Road elevation is windowless save for a wide canted bay with fixed sashes of textured and amber-tinted glazing. The nave has a low pyramidal roof, clad in metal tray decking, with a lantern at the apex and a tapering steel-framed steeple with Latin cross and vertical strap screens. The flat-roofed vestry wing also has fin-like piers at each edge of the facade, and a row of more slender fins that define vertical window bays and narrow spandrels. The rear wing adopts the same palette of materials but is simpler in form and detailing, with a flat roof, broad eaves, more conventional window bays, and a projecting canopy to the entrance on the north side.

The youth hall (aka “Centre Hall”), located on Lot 38 (87 Canterbury Road), is a flat-roofed building on a rectangular plan, built of texture concrete block that matches the earlier church. Facing the carpark, it has a series of window wall, with full-height bays and glazed doors that open onto a full-width covered walkway with timber posts and simple balustrade, providing access between the hall, the new church and the old church (now parish office).

## **Comparative Analysis**

### Early churches in Heathmont

The original timber building on the site is demonstrably Heathmont’s oldest purpose-built place of worship. At the time of its opening in 1952, it accommodated the suburb’s only formalised congregation. Although local counterparts were soon established by the Anglicans (1953), Baptists (1954) and Presbyterians (1958), all three initially held their services in existing premises, such as private houses or the public hall in Viviani Crescent. Their original purpose-built places of worship duly appeared in the second half of the decade: Christ Church Anglican Church at 265 Canterbury Road (1955), Heathmont Baptist Church at 62-64 Balfour Avenue (1958) and Heathmont Presbyterian Church at 6 Waterloo Street (1959). Like the first Methodist church, these were simple hall-like timber structures of little architectural pretension. Following a familiar pattern, the original churches built by the Anglicans and Baptists were superseded by larger counterparts, respectively completed in 1965 and 1969. The original Baptist church, in Balfour Avenue, was razed in 2006, and the Anglican complex on Canterbury Road (comprising the original hall and its larger replacement) was demolished in 2021. Thus, the timber building at the Uniting Church site is not only the oldest purpose-built church in Heathmont, but one of only two surviving local churches dating from the 1950s, a decade that witnessed the suburb’s most significant phase of expansion.

At an immediate local level, the second Heathmont Methodist Church (1966-67) has three contemporaneous comparators: the second Christ Church on Canterbury Road (Colomb, Scanlon & Jorgenson, 1963), the Heathmont Gospel Hall at 14 Armstrong Road (Trevor Kneebone, 1967) and the second Heathmont Baptist Church at 78 Cuthbert Street (Graham Law, 1969). All three were simple hall-like structures of brick or block construction, with low rooflines and little architectural pretension. The Gospel Hall (now Christadelphian Hall), starkly expressed with a plain façade and fin-like piers along the side wall, is perhaps somewhat evocative of the Heathmont Methodist Church, but on a less monumental scale. Christ Church is enlivened by a central recessed window bay with an inset Latin cross flanked by stained glass panels. Although of some aesthetic interest in its own right, the building was slated for demolition in 2020. The original Baptist Church in Cuthbert Street has been largely engulfed by later additions and remains difficult to interpret.

### Other 1960s churches in the City of Maroondah

When compared with other post-WW2 churches across the City of Maroondah, the second Heathmont Methodist Church (1966-67) represents a significant departure in terms of its planning and architectural form. Virtually all other local churches of the 1960s adhere to the traditional notion of a church with a rectilinear hall-like nave, invariably entered from one end. This is evident in such examples as the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour in Bedford Road, Ringwood (Burrowes & McKeown, 1961), the Ringwood Methodist (now Uniting) Church, at 30-32 Station Street, Ringwood (F C Armstrong, 1962-63), the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 55-57 Wantirna Road, Ringwood (Hank Romyn, 1965), the Croydon Presbyterian (now Uniting) Church at 6 Tallent Street, Croydon (Keith & John Reid, 1966), and the former Croydon Central Uniting Church at 185 Dandenong Road, Croydon (Alexander Harris, 1968).

During the first half of the 1960s, the only local church to challenge this long-established prototype was the Holy Trinity Anglican Church at 49 Patterson Street, Ringwood East (Van Trompf, 1964) [HO118]. Here, the nave was conceived on an elongated but irregular plan that can only be described as an asymmetrical barrel shape, with bulging convex walls to two sides. Departing further from traditional models, the chancel was located along one of the side walls, rather than an end wall, so that the congregation sat in pews that were parallel to the longer axis of the building, rather than perpendicular to it.

The second Heathmont Methodist Church appears to have been the first post-WW2 church in the City of Maroondah to adopt a centralized plan for the nave, rather than the traditional linear model. This new approach would not becoming more widespread in the study area until the 1970s, as demonstrated by St Paul's Anglican Church at 40 Warrandyte Road, Ringwood (Gerd & Renate Block, 1970) [HO71], the Christian Revival Crusade Church at 222 Oban Road, Ringwood North (K Murray Forster & Walsh, 1972; demolished 2011) and the Ringwood Seventh Day Adventist Church at 28 Mullum Mullum Road, Ringwood North (Fairburn, Haesler & Morris, 1975). All three of these churches were conceived with a centrally-planned square nave and pyramidal roof, top-lit but a tapering lantern at the apex. None of these later examples, however, is as architecturally sophisticated as the one in Heathmont, with its unique hexagonal plan form, its unusually stark and monumental expression, and its eye-catching central metal-framed spire.

### The work of Frank Secomb and Roy Colomb

Aside from his own house at 122 Heathmont Road (c1949), occupied by him and extended over several decades, Frank Secomb is represented in Heathmont by the former community hall (now kindergarten) at 41 Viviani Crescent (190-51). Exactly contemporaneous with the Methodist church hall, and also designed in an honorary capacity, it is similarly expressed as a simple gable-roofed weatherboard structure. Secomb otherwise appears to have undertaken little work in the study area in his professional capacity as a partner with Eggleston, Macdonald & Secomb. A slender monograph on the firm, published in the early 1980s, identifies only two projects in what is now the City of Maroondah. Both of these were additions to local Methodist churches: the aforementioned youth hall at Heathmont (1979) and unspecified/undated extensions to the East Ringwood Uniting Church. The latter complex, still extant at 28 Freeman Street (but no longer used as a place of worship), comprises a weatherboard church building and a large gable-roofed concrete brick hall to the rear that appears to date from the 1960s.

Research to date has identified only two other buildings in the City of Maroondah confirmed as the work of architect Roy Colomb. The earlier of these is the Christ Church Anglican Church at 265 Canterbury Road, Heathmont (1963), designed under the auspices of the short-lived firm of Colomb, Scanlon & Jorgenson, and latterly earmarked for demolition. Nearly two decades later, Colomb designed the Maroondah Masonic Centre at 48 Warrandyte Road, Ringwood (1981), evidently in an honorary capacity as a lodge member.

### **Statement of Significance**

#### *What is significant?*

The Heathmont Uniting Church site at 89 Canterbury Road, Heathmont, was developed by the local Methodist (now Uniting) congregation and contains a series of buildings dating from the early 1950s to the late 1970s. These comprise the original timber church hall (1951-52) with a later rear addition for the Sunday School (1956), a detached parsonage (1963), the new church (1966-67) and adjacent youth hall (1979). The earlier buildings, from the 1950s, are simple timber-framed structures, while those from the later 1960s and '70s are more prepossessing buildings of concrete block construction. All were conceived with input from parishioner and local resident Frank Secomb (of Eggleston, Macdonald & Secomb fame) in his capacity as Honorary Architect. Although the new church was documented by architect Roy Colomb, its siting and architectural form correspond with earlier concept design and masterplanning by Secomb.

Significant fabric is defined as the U-shaped cluster of buildings to the east of the site: the weatherboard hall and Sunday School, the concrete block church and the youth hall. Specific elements of significance include:

- The 1952 hall: gabled roofline, weatherboard cladding and projecting front porch;
- The 1967 church: textured blockwork, fin-like piers, slit windows, pyramidal roofline and metal spire;
- The 1979 youth hall: the stark rectilinear expression and full-height window bays.

The parsonage, visually and physically separated from the other building by a large carparking area, is not considered to be significant.

### *How is it significant?*

The Heathmont Uniting Church satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics
- Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period
- Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.

### *Why is it significant?*

The Heathmont Uniting Church complex is significant for the following reasons:

The complex is historically significant as the oldest permanent church site in Heathmont. Developed on land purchased in 1949 by the trustees of the Ringwood Methodist Church in Station Street, it is associated with an offshoot church that became the first congregation to emerge in the burgeoning post-WW2 suburb. Its original timber church hall, erected on the Canterbury Road site in 1950-51, was the first purpose-built place of worship in Heathmont, not only predating the establishment of other local church buildings, but also of other congregations. The first of four churches to be erected in Heathmont during the suburb's significant phase of expansion in the 1950s, it is now one of only two that survive. Later additions to the site, namely the Sunday School Hall (1956), new church (1966-67) and youth hall (1979), provide evidence of subsequent phases of growth and expansion in the later twentieth century. (*Criterion A*)

The main church (1966-67) is architecturally and aesthetically significant for its distinctive form and landmark qualities. Its hexagonal plan form is not only unique in the City of Maroondah, but represents the earliest local example of a church with a centralised nave and pyramidal roof (which would become more widespread from the early 1970s) rather than the more traditional rectilinear nave. The church is notable for its monumental scale, its stark expression with plain masonry walls, projecting fin-like piers and minimal windows, and its eye-catching tapering steel spire. The innate landmark qualities of the church, consequent to its form, scale and detailing, are enhanced by its elevated siting on a prominent major thoroughfare. The adjacent youth hall (1979), with its rectilinear form, window wall and covered walkway, represents an interesting synthesis that reflects the materiality and finishes of the main church, expressed in a more conventionally modernist idiom. (*Criterion E, Criterion F*)

The complex is significant with an enduring association with parishioner and local resident Frank Secomb. Best known as a partner in the important post-WW2 architectural firm of Eggleston, Macdonald & Secomb, he lived in Heathmont for over forty years and served as Honorary Architect to the local Methodist congregation for much of that time (from the early 1950s until at least the late 1970s), which encapsulated minor works as well as master-planning of the entire site, concept design of the new church (otherwise documented by Roy Colomb), and the design of the original timber church hall, the rear Sunday School hall and the new youth hall. (*Criterion H*).

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Certificates of Title, Vol 5532, Folio 322 (created 13 April 1929); Vol 7249, Folio 778 (created 11 April 1949).

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"Heathmont Church", Age, 4 February 1952, p 2.

Alf Clark, *Recollections of Ringwood Methodism* (1977).

*Eggleston, Macdonald & Secomb*. No place or date [circa 1982].

Ringwood Historical Society, Inc. *Heathmont Sketchbook*, unpaginated.

Interview with Frank Secomb, 2 September 2020.

### **Originally identified by**

Built Heritage Pty Ltd.



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	State Savings Bank of Victoria, Heathmont Branch (former)	<b>Citation No</b>	HO151
<b>Other name/s</b>	Milk & Wine Co Café; Barclays Café (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	50 A12
<b>Address</b>	196 Canterbury Road HEATHMONT	<b>Date/s</b>	1971-72
<b>Designer/s</b>	Keith & John R Reid	<b>Builder/s</b>	Unknown



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, January 2023

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Finance	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Bank	<b>Intactness</b>	Good
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Place History

The building at 196 Canterbury Road, Heathmont, was erected in 1971-72 as the new Heathmont branch of the State Savings Bank of Victoria, to a design by architects Keith & John R Reid.

Although dating back as far as 1842, the State Savings Bank of Victoria (SSB) did not establish its presence at Heathmont until 1961, when a branch opened in a shopfront at 190 Canterbury Road; this was a result of a “vigorous policy of expansion” that the bank had initiated as commerce prospered in the later 1950s. The premises sufficed for nearly a decade, when it was decided to provide Heathmont’s booming commercial strip with a new purpose-built bank branch. A site was duly acquired a little further along the road at No 196, marking the extreme western end of the strip, near the edge of the railway cutting.

Plans for the new branch at Heathmont were initially prepared by the bank's in-house architectural division, then still under the control of Robert Cousland (1908-1973), Chief Architect since 1953. Cousland oversaw a team of younger men including John Lim, whose name appears on the preliminary drawings for the Heathmont branch. Dated 1970, these drawings depict a building with an octagonal strong room towards the street façade. For reasons not yet confirmed, this design was rejected and the commission was passed onto the private architectural firm of Keith & John Reid, which had designed several previous branches.

The father-and-son architectural firm of Keith & John R Reid traced its origins back to the thriving pre-war career of Keith Reid (1906-1999), who worked in partnership with Jock Pearson in the 1930s. After WW2, Reid resumed private practice under his own name. His eldest son John followed in the family profession, graduating from the University of Melbourne in 1961. When he joined his father's office the following year, John already boasted impressive credentials: he had won several student prizes, awards and design competitions and travelled extensively overseas, working for architects in London, Honolulu and New York. Such was John's subsequent contribution to his father's practice that, in 1967, he was elevated to partnership and the firm rebadged as Keith & John R Reid. While Keith had hitherto been best known as a designer of churches, his office broadened its focus during the 1960s to include more residential and other work. The firm's association with the SSB began after John designed his own house in Templestowe in 1965. Having secured financing through the bank, John was visited by one of its assessment officers, who was so impressed by the unusual design of the house (published in several newspapers and journals of the day) that the office of Keith & John R Reid was engaged to design a branch of the SSB at Altona North. Completed in 1966, this was so well received that the Reids were retained to design further branches; ultimately, their association with the SSB continued until the bank ceased trading in 1990, by which time the architects had completed more than sixty new bank branches as well as the renovation and upgrading of countless existing ones.

Designed in 1971, the new SSB branch at Heathmont closely followed two others that the Reid had recently completed at Hastings and Deer Park. A perspective sketch, published in the bank's journal in December 1971, depicted a small but striking building with large recessed fully-glazed entrance bay and a square tower to the downward side, surmounted by illuminated signage with the bank's logo. John Reid recalls that the tower motif was specifically chosen to impart a sense of height to a site that sloped away towards the railway cutting. Completed at a cost of \$70,000, the new branch opened on 5 June 1972. A colour photograph graced the front cover of the bank's annual report for 1972, and a detailed write-up, with interior and exterior images, appeared in the August edition of its in-house journal. This drew attention to the lively open-planned and top-lit interior, with its "purple blue carpet flecked with crimson, vinyl teller booths with black vinyl counters [and] white-slatted ceiling above a suspended framework of purple-painted steel beams." Staff and customers, it was duly noted, "are delighted with it".

The building remained occupied by the SSB until it ceased trading in 1990. It was then purchased by local retailer John Boer, who had opened an appliance shop at No 123 in 1971. With business booming, he expanded his shop across adjacent sites No 119-123 in the mid-1980s, then obtained the former bank at No 196 to serve as a warehouse for whitegoods. In 2002, the building was acquired by John and Judy Lewis, who established a café there and, acknowledging the original function of the premises, named it after the leading British banking firm. The venue, which changed ownership again in 2014 (and then again in 2020), has since remained an extremely popular local meeting place.

### Physical Description

Occupying a corner site at the far western end of this commercial strip, the former SSB branch at 196 Canterbury Road, Heathmont, is a single-storeyed brick building. Its asymmetrical street frontage comprises an off-centre recessed entrance bay with full-height window wall, framed by a brick wing wall to the left and a square tower to the right. The recessed bay has a cantilevered canopy clad in metal decking and the tower is surmounted by a framed element, similarly clad. The uppermost part of the tower originally included illuminated signage with the bank's name (in white lettering) and its logo (a stylised map of Victoria in bright yellow). None of this now remains. The exterior colour scheme, originally white-painted brickwork with brown-coloured cladding, has been overpainted several times; at the time of initial assessment in 2018, it was lurid orange hue. It has since been repainted a dark grey-charcoal colour.

Although repurposed as a café, the interior of the former bank remains somewhat intact. While the original counters and so on have long since gone, other key elements and finishes remain evident, including the bagged brick walls (with fin-like spur walls), exposed roof trusses, slatted ceilings and clerestory windows.

## Comparative Analysis

Considered in the broader context of post-war bank architecture in the City of Maroondah, the former SSB branch at Heathmont has a number of comparators. Perhaps the most pertinent is the former SSB branch in Ringwood North, which also dates from 1971 and represents the work of John Lim, the SSB Staff Architect who prepared the original aborted scheme for Heathmont. Located at 174 Warrandyte Road, the SSB branch at Ringwood North also occupies a corner site, and is similarly expressed with a prominent full-height glass-walled entry bay. However, it lacks the tower-like element; its façade is relieved instead by a folded-plate roof and canopy that is now largely concealed by signage (the building is no longer used as a bank). Another former SSB branch, albeit of earlier date, survives at 131 Main Street, Croydon. Dating from 1961, this two-storey building retains some of the original windows and feature stone cladding to the upper level, although the ground level has been substantially altered by the insertion of new shopfronts.

Other branch banks of similar vintage to that at Heathmont include the former ANZ Bank at 91 Maroondah Highway, Ringwood (c.1972) and the former Commonwealth Bank at 172 Canterbury Road, Heathmont (c.1975). Both are of much simpler architectural form, although the former is otherwise notable for the rare survival of a drive-in bank teller facility. Of slightly later date, the former Bank of NSW at 90 Maroondah Highway, Ringwood (1980), is an unusual local example of the Brutalist style applied to bank architecture.

While the subject building appears to have been the only bank branch designed by Keith & John R Reid in what is now the City of Maroondah, the firm's work is otherwise represented therein by other buildings such as the Presbyterian Church in Croydon (1966) and the McGregor House in Warranwood (1969).

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The former State Savings Bank branch at 196 Canterbury Road, Heathmont, is a single-storey brick building with a simple asymmetrical façade comprising a recessed glass-walled entry bay and a square tower. Dating from 1971-72, it was designed by a private architectural firm of Keith & John R Reid, who maintained a professional association with that bank for more than twenty years.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire building. Specific elements of significance include the recessed entry bay with full-height windows, the cantilevered metal-clad canopy, and the squat corner tower with matching metal-clad superstructure.

*How is it significant?*

The former State Savings Bank satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

*Why is it significant?*

The former State Savings Bank is significant for the following reasons:

The building is a fine and mostly intact example of modernist banking architecture. While much of the design is typical of other branch banks of the post-war period (which invariably incorporated glazed window walls contrasted with mass walling), the incorporation of the square tower was highly unusual feature, intended by the architects to imbue a sense of grandeur to a site that sloped downward. Providing a suitably monumental termination to this major suburban commercial strip, the former bank remains a prominent element in the streetscape and is considered something of a minor local landmark (*Criterion E*)

## References

Drawings held in Plan Collection, State Bank of Victoria Archives. VPRS 8934/P194, Unit 1, PROV.

'Progress in premises', *Statesman*, No 48 (December 1971), p 14; No 52 (August 1972), p 9.

Interview with John Reid, 15 June 2018.

Heathmont History Group, *Heathmont Sketchbook* (PenFolk Publishing: Blackburn, 2017), Section 5.

## Originally identified by

Heathmont History Group.





<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	FIBREMAKERS BUSINESS PARK	<b>Citation No</b>	HO152
<b>Other name/s</b>	British Nylon Spinners / Fibremakers factory (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	51 H12
<b>Address</b>	254 Canterbury Road BAYSWATER NORTH	<b>Date/s</b>	1955-58 (initial phase) 1961-70 (additions)
<b>Designer/s</b>	Stephenson & Turner Emily Gibson (landscape)	<b>Builder/s</b>	McDougall & Ireland (buildings) Utah Australia Ltd (site works)



*Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, April 2018*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Manufacturing and processing	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Factory/plant	<b>Intactness</b>	Good
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Place History

The former industrial complex at 254 Canterbury Road, Bayswater North, was developed from 1955 as a nylon yarn factory for British Nylon Spinners, to a masterplan by Stephenson & Turner.

British Nylon Spinners was formed in 1940 as a joint venture between two leading British companies: Imperial Chemicals Industries (ICI), which had just secured a license to manufacture rayon fibre, and long-established textile manufacturers Cortaulds Ltd, which had started to produce viscose rayon. Production began in Coventry in 1941 but, following wartime bomb damage, was relocated to various other locations until a new factory opened in 1948 at Pontypool in South Wales. While the company had initially focused on the manufacture of nylon products for the war effort, the end of WW2 saw business boom as civilian demand for the material increase at an unprecedented rate.

By 1946, British Nylon Spinners was already exporting nylon to Australia; when a company representative flew to Sydney the following year, he told the press that local manufacture should be a priority. A subsidiary company, British Nylon Spinners (Australia) Ltd, was registered here in early 1953, initially intended only as a distributor of imported nylon. Finally, in April 1955, it was reported that the company had purchased 92 acres in Bayswater North for what would be Australia's very first nylon yarn factory.

Plans for the vast factory complex were prepared by the eminent architectural firm of Stephenson & Turner. Originally known as Stephenson & Meldrum, the practice was founded in Melbourne in 1922 by Arthur Stephenson (1890-1967) and Percy Meldrum (1887-1968). By the mid-1930s, it had risen to become one of Australia's leading exponents of modern architecture, especially in the field of hospital design. Opening a branch office in Sydney in 1937, under the control of long-time staff member Donald Turner (1895-1964), the firm was very briefly known as Stephenson, Meldrum & Turner, but altered its name after Meldrum withdrew from the practice in 1938. After WW2, the office of Stephenson & Turner continued to focus on hospital design but also began to embrace major industrial projects (notably, a series of factories around Australia for General Motors Holden) and other large-scale non-residential work.

Stephenson & Turner's masterplan for the British Nylons Spinners factory, finalised before the end of 1955, was to include production buildings, warehouses, administrative offices and amenities, spread over an area of 4½ acres. The buildings were to be of steel-framed construction (developed in conjunction with the parent company's engineers in London), with curtain walling and pink-coloured brickwork. Following the precedent of the original British Nylon Spinners factory in Wales, the complex was to include extensive staff facilities and a pleasant garden setting developed by landscape designer Emily Gibson (1887-1974).

Development of the Bayswater North property began in June 1956, when construction engineers Utah Australia Ltd began site excavations and filling, the layout of concrete roads, and erection of temporary offices, workshops, stores and a sewage disposal plant. The contract for constructing the factory buildings was let to the leading firm of McDougall & Ireland, with completion aimed for August 1958. Production commenced ahead of schedule in February 1958, with the plant operating on a running-in basis for several months before reaching 70% by September. On 12 November 1958, the complex was officially opened by the Governor, Sir Dallas Brooks. Within a few more months, production was running at full capacity, with continuous shifts, seven days a week. As the first nylon spinner factory in Australia, the project attracted considerable publicity, not least of all in the architectural and building press. It was written up in a number of journals including *Architecture & Arts*, which described it as "a handsome building of apricot brick, aluminium and glass", in a pleasant landscaped setting "left temporarily as pasture to be in harmony with the attractive rural district in which it stands".

Even before the factory was officially opened in November 1958, it was announced that further expansion would soon take place. For over a decade, the office of Stephenson & Turner received repeat commissions for additional buildings; in 1970, the architects could report that "building has been an almost continuous process and plant, process and warehouse areas today occupy some three times the area of the original 1957 premises". It was during that period of expansion, in early 1963, that British Nylon Spinners (Aust) Pty Ltd changed its name after a merger with ICIANZ, and became known as Fibremakers Ltd. The factory operated as such for several decades before being taken over by Dupont in the late 1980s, and then Godfrey Hirst in 1998. Now known as Fibremakers Business Park, some of its buildings have been leased to others.

### Physical Description

The Fibremakers site covers a large site and comprises numerous of buildings, most of which were built between 1956 and 1970, to the design of Stephenson & Turner. While the buildings necessarily differ in form and scale, befitting their various functions, they otherwise exhibit a high degree of consistency in their stark modernist expression and use of pale brickwork and curtain walling. The earliest buildings on the site, reflecting the original 1955 masterplan (realised from 1956 to 1958), comprise the eastern part of the two-storey administration block fronting Canterbury Road (with elongated plan, low pitched roof and repetitive window bays), the southern part of the adjacent production building (incorporating flat-roofed laboratory and workshop areas, sawtooth-roofed warehouse and another production area with multi-storey extrusion area above), and a narrow link (former laboratory area) that connects them. To the east is a group of detached buildings that also date from the original phase: the (former) boiler house, a large sawtooth-roofed warehouse, small building that contained switch room, compressor and various other utilities, and another building on an elongated and narrow plan that accommodated the laundry and garages



Amongst the changes made during the 1960s were a two-storey addition at the west end of the administration building (expressed differently, with a row of fin-like rendered piers), two more sawtooth-roofed warehouses (one to the north of the existing warehouse, and another at the far west end of the site), the gatehouse, minor additions to the switch room and laundry garage block, and major additions to the main production building that virtually tripled its size. Relatively few major additions have been made since the 1970s, and these tend to be located to the rear of the complex, not visible from the street

Although the original masterplan included input from noted landscape designer Emily Gibson, little appears to remain of any formalised gardens. Remnant area of lawn, defined garden beds (with low plantings) and shaped hedges along certain buildings may well represent surviving evidence of Gibson's input.

## Comparative Analysis

Although post-war industrial development has been a recurring theme in what is now the City of Maroondah, there are no factory complexes that are truly comparable to the sprawling facility on Canterbury Road that represented a unique Australian foray for a British company that would develop, expand and occupy the site for more than three decades. It was not until 1972 that another British-based manufacturer would establish a presence in the study area, when Wedgewood proposed a new factory alongside the existing Johnson Pottery works in Lusher Street, Croydon. Historically, this has strong parallels with British Nylon Spinners, in that it represented the first Wedgewood factory ever built outside the United Kingdom. However, it proved a relatively short-lived venture; the factory closed in the 1980s and the building has since been demolished.

While the British Nylon Spinners factory was a major and high-profile undertaking for the office of Stephenson & Turner, it appears to represent a unique example of that firm's work in what is now the City of Maroondah. Architecturally, the MacRobertson chocolate factory (now Cadbury), located further east along Canterbury Road, in Ringwood, could perhaps be considered as its spiritual successor. This was designed by the architectural partnership of Melville van Sticksen, whose two principals (James Melville and Thillo van Stickson) had both previously worked at Stephenson & Turner. Melville, who is confirmed to have been heavily involved with the earlier project (his initials appear on some of the masterplan drawings from 1955) must have drawn from his experiences when called upon to design the chocolate factory a decade later. Interestingly, Melville even engaged the same landscape designer, Emily Gibson, who had previously worked on the gardens for the British Nylon Spinners site.

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

Developed and occupied by a local subsidiary of a prominent British manufacturer as the first nylon spinning factory in Australia, the British Nylon Spinners factory at 254 Canterbury Road, Bayswater North, was erected in several stages between 1956 and 1970. The original buildings, laid out according to a 1955 masterplan by Stephenson & Turner, were completed between 1956 and 1958, with several subsequent phases of expansion (designed by the same architects) undertaken during the 1960s. These buildings, while differing in scale and form according to function, are otherwise similarly expressed in a stark modernist idiom with a consistent palette of pale brickwork and curtain walling.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of Buildings 1, 2, 3 and 9 (as marked on the plan overleaf) that represent the core of the 1955-58 masterplan by Stephenson & Turner, and later additions by the same architects up to 1970. Specific elements of significance include the stark block-like expression of buildings, low rooflines, cream brickwork and repetitive fenestration, including bays of curtain walling.

*How is it significant?*

The former British Nylon Spinners factory satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

*Why is it significant?*

The former British Nylon Spinners factory is significant for the following reasons:

The factory is significant as an ambitious and ultimately successful attempt by a leading British-based manufacturer to establish a presence in Australia by developing this country's first nylon spinning factory. A unique venture at the time, the project attracted considerable attention and publicity. It went on to become a major presence in the outer eastern suburbs as well as a highly significant local employer. By far the largest, busiest and best-known factory ever developed within what is now the City of Maroondah, it also represented a major industrial achievement. (Criterion A)

The factory is significant as an intact and evocative example of post-war industrial architecture that was carefully designed to dispel preconceptions that such buildings must necessarily be ugly and undesirable. Laid out according to a masterplan by leading factory specialists Stephenson & Turner, the complex was designed in the crisp modernist idiom that characterised the firm's highly-regarded work at that time, with simple expression of volumes, stark pale-coloured brickwork and curtain walling. In what was a deliberate attempt to emulate the parent company's existing factory in Wales, the Bayswater North counterpart was to include recreational amenities for staff (including a sports oval; since redeveloped) in a landscaped setting. (Criterion E)

## References

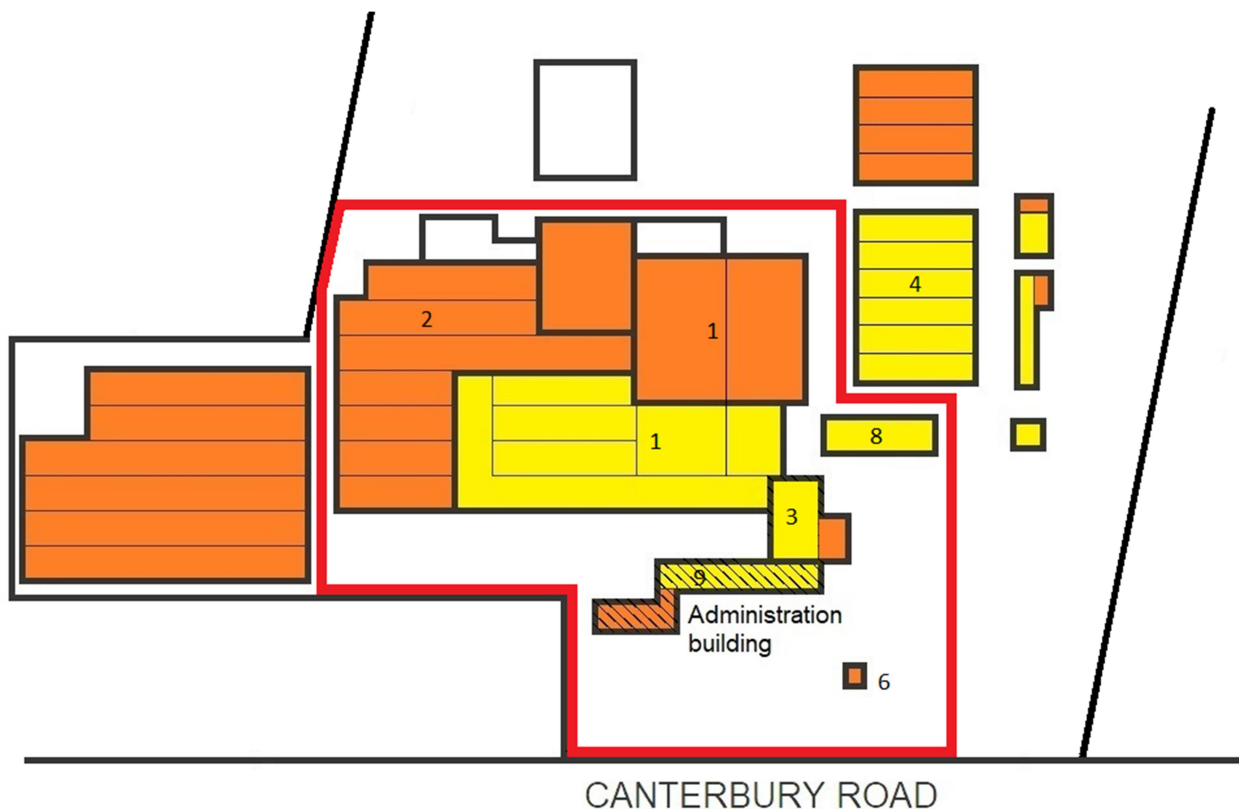
"British Nylon Spinners (Aust) Pty Ltd: £4,000,000 plant at Bayswater", *Building Lighting Engineering*, 24 June 1957, p 31.

"Australia's First Nylon Spinning factory", *Architecture & Arts*, May 1958, pp 36-37.

*Stephenson & Turner, 1920-1970*. Melbourne, Stephenson & Turner Pty Ltd, 1970.

## Originally identified by

Richard Peterson with Peter Barrett, *Maroondah Heritage Study: Stage Two* (2003)



Indicative map of the Fibremakers site, showing extent of original 1955-58 masterplan (in yellow) and subsequent additions by Stephenson & Turner up to 1970 (in orange). Numbers indicate buildings as follows: Building 1 (spinning floor and drawtwist), Building 2 (warehouse), Building 3 (canteen, amenities and medical centre), Building 6 (control centre, weighbridge), Building 8 (boiler house) and Building 9 (administration building). Red outline indicates proposed extent of HO. Hatching indicates where prohibited use may be permitted.

<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	TLC (TRUTH & LIBERATION CONCERN) CHURCH	<b>Citation No</b>	HO167
<b>Other name/s</b>	Jesus Light & Power House (part)	<b>Melway ref</b>	50 H12
<b>Address</b>	265 Canterbury Road BAYSWATER NORTH	<b>Date/s</b>	1976 (designed) 1980 (completed)
<b>Designer/s</b>	Alistair Knox & Associates	<b>Builder/s</b>	TLC congregation



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, June 2020

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Religion	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Church	<b>Intactness</b>	Excellent
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> External paint controls <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interior alteration controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls		

### Place History

The Truth & Liberation Concern (TLC) Church at 265 Canterbury Road, Bayswater North, was built as the headquarters and meeting-place for a unique Christian denomination founded in 1972 by the Reverend Dr John Smith, a countercultural preacher best known as founder of the *God's Squad Christian Motorcycle Club*. Designed in 1976 by Alistair Knox, the building was erected by church members and completed in 1980.

Born in Melbourne, Kevin John Smith (1942-2019) was the son of a Methodist preacher and, by his own account, had a conventional evangelical Christian upbringing. As Smith's father was transferred to different congregations, the family lived in various parts of regional Victoria before settling in Queensland in the late 1950s. After completing tertiary studies at a teachers' college in Brisbane, Smith commenced his career as a school teacher, obtaining his first posting in his home town of Chinchilla.



By the mid-1960s, Smith saw his future as a preacher, and his fiancée Glenna as a missionary. The couple moved to Melbourne to attend theological college, and married after graduation. Settling in Wonthaggi, he taught at the high school and while ministering to three local congregations. The social upheavals of the late 1960s were to have a profound effect on Smith, who recalled it as “an age of freedom and questioning like we had never experienced before”. Joining a non-denominational evangelical group in 1969, the Smiths moved to Boronia and became heavily involved in the group’s outreach work. This spurred Smith’s interest in bringing a Christian message to marginalised people “who would normally be beyond the reach of the church”, as he put it. By his own admission, Smith’s conviction drew inspiration from the so-called “Jesus Movement” then emanating from North America. In 1971, inspired by radicalised Christian groups aligned with that movement, Smith began publication of a street newsletter, simply titled *Truth*.

After attending the Sunbury rock festival in 1972, and witnessing scenes of substance abuse and debauchery, the Smiths were fired with enthusiasm to formalise a ministry to people outside the fringes of mainstream society. Their newsletter, recently re-badged as *Truth & Liberation* to sidestep litigation with a long-running Melbourne tabloid, gave its name to their new venture: the *Truth & Liberation Concern*, abbreviated as TLC to evoke “Tender Loving Care”. As Smith later explained it, “TLC is a Christian and social welfare movement involved in meeting the physical social and spiritual needs of a wide range of people with particular emphasis on youth and specially needy sub-cultures such as deserted wives and socially disadvantaged people”. An early off-shoot of Smith’s ministry was a Christian motorcycle club, dubbed *God’s Squad*. This attracted considerable publicity, raised his profile, and furthered his cause.

Initially, the *Truth & Liberation Concern* operated from the Smiths’ Boronia home, where the newsletter was published and regular meetings held. In 1972, a friend drew their attention to a potential new headquarters in the adjacent suburb of Bayswater North. Recalled by Smith as “an old grubby white weatherboard house with broken window panes”, the Canterbury Road property had been vacant and neglected after an ill-fated attempt to use it as Methodist drop-in centre. With funds donated by a local doctor, the Smiths bought the house and began to renovate it, painting it in bright orange and furnishing it with old theatre seats from a defunct cinema. Dubbed the “Jesus Light & Power House”, the remodelled venue served many and varied functions: as Smith recalled, “it was our administration centre, a place for meetings, a drop-in centre in the daytime and a hostel at night”. It also served as the *de facto* headquarters of the *God’s Squad* motorcycle club.

Such was the rapid increase in TLC membership that the group soon outgrew the converted house. Initially, plans for larger premises on the site were to be prepared by Colin Falconer, an architectural draftsman who was the father of a *God’s Squad* member. However, around the same time, Smith happened to preach at an Anglican church in Eltham whose congregants included the celebrated designer Alistair Knox, who later phoned Smith’s wife Glenna and offered his services. A leading figure in the trend towards self-built dwellings, Alistair Knox (1912-1986) began his career as a bank clerk, commencing (but not completing) architectural studies after returning from WW2. In 1948, he started experimenting with mudbrick as a solution to the post-war housing crisis and duly developed a distinctive organic style combining mudbrick with rough timber, recycled brick, bluestone and slate (often salvaged from demolition sites). After designing early houses for brave clients (mostly artists and academics in the Eltham area), Knox’s reputation rose sharply and, from the mid-1960s until his death, he remained highly sought after. An indefatigable champion of the environment, he wrote several books and many articles, frequently lectured, and was active in his community as a shire councillor and later Mayor of Eltham. Two years before his death, Knox received an honorary Doctorate of Architecture for his unique contribution to environmental design.

At the time that he met the Smiths, Knox had designed many houses but very few non-residential projects. Best known of these was a development of mudbrick buildings at Kangaroo Ground for the Wycliffe Bible Translators. As fate had it, the Smiths were close friends of the WBT director and already knew the site well. Glenna Smith, who had recently read of a mudbrick convent proposed by an order of nuns in NSW, became particularly enamoured by the material: as her husband put it, she “liked the warmth and organic feel of mudbrick buildings because they felt more homely”. As he further related, she “had a very strong vision that mudbrick was our answer – the way we could build our community centre at minimum cost”. In this way, Alistair Knox & Associates was engaged to design the building, with an unusual brief that not only required space for sermons but also counselling, education, recreation, youth training and hobbies/crafts. It was to be large enough to cater for the still-growing TLC membership, while retaining an intimate homely atmosphere. It was not only to be unconventional in a programmatic sense but also in an architectural one: as Smith recalled, “we decided on a colonial-style structure with wide verandahs, pole framed with mud brick infill and a galvanised iron roof”.



Knox's drawings, dated October 1976, proposed a suitably homestead-style building with an auditorium for over 300 people, a stage at one end (with backstage area), a "crying room" for mothers with babies (which was not ultimately included), a row of small meeting/counselling rooms, a canteen, a "billiard/activities room" and a T-shaped foyer with toilet facilities. The building extended from the rear of the timber house, which would be retained as administrative offices. In parallel with the building design, a landscaping scheme was prepared by Eltham-based garden designer Robert Boyle, a frequent Knox collaborator. His plan, dated April 1976, proposed gravelled pathways, brick paving, lawns, a separate motorcycle parking area (for *God's Squad* members) and garden beds with evergreen shrubs and small trees, ferns, ground cover and climbing plants (mostly native species, including eucalyptus, melaleuca, banksia, callistemon, casuarina, acacia and grevillea). Boyle's planting scheme was never implemented, evidently for cost reasons.

To keep costs to a minimum, building materials were sourced as cheaply as possible, if not for free. Trunks of Yellow Stringybark were provided by a TLC member who cleared land for a living, and a stack of Oregon planks donated by a motel owner from South Australia. Construction was conceived as a participatory event, achieved collectively by TLC members. This not only reduced costs further, but also helped foster a sense of community that echoed the group's remit. As Smith recalls, some TLC members assisted Knox in the design process while others visited the WTB complex in Kangaroo Ground to learn to make mud bricks. Others offered more specific skills. Smith recalls a member who, found to be adept at the use of an adze, shaped the log poles, while an elderly ex-alcoholic in the group, a former bushman "who could cut timber slabs by eye", set up a saw-bench to produce roof beams. Bespoke metalwork, including light fittings and door hardware, was fabricated "by the Fleckhammer brothers, two guys who were into ironmongery and blacksmithing". Another group member, an experienced site foreman, oversaw much of the work, including production of mudbricks. These were initially hand-moulded (and laid) by female members, until the group obtained a second-hand asphalt mixing machine that was adapted to extrude them automatically.

Construction continued for almost five years, with a regular building team that worked every night "even in the middle of winter, often 'till midnight and beyond". In early 1980, the TLC newsletter reported that "the building is taking shape ... we are already using one of the meeting rooms, which is a tremendous blessing as most people can get inside" (*TLC Praise & Prayer Letter* 03/03/1980:1). At that time, the group had just sourced more second-hand theatre seats from a defunct cinema in the city. The building appears to have been fully completed, or at least fully operational, by early 1981. Smith later stated that the project had cost around \$100,000, which he estimated to have been 20% of what it would have cost if built by a commercial building firm. On completion, the premises was reported as the largest single mud brick building in Australia, and perhaps even the southern hemisphere, although, as Smith ruefully added, that title was soon usurped by a large Baptist church that was inspired by the TLC Church. Still, the Bayswater North building was to remain, as Smith put it, "a monument to everyone who made a brick, chiselled a window or carried a theatre seat". While Smith ceased his own association with the TLC in late 1982 (later heading a community church in Carlton), the building still remains occupied by the group at the time of writing.

## Physical Description

The TLC Church at 265 Canterbury Road, Bayswater North, comprises two key elements: the former timber dwelling fronting the street (purchased in 1972), and the large new building to the rear (1976-80).

The former house, now accommodating the group's administrative offices, is a single-storey gable-roofed weatherboard dwelling with an asymmetrical double-fronted facade incorporating a projecting gabled bay with its original timber-framed double-hung sash windows. The building has otherwise been altered by skillion-roofed weatherboard additions to the north and east sides, new multi-paned window bays, and an expansive full-width skillion-roofed return verandah supported on rough log poles.

The new building, which extends from one corner of the former dwelling, is a large timber-framed mudbrick structure on an elongated rectangular plan. It has a broad hipped roof, clad in corrugated galvanised steel, that is asymmetrical and irregular, incorporating a long clerestory window. The roof projects along the east side to form a wide verandah, and to the north-east corner to form a skillion-roofed entry porch. The building's timber structure is fully exposed, with a grid of log pole columns, matching pole beams above the entry, and roughly shaped timber beams, purlins and fascias to the verandah. Between the log poles, wall areas are infilled with mudbrick (with a characteristic bagged and beige-painted finish), and alternating bays of timber-framed glazed doors with sidelights and highlights. The main entrance has a huge pair of ledged-and-braced doors in recycled timber, with large bespoke iron hinges and pull-bars. The doorway is flanked by sidelights, with a highlight above following the roof slope.

The building has pebbled concrete paving to the verandah (enlivened by inset patterns in red brick depicting Christian symbols such as a Latin cross and a fish), and there are brick paved and gravel pathways to the front entrance and environs. The landscaped setting includes lawn areas, mature trees and garden beds, edged in red brick, volcanic rock or recycled timber sleepers, containing low plantings. Neither the layout of the hard landscaping, nor the individual plantings themselves, correspond to Robert Boyle's 1976 proposal.

An interior inspection conducted in January 2023 confirmed that the principal areas of the church building, namely its auditorium, foyer and former billiard/activities area, retain original finishes and fittings such as bagged mudbrick walls with log posts and beams, brick paved floors, ceilings with exposed trusses and purlins, timber board panelling, shingles, and ledged-and-braced timber doors with bespoke metal hinges and latch-handles. The auditorium has two large open fireplaces with recycled timber mantles on curved iron brackets. The original theatre seats have been replaced by proprietary metal row seating (now oriented north-south), but the timber pulpit is original. The former billiards/activities area has timber tables and chairs believed to be of original or early date. An early timber sign hangs to the right of the main entry. These key internal spaces, and their original furniture, are all considered part of the heritage significance. The meeting/counselling rooms and children's area (south of the backstage), which have been altered but retain some original finishes, are considered of lesser significance. Utilitarian areas, namely the kitchen, toilet and music studio, now retain little or no original fabric and are considered of no heritage significance, as are the interiors of the adjacent administration block (ie, former dwelling).

### **Comparative Analysis**

As an example of the work of Alistair Knox, the TLC Church has several local comparators. According to the website maintained by Knox's son, the designer Knox completed nine other projects in what is now the City of Maroondah. All of these were single dwellings: the Van Leeuwen House at 9-11 Cecil Circuit, Croydon (1966), the Stafford House at 5-7 Brysons Road, Warranwood (1966), the Grindberg House at 118 Longview Road, Croydon (1967), the Wardrop House at 24 Vista Avenue, Ringwood East (1967), the Baillie House at 94 Plymouth Road, Ringwood (1968), the Ganney House at 17 Summit Crescent, Ringwood (1969), the Hall House at 41-43 Merrill Crescent, Warranwood (1972), the Spurway House at 20 Pine Crescent, Ringwood North (c1975) and the Townsend House at 27-29 Omeo Parade, Warranwood (1980). The houses vary in size and plan form, but are otherwise similar in their low rooflines and use of clinker brickwork and exposed timber beams. None of them, however, is of mud brick construction. They all seem to be merely representative examples of Knox's residential work, rather than especially outstanding ones. By contrast, the TLC Church stands out in terms of its grand scale, its atypical non-residential function, and its conspicuous use of the designer's trademark mud brick, rugged timberwork and recycled brick paving.

To date, only a few other mudbrick buildings have been identified in the City of Maroondah, all of which are single dwellings. Not surprisingly, most are located in Warranwood (ie, closer to the mudbrick heartland of Eltham and Warrandyte), and include houses at 200 Wonga Road, 36 Braden Brae Drive, 30-32 Kerry Drive, 10-12 Gibson Road, 37 Bemboka Road and 11 Dromsally Rise. Elsewhere, mudbrick houses can be found at 11 St Georges Crescent, Croydon, and 11 Cheong Street, Ringwood East. Except for the Wonga Road house (designed by John Pizzey), the architectural attributions are unconfirmed. As they are not listed on Knox website, it is doubtful that he designed them; there are more likely to have been the work of architects (such as Robert Marshall and the aforementioned John Pizzey) who were one-time Knox associates. These local manifestations of mudbrick construction vary in scale and degree of architectural sophistication, with some being considerably simpler than others. The standouts, most comparable to the TLC Church, would be the notably large dwellings in Braden Brae Drive and Gibson Road, both of which also have conspicuous use of rugged timber members and recycled brick paving. The former house, with its elongated plan, low gabled roofline and full-width timber-posted front verandah, is particularly evocative of the TLC Church.

While the TLC Church is unique in the City of Maroondah as non-residential Knox project, it is worth noting that he made few such forays during his career. Of these, the best known is the Wycliffe Bible Translators site at 60 Graham Road, Kangaroo Road, with which (as already noted) TLC director John Smith was familiar before engaging Knox to design his own building. Laid out in stages from 1969 to 1979, the site includes detached dwellings, administration/conference centre and other structures; upon completion, it was described as the world's largest complex of mudbrick buildings. A review of the Knox website shows that his few other ecclesiastical projects included a new hall (1959), manse (1960) and additions (1974) to the Eltham Presbyterian Church, additions to the Southern Evangelical Mission premises in Brighton (1967), a Presbyterian church in Macleod (1972) and two Lutheran churches at Sunbury (1978) and Knoxfield (1980).

Mudbrick churches (whether by Alistair Knox or others) are uncommon on a broader metropolitan or even statewide context. The handful of examples identified to date include St Peter's Roman Catholic Church at 1053 Kinglake Road, Hurstbridge (1972), the octagonal parish hall of St Margaret's Anglican Church at 79-83 Pitt Street, Eltham (1976-78), Diamond Creek Uniting Church at 32 Wensley Street, Diamond Creek (1984), Diamond Valley Baptist Church at 309 Diamond Creek Road, Plenty (1984; the one that usurped the TLC Church's title as Australia's largest mudbrick church), St Luke's Anglican Church in McBride Street, Cockatoo (c1985) and the Seymour Baptist Fellowship at 82 Avenel Road, Seymour (1996) and the former Church of Christ (now Discovery Church) at 89 Monbulk Street, Mount Evelyn (1990s).

There do not appear to be any other buildings within the City of Maroondah associated with the TLC. John and Glenna Smith's own house, where the denomination initially held its meetings, still stands at 28 Hillside Avenue, Boronia, in what is now the City of Knox. Research has also identified a venue used by the group in the late 1970s, known as the Truth & Liberation Oak Tree Craft Cottage, located in Market Street, Lilydale, in what is now the Shire of Yarra Ranges (*Age*, 12/05/1978:36). The building has since been demolished.

In the context of post-WW2 places of worship in the study area, the TLC Church has no direct comparators in a historical sense, and few in an architectural sense. Its unusual homestead-like form, a notable departure from traditional ecclesiastical design, is comparable to the contemporaneous and nearby Anglican Church of New Guinea Martyrs (now Croydon South Anglican Church) at 199 Bayswater Road (1976). Noted by Muriel McGivern to have been "designed in the style of an Australian homestead" (*A History of Croydon Vol 3*: 92), it has a steep hipped roof and return verandah, although it has been altered in recent years. This building, and the TLC Church, anticipated the emergence of other domestically-inspired places of worship in the late twentieth century, typified by the new premises of the Heathmont Baptist Church at 78 Cuthbert Street (1992) and the Ringwood Church of Christ at 13 Bedford Street (1997).

## Statement of Significance

### *What is significant?*

The TLC Church at 265 Canterbury Road, Bayswater North, is the headquarters/meeting-place for a unique Christian denomination/social welfare group fully known as the Truth & Liberation Concern, and consists of a small former residence (a single-storey double-fronted pre-war weatherboard dwelling) attached to a larger timber-framed mudbrick building with broad hipped roof extending to form a verandah along one side and an entry porch. Designed by Alistair Knox & Associates in 1976, the building was built over the course of five years (almost entirely by voluntary labour) to provide a large purpose-built multi-function premises for the group, which had formerly operated from the small timber house on the site.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire church, comprising the Knox building and the attached former house (now offices). Specific external elements of significance include the low roofline, mudbrick walls, exposed timber structure, large front doors, verandahs and bays of timber-framed doors and glazed windows.

Internal alteration controls are recommended to preserve the original finishes, fittings and furniture of the principal interior spaces of the Knox building, defined as the auditorium, foyer and former billiard/activities area. Specific elements of significance in these spaces including mudbrick walls, exposed timber structure, shingled lining, brick paved floors, fireplaces, and the original timber pulpit. Lesser internal spaces, namely utilitarian service areas (kitchen and toilets), music studio and office fitouts, are not considered significant.

While the landscaping is sympathetic to the style of the building, it is of relatively recent origin and is not considered significant. Other recent additions at the south end of the property, namely the playground, community garden, crèche and youth centre, are also not considered significant.

### *How is it significant?*

The TLC Church satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history;
- Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history;
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics;

- Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period;
- Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.

*Why is it significant?*

The TLC Church is significant for the following reasons:

The building is historically significant for associations with the Trust & Liberation Concern, an innovative Christian ministry initiated in 1972 by former schoolteacher turned counter-cultural preacher, the Reverend Dr John Smith, best known as founder of the *God's Squad* motorcycle club. Aligned with the so-called "Jesus Movement" that emanated from the USA in the late 1960s, Smith's ministry focused on bringing a Christian message to marginalised members of society. One of many such radical Christian groups to emerge in Australia from the early 1970s, the TLC was one of few to provide itself with purpose-built multi-functional premises geared to its far-reaching ministry. An unusual manifestation of post-WW2 religious development in the City of Maroondah, the TLC Church is unique on a broader metropolitan scale, not only as the state headquarters of this unique denomination, but also as the only church it ever built. (*Criterion A, Criterion B*)

The building is architecturally and aesthetically significant as a highly distinctive and unusual example of ecclesiastical architecture, or even considered more broadly as a public building. Its deliberately domestic character, which represents a significant departure from traditional church architecture, was intended by its proprietors to evoke a homely environment amenable to its unorthodox ministry remit, reflected in the provision of informal seating and open fireplaces in the auditorium. Its specific articulation as an oversized homestead, with low hipped roofline and elongated side verandah, demonstrates the influence of a renewed interest in colonial architecture from the early 1970s, while its mudbrick construction, rough timberwork and bespoke metalwork are all indicative of the parallel trend for organic architecture and self-building that also became popular during that period. (*Criterion E, Criterion H*)

The building is also significant as a notable achievement of participatory construction, where the majority of work was undertaken as a collective effort by members of the TLC group themselves, on a voluntary basis. This covered virtually all aspects of the project, with group members assisting with design, manual labour, preparation of timber, hoisting of structural members, production and laying of mudbricks, fabrication of bespoke metalwork and the sourcing and relocation of second-hand furniture. This ambitious and unusual approach demonstrates a high degree of creative and technical achievement at the time. Rarely undertaken on such a grand scale, this participatory approach was not only adopted due to the group's limited finances (reportedly reducing the overall project cost by at least 80%) but also to foster feelings of community, co-operation, self-reliance and self-esteem that the TLC group considered part of its broader programme of ministry and pastoral care. (*Criterion F*)

The building is architecturally significant as a large and unusual example of the work of Alistair Knox, an influential environmental designer who is often credited with re-introducing the mudbrick aesthetic into the post-WW2 architectural scene, as well as popularizing the self-building movement and the use of recycled or salvaged building materials that all became highly fashionable during the 1970s. While Knox is known to have designed nearly a dozen houses in what is now the City of Maroondah, this building stands out at the local level as his largest and most ambitious project, and his only non-residential one (and, on a broader scale, one of his very few forays into the field of ecclesiastical architecture. (*Criterion B, Criterion H*)

## References

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 [includes chapter contributed by John Smith, pp 114-127]



John Smith, *On this Side of the Angels* (Revised edition, 2006).

**Originally identified by**

Built Heritage Pty Ltd.



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HOUSES	<b>Citation No</b>	HO153
<b>Other name/s</b>	Romyn Residence and Studio (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	37 B11
<b>Address</b>	129 and 131-133 Dorset Road CROYDON	<b>Date/s</b>	1964 (original house) 1984 (conversion of studio)
<b>Designer/s</b>	Hank Romyn	<b>Builder/s</b>	Unknown



*Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, April 2018*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential buildings (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Excellent (studio converted)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Place History

Originally occupying a single triple-width site, the two dwellings at 129-133 Dorset Road, Croydon, were designed in 1964 by architect Hank Romyn for himself. The large house at 131-133 was the original family residence, while the smaller building at 129 was Romyn's detached studio or architectural office, which was later converted (to Romyn's own design) into a separate dwelling.

Born in Holland, Hank Martin Romyn (*ne Romijn*) migrated to Australia in 1951 to avoid compulsory military service at a time when his homeland was in conflict with the former Dutch East Indies. Although he had already completed architectural studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in the Hague, Romyn had difficulty finding architectural work in Australia. Initially, he took a number of other jobs that included fruit-picking in Mildura and working as a carpenter on construction projects that included prefabricated housing.

In 1952, Romyn began his Melbourne architectural career in the Building Department of the State Savings Bank of Victoria. Completing further studies at Melbourne Technical College and Melbourne University, he was registered as an architect in June 1954. Around that time, while still employed at the bank, he purchased land at the corner of Dorset Road and Moore Avenue in Croydon and built a house for himself. Still single, Romyn conceived his house as a modest three-bedroom timber dwelling, but laid out on an unusual Z-shaped plan. After it was finished, Romyn left the State Bank and gained a position with the leading office of Bates, Smart & McCutcheon, where he worked on large commercial projects including a 12-storey office building at 406 Lonsdale Street. While at BSM, Romyn married fellow Dutch émigré Antonia Zwetsloot and began to receive private commissions. Around 1959, he resigned to open his own office, taking up space in the building at 406 Lonsdale Street. His practice boomed, with projects including houses (many commissioned by members of Melbourne's Dutch community) as well as restaurants, car showrooms and other commercial buildings. An infant welfare centre and kindergarten in Mooroolbark, designed for the Shire of Lilydale in 1962, brought commissions for others in Nunawading, Donvale and Wantirna South.

By the early 1960s, Romyn's modest timber house was no longer adequate for his growing family of four daughters (soon to become five). One day, he noticed land for sale further along Dorset Road that had been the front garden of a large pre-war house built by the MacPherson family (of MacRobertson chocolate fame). With the house located to the rear, fronting Morgan Avenue, subsequent owners had now opted to subdivide the Dorset Road frontage, which included the original tree-lined driveway and tennis court. Romyn deemed it a perfect site for a new house, but realised that he could not afford all three blocks. He approached the owners with a bold offer: if they sold him three blocks for the price of two, he would ensure that his house would be sensitively designed, with no windows overlooking their own house, and much of the landscaping could be retained. The owners agreed to these terms, and the project was underway.

Romyn conceived his new house as a showpiece that would serve as an advertisement for his practice. To that end, he approached various manufacturers (such as Besser bricks and Stegbar windows) and suggested that, as his dwelling would effectively be a display house, they might supply materials at a discount. Many obliged and Romyn could thus afford to build a detached studio on the site for his architectural office. The huge two storey house provided six bedrooms (five of which were arranged along one side with individual balconies, creating a striking repetitious façade) and extensive living areas. It otherwise incorporated some American-style innovations hitherto unseen in Melbourne, such as ducted vacuum system, automatic insect sprays and a power unit built into the kitchen bench for blenders and other appliances.

The house was finished by August 1964, when Romyn opened it for public inspection for several weekends, ostensibly to raise funds for the Red Cross. That month, the house was profiled in the *Herald* newspaper and *Architecture & Arts* magazine. It would later in the *Australian House & Garden*, in that magazine's annual number and a spin-off publication, *The Australian Book of Furnishing and Decorating* (1967).

As originally built, the architect's detached studio was a flat-roofed structure in matching concrete brick, laid out on an elongated L-shaped plan that stepped down across three levels, providing two large studio spaces, a kitchenette and a storeroom. Along the south side (ie, facing Romyn's residence), the studio has full-height windows and a detached double carport linked by a covered walkway.

Romyn and his family occupied the property for several decades, during which time his architectural practice (known as Hank Romyn & Kings from 1979) operated from the detached studio. After retiring in the mid-1980s, Romyn subdivided the property and prepared drawings (dated June 1984) for his former studio to be converted into a stand-alone dwelling on a separate title. The principal studio space was refitted as an open-planned kitchen and dining area, while the lower space became a living room that abutted a small addition at the west end (ie, facing Dorset Road), with two bedrooms and a bathroom. This addition followed the stepping flat roofline of the original building, with ceramic tiling to the end wall and a curved glass block wall to one bedroom. The following year, Romyn drew up plans for the former storeroom (at the opposite end) to be converted into a large master bedroom with *en suite* bathroom. At some point, a small Japanese garden (with rocks, pond and stone lantern) was added along the south side.

In November 1985, the Romyns decided to sell their house, which was advertised as an "architect's own executive dream home" by "well renowned Melbourne architect Hank Romyn". However, it was passed in at auction and the couple remained in residence for another decade, when they decided to move closer to the city for family reasons. The property still exists as two separate titles: the original house at No 131-33, and the former studio at No 129.



## Physical Description

The former Romyn Residence at 131-133 Dorset Road, Croydon, is a large two-storey flat-roofed house on a modular rectangular plan. It is of Besser concrete block construction, with the blocks representing several different types but mostly narrow Roman-style bricks with either a smooth or textured face. The house presents a mostly blank façade to the street, relieved by a wide projecting chimney and one large window at ground level. The north (side) elevation is divided by fin-like piers into five regular bays. Save for the third bay along the ground level, which incorporates a recessed porch to the main entry, these bays contain full-height glazing to both levels. At the upper level, sliding doors open onto individual canted balconies with metal railings, each with a matching canopy above. The immediate surrounds include Roman-style concrete brick retaining walls and paved pathways that appear to be contemporaneous with the house.

Located on a separate title at No 129, the former architectural office is a single-storey split-level building on an elongated plan, with a stepping flat roof with wide panelled fascias, Roman-style concrete bricks (both textured and plain), and tall windows that include some large full-height sashes. The 1984 addition, at the west end, has ceramic tiled cladding to the end wall, and a curved feature wall of glass blocks. Photographs sourced from online real estate listings indicate that the original double carport and covered walkway have both been removed since September 2014, while the Japanese garden has been removed since August 2020.

## Comparative Analysis

Obviously, the most pertinent comparator to Hank Romyn's own house at 131-33 Dorset Road would be his previous residence, located further along the road at No 225, which he designed and built a decade earlier. Notwithstanding the common factor that both houses were designed by the same architect for his own use, the two buildings are markedly different. The earlier house, designed on a limited budget for the modest requirements of an unmarried man, is relatively conventional in its form and detailing, with weatherboard cladding and low pitched roof. Otherwise, its most striking feature is its unusual Z-shaped plan form. By contrast, Romyn's later house at 131-133 was an ambitious and lavishly-appointed undertaking, conceived as a professional showpiece with many innovations and enough space for his large family of five daughters.

Romyn's second residence in Dorset Road was certainly one of his largest, most prominent and most lauded residential projects in the Croydon area, where he undertook a considerable amount of work. His other local houses, while often of architectural interest, tend to be smaller and more modest. These not only include his former residence at 225 Dorset Road, but another that he designed on the opposite corner (No 227) around 1957, with a U-shaped courtyard plan, vertical timber cladding and an eye-catching butterfly roof. With its monumental scale and stark expression, Romyn's concrete-brick house at No 131-133 has few comparators in the municipality, although it has some elements in common with such later houses as architect Ian J Smith's own house at 4 Swain Court, Heathmont (1971) and another at 13 Panorama Avenue, Ringwood (1975).

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The properties designated as 129 and 131-133 Dorset Road, Croydon, comprised the former architectural office and former residence, respectively, of architect Hank Romyn, who designed both buildings in 1964 as part of his ambitious development of what had been a triple-width site. With flat roofs, Besser blockwork and full-height glazing, the two buildings are similar in form and expression, although the original house (No 131-133) is much grander two-storey edifice, distinguished by canted balconies with matching canopies.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of both buildings. Specific elements of significance include:

- The house: concrete blockwork, full-height windows and projecting balconies with matching canopies;
- The studio: elongated form with low stepping roofline, large windows and curved glass block wall

*How is it significant?*

The former Romyn Residence and Studio satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

*Why is it significant?*

The former Romyn Residence and Studio are significant for the following reason:

The two buildings, with their flat roofs, broad eaves, unusual Roman-style blockwork and generous glazing, represent an idiosyncratic manifestation of modernist architecture that references Romyn's varied interests in European modernism (being Dutch himself, he admired Mondrian and Reijnders), Frank Lloyd Wright, and Japanese design. With a striking façade of repetitive bays, canted balconies and canopies, the main residence remains an eye-catching element in the streetscape. (Criterion E)

## References

"Modern house in an old garden", *Herald*, 21 August 1964, p 24.

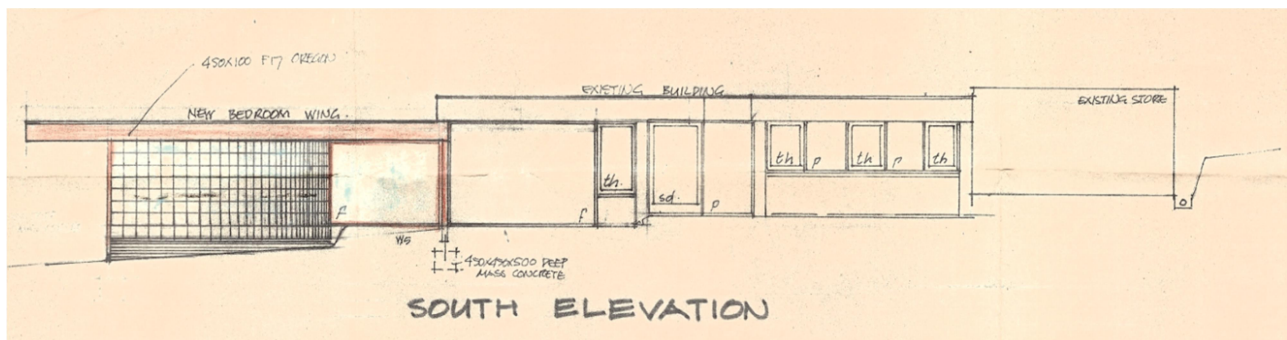
"House and office at Croydon, Victoria", *Architecture & Arts*, August 1964, pp 45-47.

Hank Romyn,, "Proposed conversion of studio into residence, 131 Dorset Rd, Croydon, for Mr & Mrs H M & A M Romyn", working drawings, dated June 1984. City of Ringwood Building Permit No 29,082.

Interview with Hank Romyn, 5 September 2016.

## Originally identified by

Built Heritage Pty Ltd.



Excerpt of drawings for Romyn's conversion of his detached studio in a separate dwelling, 1984 (note addition at left)  
Source: City of Ringwood Building Permit No 29,082, held by City of Maroondah.

<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HOUSE	<b>Citation No</b>	HO154
<b>Other name/s</b>	Alsop Residence (former); <i>Darley Dale</i>	<b>Melway ref</b>	37 B12
<b>Address</b>	161 Dorset Road CROYDON	<b>Date/s</b>	1939 2004 (second storey addition)
<b>Designer/s</b>	Miss Ruth Alsop	<b>Builder/s</b>	Unknown



*Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, April 2018*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential buildings (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Good
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Fair (second storey addition)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Place History

The house at 161 Dorset Road, Croydon, was designed in 1937 by Victoria's first qualified female architect, Miss Ruth Alsop, as a residence for herself and her two unmarried sisters, Florence and Edith.

Ruth Alsop (1879-1976) was the sixth of seven children of John and Anne Alsop. Born at Darley Dale in Derbyshire, John migrated to Australia with his parents in 1849; the family initially settled in Adelaide, but John moved to Melbourne in 1854 and started work with the then newly-founded State Savings Bank of Victoria. Remaining there for more than fifty years, he rose to become an actuary and trustee manager. In 1865, he married Anne Howard. The couple, who resided for many years in the Hawthorn area, went on to have four sons and three daughters: Henry, Osmond, Edith, Florence, Herbert, Ruth and Rodney.



Although a large family, the Alsops were clearly not without means and, by all accounts, enjoyed travelling and other cultural pursuits. In the late 1890s, Ruth and her brother Osmond spent several years touring Australia and New Zealand; then, in 1900, the entire family (save for the eldest three sons) embarked on a twelve-month tour of Europe. By that time, youngest son Rodney Howard Alsop (1882-1932) had already become interested in pursuing a career as an architect. On his return, the young man completed his articles and then entered into private practice in 1906, initially in partnership with Frederick Klingender. Around the same time, his sister Ruth reportedly surprised everyone by announcing that she, too, wished to become an architect – a profession that had hitherto not been seriously considered by any woman in Victoria.

Although dates remain sketchy, Ruth Alsop commenced her architectural career as an articled pupil in her brother's firm, Klingender & Alsop, sometime between 1907 and 1909. On completion of her articles circa 1912, she officially became Victoria's first qualified female architect. She remained employed in her brother's firm for seven years in total. During 1912, after colleague Raymond Synott was elevated to partnership, she accompanied him to Sydney to assist in the establishment of a branch office there, known as Klingender, Alsop & Synott. In 1923, when new legislation made it compulsory for architects to become registered in Victoria, Ruth Alsop was one of the first females to do so (after Vera Lane, Muriel Stott, Gwen Jones and Lucy Wright). She would maintain her registration until the later 1920s.

Ruth Alsop's two elder sisters Edith (1871-1958) and Florence (1874-1958) also followed creative pursuits: the former was a talented painter and the latter a well-known cellist, writer and occasional journalist. None of the Alsop sisters married and, after the deaths of their mother in 1920 and father in 1925, they used their inheritance to fund an extended European tour. Returning in 1930, the three shared a flat in Hopetoun Road, Malvern, and pursued their creative endeavours. While Ruth and Edith both became members of the Arts & Crafts Society, the former did not resume full-time architectural work. However, after a chance commission to renovate a cousin's seaside cottage in 1937, Ruth decided to design and build a house for herself and her sisters. In October 1938, they acquired the title to a block of vacant land on Dorset Road, Croydon, which represented Lot 5 of a large subdivision laid out in 1929. As Florence later wrote in an unpublished memoir:

*We resolved to give up the flat in town and build a little house of our own... Throughout the summer, we paid surreptitious visits to the country where we bought a piece of land about fifteen miles from town. Week by week, we watched the cottage grow. It was specially designed by [Alsop], who, with her architectural training and domestic experience, made an ideal home for our several needs. It was at the time that peace was merging into war. Prices were comparatively moderate. We built just in time, for never since could we have achieved our end.*

The three sisters named the house *Darley Dale*, after their father's birthplace in Derbyshire (their brother Rodney had previously bestowed the name upon his own house in Toorak), and would remain living there together for almost twenty years. After the deaths of Edith and Florence, barely three months apart in 1958, Ruth sold the property and returned to the inner suburbs and took up residence in a block of pre-war flats in Mathoura Road, Toorak. Remaining there for several decades, she died in 1976 at the age of 97 years. Although she never designed another building, her nephew Garnet Alsop (1909-1994), and his two sons David and John, all followed in the family profession and became prominent Melbourne architects.

From 1959, the Croydon house was briefly occupied by a couple from South Australia, and then offered for sale again in September 1962, advertised as "spacious WB residence, seven rooms, all modern conveniences, tiled roof, wall-to-wall carpets, electric HW service, established garden, in superiors residential area near golf links". The next owners of the house were bank manager Robert Anderson and his wife Corrie, who lived there for over twenty years. In 2004, the house was enlarged with a second storey addition.

### Physical Description

The house at 161 Dorset Road, Croydon, is a simple weatherboard dwelling with a hipped roof clad in terracotta tiles and an asymmetrical street frontage with timber-framed double-hung sash windows. Formerly a single storey dwelling, it has been enlarged by a partial second storey addition (2004) that was designed in a matching style, closely echoing the forms, finishes and detailing of the original (and, according to the working drawings, re-using some of the original roof tiling and windows). The new roof combines hipped and pitched forms and incorporates half-timbered gables to three sides.

The tall front fence, of shaped timber pickets, is not original.



## Comparative Analysis

According to academic Dr Julie Willis, who provided the definitive account of Ruth Alsop's career in her 1995 thesis on pioneer female architects of Victoria, this house at Croydon represented the "only piece of architectural design that can be wholly attributed to Victoria's first female architect". Although Alsop is known to have previously undertaken renovations to the house of an unidentified cousin, described only as "a seaside cottage", this has not been conclusively located and, in any case, would not have been located within what is now the City of Maroondah.

Within a municipal context, the house has few direct comparators. While research has identified a number of other buildings designed (or co-designed) by female architects, they are all much later in date. These include several early post-war houses by the acclaimed husband-and-wife partnership of John & Phyllis Murphy, such as the Haviland House at 30-36 Vasey Concourse, Croydon (1953), the Murray House at 98 Dorset Road, Croydon (1954), the Bennetts House at 10 Russet Road, Ringwood (1955) and the Dexter House at 46-48 Dickasons Road, Heathmont (1956). However, it was not until the later 1960s that buildings solely attributable to a female architect would next appear in what is now the City of Maroondah. Dutch-born architect Mrs Jeanette van Wyk, who settled in Croydon, went on to design a house for her own family at 77 Montana Parade (c.1971) and several other local projects including the Johanna Hospital at 295 Maroondah Hospital (1974; demolished). More recent manifestations of the theme include Edmond & Corrigan's award-winning Ringwood Library at Civic Place (1995; demolished), which involved principal Maggie Edmond.

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

*Darley Dale*, the former Alsop Residence at 161 Dorset Road, Croydon, is a bungalow-style two-storey weatherboard house with a terracotta tiled roof. Erected in 1939, it was designed by Miss Ruth Alsop, Victoria's first qualified female architect, for herself and her two unmarried sisters, Florence and Edith.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house, excluding the second storey addition. Specific elements of significance include the original weatherboard cladding, terracotta-tiled hipped roof (at the lower level), double-hung sash windows and the timber-posted corner porch.

*How is it significant?*

The former Alsop Residence satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Maroondah's history.

*Why is it significant?*

The former Alsop Residence is significant for the following reasons:

The house is significant as the only independent architectural project that can be attributed to Ruth Alsop (1879-1976), acknowledged as the first woman to become qualified as an architect in Victoria. A member of large and creative family, Ruth was the elder sister of Rodney Alsop, a more well-known (if short-lived) Melbourne architect, in whose city practice she commenced her own career, joining him as an articulated pupil as early as 1906. Although employed in her brother's office for some years, she never established her own practice. To date, only two examples of her independent work have been identified: the renovation of an unidentified cousin's "seaside cottage" in 1937, and this house in Dorset Road, Croydon, which Alsop designed for herself and her two single sisters. Although altered by a second storey addition, the house is still the only building known to have been designed by Victoria's first female architect. (*Criterion H*)

## References

Julie Willis. 'Women in Architecture in Victoria, 1905-1955: Their Education and Professional Life', Ph D Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1997.

ARBV membership file on Ruth Alsop. Unit 1, VPRS 8838/P1, PROV.

## Originally identified by

Built Heritage Pty Ltd.



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	SHOP / OFFICE BUILDING	<b>Citation No</b>	HO168
<b>Other name/s</b>	Melba Hall; Melba Recreation Hall (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	37 C8
<b>Address</b>	25-27 Exeter Road CROYDON NORTH	<b>Date/s</b>	1926-27
<b>Designer/s</b>	Unknown	<b>Builder/s</b>	Ford & Hardidge



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, June 2020

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Community facilities	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Hall - public	<b>Intactness</b>	Good (façade altered c1930s)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External paint controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior alteration controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls		

### Place History

The building at 25-27 Exeter Road, Croydon North, currently used as offices and formerly as a retail outlet, was originally a public hall known as Melba Hall, purpose-built in 1926-27 by a local community activist group known as the Croydon North Progress League.

Commercial development along this part of Exeter Road, adjacent to the prominent intersection of Dorset Road and the Maroondah Highway, commenced in the early 1920s after public servant John Joseph McEvoy (1865-1946) and his wife Rose relocated from Hawthorn to take up residence, circa 1920, in a timber dwelling on the north-east corner of Exeter Road and Maroondah Highway (then known as Lilydale Road), formerly occupied by blacksmith Henry Wayland. There, as local historian Muriel McGivern has noted, "Mrs McEvoy later set up a store and sold knick-knacks".

At the time, residents of fledgling suburbs often formed groups to agitate for local improvements. Two such groups had already emerged in this area by 1925: the Croydon North Progress Association and the Brushy Park Progress League. After a combined meeting in September 1925, the two groups opted to merge into a single entity, the Croydon North Progress League. Meetings were initially held in John and Rose McEvoy's home, but, by the end of the year, had transferred to the Croydon North State School, recently re-established on the west side of Brushy Creek. Amongst the united league's early achievements was the erection of two community noticeboards, and successful agitation for a local post office (*Lilydale Express* 16/10/1925:3). The latter, housed in McEvoy's Store (with Rose as inaugural postmistress) opened on 1 November 1925.

With a local shop, school and post office in operation by the end of 1925, the group turned its attention to provision of a purpose-built meeting place. This came to a fore during 1926, as membership of the Croydon North Progress League approached one hundred, reportedly making it one of the largest such groups in Melbourne. In September, after a formal deputation to the Shire of Lilydale, the hall scheme was debated at the group's monthly meeting. While McEvoy posited that a larger building (costing £1,000) would be better for future needs, a local councillor countered that a smaller hall, measuring 30 by 40 feet (costing £700), would be more affordable and easily upgraded by working bees (*Lilydale Express* 10/09/1926:5). At the end of the meeting, twenty league members were nominated to serve as guarantors for the project.

In early 1927, it was reported that "in order to provide for the erection of a public hall in Croydon North, an area of land has been acquired from Mr J J McEvoy" (*Argus* 31/01/1927:16). The land, at the other end of the expanding Exeter Road commercial strip, stood at the corner what was then called Brushy Creek Road (now Karingal Street). The land title was transferred to three members of the Croydon North Progress League: David Birch (Honorary Secretary), F J Stenning (Honorary Auditor) and Ernest Beckhurst (one of several joint vice-presidents). Plans were drawn up for a simple gable-roofed timber building with a rectangular plan measuring 60 feet (18 metres) by 27 feet (8.2 metres), containing a large hall (42 x 26 feet) with a stage at one end (eight feet wide) and a rear kitchen, with detached toilets to the rear boundary of the block.

Construction of the hall was nearing completion by July, when David Birch submitted copies of plans and specifications to the Department of Public Health to seek approval for the hall to be opened for public use. While no architect was mentioned, the builders were cited as Ford & Hardidge, a local firm based in Lusher Street. Birch's correspondence also noted that "arrangements have been made for Dame Nellie Melba to open the hall on Saturday next at 3pm". Already well-known as Australia's most famous opera singer, Melba (*nee* Helen Porter Mitchell, 1861-1931) had resided in Lilydale since 1916, but her local links went back even further. Her father, noted Melbourne builder David Mitchell (1829-1916) bought property in Lilydale in the late 1870s, which he developed as a limestone quarry, dairy and factories for ham, bacon, cheese and soap. After retiring as a builder, he opened butcher's shops at Lilydale and Croydon; at various times, several of his other children also resided in the area, at Ringwood, Croydon and Lilydale.

The new hall bearing Melba's name was officially opened by her on Saturday, 31 July 1927, when "Dame Nellie motored from *Coombe Cottage* [her home in Lilydale], a distance of about eight miles, arriving at 3pm" (*Age* 01/08/1927:11). The event was attended by "a large gathering of residents of the surrounding district", as well as the president of the Shire of Lilydale, several councillors, and three Parliamentarians (the local members of the House of Representatives, Legislative Assembly, and Legislative Council). Presented with a bouquet from Myra Hardidge, the builder's teenage daughter, Melba took to the stage, reportedly "arranged in a most artistic setting". After "tumultuous applause", she gave a speech in which she reiterated that "she had been associated with the district since her birth. It has always been dear to her father and was always dear to hear, for it was beautiful and full of possibilities". Ever the builder's daughter, she was moved to observe that "it delighted her to know that the comfortable little hall had been built entirely of Australian wood, and she was proud that such a fine building was to be called after herself".

Melba's association with the new hall did not end with the official opening; as later reported, she "continues to take a practical interest in the Melba Hall at Croydon" (*Argus* 29/11/1927). In November, she organised for students from the Conservatorium of Music in East Melbourne to perform at Melba Hall to raise funds for purchase of furniture; her involvement included arranging for a baby grand piano to be provided at the venue. The concert, which took place on Saturday, 3 December, was well-attended and widely reported by the Melbourne press. Along with brief reports in the *Herald* (05/12/1927:12) and *Table Talk* (08/12/1927:50), a lengthy review in the *Argus* provided especially detailed coverage of the event, noted to have taken place "in a country hall in Croydon North, more than two miles from the nearest railway stations and situated picturesquely in the midst of apple orchards and dairy farms" (*Argus* 05/12/1927:18).



After the opening, it was reported that Melba Hall would host “concerts, meetings and entertainments of various kinds”. During 1933, several fundraising events were held, including a dancing competition in aid of St Vincent’s Hospital. Towards the end of that year, a local couple who lived nearby took legal action against Rose McEvoy, alleging that attendees at a recent dance had engaged in behaviour “to the annoyance and injury of complainants” (Age 02/11/1933:11). The judge ruled in their favour, with McEvoy deemed responsible for ensuring higher standards of behaviour from patrons. It was evidently also during the 1930s that the hall’s façade was remodelled in a fashionable domestic bungalow style. Use of the hall seems to have petered out during the early years of WW2, with a memo from June 1942 stating that “the hall has not been in use for some months”. The following year, when the McEvoy family left Croydon North and moved back to Hawthorn, the former Melba Hall was acquired by Eric Izod, a travelling salesman from Camberwell.

Little is known of the use of the hall thereafter. When Exeter Road first appeared in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* in 1959, there were entries for the post office, general store and another shop, but nothing further west, to the corner of what was then called Old Brushy Creek Road (ie, Karingal Street). In the next edition, a new entry appeared for two flats between the second shop and the corner. This is confirmed by Muriel McGivern who, writing in 1967, noted that Melba Hall had recently been converted into two flats. This use seems to have continued until the end of the decade, when ownership of the property passed from Eric Izod to a company, Permette Pty Ltd. In recent decades, the building has accommodated commercial/retail use.

### Physical Description

The former Melba Hall is single-storey weatherboard building with a broad gabled roof, clad in corrugated steel sheeting with timber-lined eaves. Originally symmetrical with a central projecting porch, the street façade is now asymmetrical with an off-centre porch comprising a subsidiary gabled rooflet supported on a pair of tapering rendered pillars on squat clinker brick plinths. The slightly off-centre front doorway is flanked by two boxed windows with pairs of timber-framed double-hung sashes; the window to the left (west) side is set right at the edge of the façade so that it forms a corner window with a matching bay along the side (west) elevation. The west façade otherwise contains a group of three taller windows, and one smaller window that is now concealed. At the far (north) end is an external door.

A skillion-roofed wing extends across the full width of the rear (north) side of the building. This wing has a door to the rear and another boxed window, with multi-paned double-hung sashes, facing west.

### Comparative Analysis

#### Early public halls in the City of Maroondah

The first purpose-built public meeting spaces in the study area were the mechanics institutes at Ringwood (Melbourne Street) and Croydon (Mount Dandenong Road), which both opened in 1909. These buildings were similar in form: weatherboard halls with gabled rooflines, and detailing evocative of contemporary residential architecture (eg, fretwork verandah at Ringwood, and half-timbered gable ends at Croydon). This domestic character anticipated the bungalow-style Melba Hall, built nearly two decades later. Neither of these two mechanics institutes, however, still evokes this residential style. The Ringwood building was demolished in the late 1960s and its counterpart at Croydon was remodelled in 1937, its original façade concealed by a new cream brick front in the fashionable Moderne style. Re-badged as the Croydon Hall, the building still stands, and is included on the heritage overlay schedule [HO108].

During the inter-war period, two new public halls emerged in what is now the Croydon North area: Melba Hall on Exeter Road, and Dorset Hall on the Maroondah Highway. According to Muriel McGivern, the two halls were both erected during 1927, although their sequence of Public Building file numbers confirms that Dorset Hall (PB 6759) slightly predated Melba Hall (PB 6888). As McGivern further explained, “great rivalry existed between the bodies of sponsors, for each desired to endow their respective project with the name of the Croydon North Public Hall”. This came to a fore in April 1927, when the owners of the Exeter Road building requested that the local press make it clear that their building was the Croydon North Public Hall, whereupon the counterpart on Maroondah Highway was daubed with the slogan “Cheerio Hall”.

Ironically, Dorset Hall proved to be the more enduring venue, as it operated as a public meeting-place into the post-WW2 era, and well after Melba Hall was converted into flats. Dorset Hall remained standing at 335 Maroondah Highway (latterly, a minor landmark beside the Bird & Bottle Restaurant at No 333) until it was destroyed by fire in 1976. Its role as a meeting place for Croydon North residents was duly resumed by a new building, the Brushy Park Hall, which opened in Hughes Park in 1977.

### Places associated with Nellie Melba

As Dame Nellie Melba herself said on the day she officially opened the hall bearing her name, her family had a long connection with what was then the Shire of Lillydale. Her father's local associations, dating back to the late 1870s, remain evidenced by the Cave Hill Limestone Quarry site (formerly known as the David Mitchell Estate Quarry as recently as until 2002), now addressed as 4 Melba Avenue, Lillydale. In the late 1920s, part of his former *Cave Hill Farm* was purchased by his youngest daughter, Mrs Dora Lempriere (1873-1958), who renovated a former manager's cottage and lived there for some time; after her death, the property was acquired by the Lillydale Adventist Academy (now Edinburgh College), which still operates from the site, at 33-61 Edinburgh Road. Melba's own former residence, *Coombe Cottage*, still stands at 673 Maroondah Highway, Coldstream. All of these sites, however, are located within the portion of the former Shire of Lillydale that is beyond the present-day boundaries of the City of Maroondah.

The part of the Shire of Lillydale that was severed in 1923 to form the Shire of Croydon (and thus comprise part of the City of Maroondah) contained several places with Mitchell family connections. David Mitchell's butcher shop in Croydon, erected in 1907 at what later became 118 Main Street, was a grand double-fronted building in reinforced concrete. Its link with Melba was deemed worthy of mention when the shop was offered for sale almost fifty years later (*Herald* 21/06/1954:3). As Muriel McGivern noted, the shop site was later redeveloped with new premises for another firm of butchers, Armours Pty Ltd (McGivern:29).

Two of Melba's siblings are known to have resided in the study area. In 1916, her sister Isabella (1866-1950) and brother-in-law, estate agent Thomas Patterson, purchased property in Croydon: a sprawling nineteenth-century weatherboard homestead known as *Montana*, which occupied a hilltop site off Mount Dandenong Road. While it is unclear how long the property was owned by the Pattersons (who maintained permanent residence in Kew), Melba is known to have visited them at *Montana*, as she reportedly quipped "I have the house [ie, *Coombe Cottage*] but you have the view" (quoted in McGivern:191). Writing in 1967, McGivern noted that *Montana* was still standing at that time, having been recently bought by a local chemist intent on restoring it. The house, latterly addressed as 1-5 Currong Grove, Croydon, was demolished c2011 and its large site subdivided for several new houses, although some mature trees were retained. Melba's youngest brother, William Henry Ernest Mitchell (1875-1956), is known to have settled in Wonga Road, Ringwood, in the mid-1930s and later erected a new house for himself at what is now 147-151 Dorset Road, Croydon. An imposing brick house designed in the Tudor Revival mode, set in a garden designed by Edna Walling, the property is currently included on the heritage overlay schedule [HO19].

As such, Melba Hall is probably the last remaining building in the City of Maroondah that can claim a direct link with Dame Nellie Melba. While she is known to have visited her sister and brother-in-law's property off Mount Dandenong Road, it has since been demolished. By contrast, her brother's house in Dorset Road still stands, but, as it was erected some years after her death, she would never have visited him there.

### **Statement of Significance**

#### *What is significant?*

The former Melba Hall at 25-27 Exeter Road, Croydon North, is a domestically-scaled single-storey gable-roofed weatherboard building with an asymmetrical façade that incorporates half-timber gable ends and a projecting porch with tapered pillars on brick plinths. Erected in 1926-27 by a local progress association, the hall was intended as a public meeting place and was named after (and officially opened by) the eminent opera singer Dame Nellie Melba, who was then residing in nearby Lillydale.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire building. Specific elements of significance include the gabled roofline, weatherboard cladding, double-hung windows (to the side elevation), and its asymmetrical street façade with bungalow-style detailing (boxed windows and gabled porch with clinker brick piers and tapered roughcast pillars).

#### *How is it significant?*

The former Melba Hall satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

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

#### *Why is it significant?*

The former Melba Hall is significant for the following reasons:

The building is historically significant as an early community-oriented building in the Croydon North area. Erected in 1926-27 by the then newly-formed Croydon North Progress Association, it provides evidence of the enthusiasm, ambitions and aspirations of a group of forward-thinking residents who banded together to improve conditions in an area that, hitherto sparsely-populated, began to undergo more intensive expansion from the early 1920s. Initiated and co-owned by the McEvoy family, who opened the first general store (and later the post office) along this stretch of Exeter Road, the hall served as an important focus for community events and gatherings until WW2, and remains as the oldest surviving building in a local retail strip that has since grown into an important commercial precinct. (*Criterion A*)

The building is aesthetically significant for its distinct domestically-inspired expression, with asymmetrical façade, half-timbered gable ends and projecting porch (with tapered pillars and clinker brick plinths) that reflects the prevailing tastes in bungalow-style residential architecture. Built right to the street boundary, at the far edge of this established retail strip, the building remains as a distinctive and eye-catching element in what is otherwise, now, an entirely post-WW2 commercial streetscape. (*Criterion E*)

The building is historically significant for its direct association with Dame Nellie Melba, Australia's most celebrated opera singer, who not only consented to this local public hall being named in her honour but also accepted the invitation to officially open it in July 1927. The naming of the hall acknowledged the enduring connection that Melba (and other members of the Mitchell family) maintained with what was then the Shire of Lillydale (part of which was severed in 1961 to form the Shire of Croydon). One of numerous sites in the former Shire of Lillydale to retain associations with Melba and her family, the former hall is the only one still standing in the City of Maroondah (which absorbed the former Shire/City of Croydon) with which she had a direct connection, having visited the venue at least twice before her death in 1931. (*Criterion H*)

#### **References**

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Muriel McGivern, *A History of Croydon: A Second Volume* (1967), pp 69-70.

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#### **Originally identified by**

Built Heritage Pty Ltd.





<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HOUSE	<b>Citation No</b>	HO169
<b>Other name/s</b>	Myers Residence (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	36 K8
<b>Address</b>	114-116 Exeter Road CROYDON NORTH	<b>Date/s</b>	1969-70
<b>Designer/s</b>	John Wolt	<b>Builder/s</b>	John Wolt



*Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, June 2020*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential building (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Excellent
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External paint controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior alteration controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls		

### Place History

The house at 114-116 Exeter Road, Croydon North, was erected in 1969-70 for sales manager Leon Myers and his wife Barbara, and was designed and built for them by John Wolt, a Dutch-born builder and timber joiner based in nearby Wonga Park.

The site of the Myers' house formed part of an elevated tract of land along the south side of Exeter Road, extending west from Fairview Avenue, which had been subdivided in 1962 to create three allotments. The westernmost block, designated as Lot 1, was originally owned by a Mrs Alice Farran. Over the next few years, ownership passed through various others before the title was acquired in December 1969 by Leon and Barbara Myers, who were then residing in Molesworth Street, Kew.

At the time the Myers family acquired Lot 1, drawings for a house on the site had already been prepared, amended and endorsed for a building permit. The drawings, dated 19 October 1968, do not bear the title block of an architectural firm but identify only a builder, John Wolt of Croydon. A date-stamp records that a building permit was issued by the City of Croydon on 25 November 1969. The building was completed by July 1970, when it was profiled in the *Herald* newspaper as a one of several recent entries in the “Finest in Family Living” competition, sponsored by the newspaper and the Housing Industry Association. The article confirmed that “this individually planned A-frame house was designed and built for its owners by John Wolt”, and drew special attention to the “exposed beam construction with Stramit integrated roof and ceiling system with inbuilt thermal insulation” (*Herald*, 03/07/1970:24).

Of Dutch origin, John Wolt (1915-1981) was born in Groningen as Jan Hendrik Wolthuis, and migrated to Australia in August 1950. Within a year, he had taken up residence in Heidelberg Road, Clifton Hill, from which address he advertised his professional services as a “home builder” (*Age* 23/06/1951). The business duly expanded and, in May 1957, became a company, John Wolt & Staff Pty Ltd. This period saw Wolt credited as builder for a modernist cabaret/coffee shop in Blackburn, designed by compatriot architect Hank Romyn (*Cross Section*, 05/1958). By then, Wolt had married and was living with his wife Johanna in Yarra Road, Wonga Park. In parallel with his building firm, Wolt operated a joinery workshop at 302 Yarra Road, known as the Wonga Park Joinery Cottage. The building was identified in the *City of Manningham Heritage Study Review* (2006), deemed to be of “local interest, for its long use as a joinery run by John Wolt”.

As a builder and joiner, Wolt is best known for the St Thomas’ Church at Langwarrin (1964), an A-framed building designed by Wystan Widdows and David Caldwell. In Caldwell’s self-published memoir of the project, Wolt figures as a major character. Caldwell recalls being pleased that Wolt had tendered for the job, as he had already undertaken prior (unspecified) work for the architects; furthermore, Caldwell noted that Wolt was “very keen on the design” of the proposed church (Caldwell: 12). Ultimately, Wolt not only won the contract to erect the building, but also (in his capacity as a timber joiner), a separate contract to fabricate all of the bespoke timber furniture that Caldwell designed for the church (Caldwell: 30). In his memoir, the architect acknowledged Wolt’s contribution in glowing terms, stating “the high standard exhibited in the construction and finish of the building and furniture are owed in very much to the intense interest and enthusiastic co-operation of the builder, John Wolt, and his staff, enthusiasm which extended beyond the bounds of mere contractual responsibility” (Caldwell:47).

Wolt’s involvement with the construction of the Church of St Thomas, and his acknowledged admiration for its design, clearly influenced the A-framed house that he designed and built at Croydon North just a few years later. As Caldwell has noted, Wolt’s appreciation for the church was still evident in the 1970s, when he took his mother (then visiting from the Netherlands) to see the building. Wolt’s professional activity during that decade include acting a builder for the first stage of the Rudolf Steiner School in Wonga Road, Warranwood (1972) and a house in Lister Avenue Kew (1975) designed by architect and fellow Croydon resident Graeme Law. The latter, a distinctive split-level concrete block house on an angled plan, was profiled in the *Age* as a “House of the Week” (*Age* 01/03/1976:14). According to Caldwell, the late 1970s saw Wolt join an Australian expedition to climb Mount Everest, in the role of official photographer. But, as Caldwell, adds “some months after his return from the expedition, John was diagnosed as having a rare form of bone cancer. He died soon after, a superb craftsman lost to the Australian scene” (Caldwell, p 42). At that time of his death in June 1981, Wolt and his wife still resided in Yarra Road, Wonga Park.

In the meantime, the Myers family continued to own and occupy their A-framed house in Exeter Road for thirty years. During their long tenure in residence, they added a detached shed (1971) and a swimming pool (1976) but otherwise made no major alterations to the house itself. Since the family sold the property in 1999, there have been only two subsequent owners.

### Physical Description

Occupying an elevated site at the crest of a hill, the house at 114-116 Exeter Road, Croydon North, is a two-storey A-framed dwelling, with the characteristic steep gabled roof that extends down to ground level and creates acute triangular elevations at either end. The prominent enveloping roof is clad with metal tray-decking and, at ground level, incorporates a projecting flat-roofed dormer-like bay window to each side.

At the two end walls, the roof has raked eaves (creating a distinctive prow-like form) and timber bargeboards connected by a horizontal tie. The north elevation, fronting Exeter Road, also has a projecting balcony to the upper level, with horizontal timber plank balustrade and slender supporting columns.



## Comparative Analysis

As author Chad Randl has noted, while A-framed structures are strongly associated with the 1960s and '70s, the notion of enclosing space between two angled planes is a primitive one with many historical antecedents around the world. As the popularity of A-framed construction experienced renewed popularity in the USA in the post-WW2 era, this inevitably spread to Australia. Here, a few progressive architects experimented with the A-frame form in the later 1950s and early '60s, typically in the design of churches and dwellings. Among the early A-framed houses in Victoria were the Ferguson House in Glen Waverley (Chancellor & Patrick, 1959), the Mitchell House in Balwyn (Tad Karasinski, 1963) and the Woodburn House at Ocean Grove (W J Woodburn, 1964). However, it was not until the later 1960s that the form would become more ubiquitous, not least of all due to the increasing number of standardised A-framed houses offered by project housing or kit home companies, frequently promoted as seasonal dwellings for alpine or coastal areas. Two examples, both dating from 1966, were the *Wilcroft A*, designed by architect Peter Hooks for Wilcroft Homes Pty Ltd, and the T124, introduced by the Age/RAIA Small Homes Service. By the early 1970s, A-framed dwellings had become a popular choice for holiday houses, most commonly owner-built to standard designs rather than individually conceived by an architect.

While A-framed houses had established a pervasive presence in Victoria's coastal and alpine areas by the late 1970s, they remained far less common in a suburban residential context. Examples have been recorded in areas now considered to be the outer edges of the Melbourne metropolitan area (eg Wattle Glen, Emerald and Mount Eliza) but they are seldom found in the more established suburbs. Only two other examples have been identified in what is now the City of Maroondah. One of these was a large A-framed studio in the expansive grounds of a house at 26-32 Quamby Road, Ringwood North (date unknown); however, this is no longer extant, as the entire site was cleared c2011 and subdivided for housing and a new cul-de-sac, Newton Court. A surviving example at 88 Felix Crescent, Ringwood North (1970) is a relatively small house with a truncated mansard-like roofline rather than a true A-frame. More evocative of the modest holiday dwellings in coastal areas, this house is smaller, simpler and much less architecturally distinguished than the former Myers House in Croydon North, with its elevated siting, acute profile and boldly raked eaves.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is significant?*

The former Myers House at 114-116 Exeter Road, Croydon North, is a two-storey A-framed house, with the characteristic steeply gabled roof extending to ground level, creating triangular elevations at either end, with raked eaves and a projecting first floor balcony to the street frontage. Erected in 1960-70 for sales manager Leon Meyers and his wife Barbara, the house was designed and built by John Wolt, a highly-regarded Dutch-born builder and timber joiner who lived and worked for many years in nearby Wonga Park.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire building. Specific elements of significance include its steep gabled roofline with broad raked eaves and horizontal tie beam, the dormer-like side windows, and the projecting timber-framed front balcony.

### *How is it significant?*

The former Myers House satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history;
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

### *Why is it significant?*

The former Myers House is significant for the following reasons:

The house is architecturally significant for its distinctive and unusual expression, demonstrative of the iconic A-framed structural form that was widely popular in the 1960s and '70s. In Australia, the expression of a building with a steep sloping roof extending down to ground level, forming acute triangular elevations to either end, was mostly expressed in ecclesiastical architecture (especially in the early 1960s) and as modestly-scaled seasonal residences in coastal and alpine areas.

Intended as a permanent suburban residence rather than a mere weekender, this particular example in Croydon North is both larger and more confidently articulated than A-framed houses typically seen in seaside resorts, which were often built to standard designs of project house or kit home companies. With its dramatic angular silhouette, bold raking eaves and its prominent siting on a cliff-like block at the crest of a hill, overlooking two public reserves, the house remains as an unexpected and eye-catching element in the local landscape. (*Criterion E*)

The house is architecturally significant as a rare example of an A-framed house in a suburban context, intended as a full-time family residence rather than a holiday dwelling in a seasonal resort area. While houses of this type became ubiquitous in coastal and alpine regions, they were rarely built as permanent homes in the Melbourne metropolitan area. One of only three A-framed buildings known to exist in the City of Maroondah (one of which was a backyard studio, since demolished), it now stands out as the largest and most architectural sophisticated example when compared to a smaller and much simpler counterpart still extant in Ringwood North. (*Criterion B*)

## References

Certificate of Title, Volume 8377, Folio 096, created 18 October 1962.

John Wolt, "Residence for Mr and Mrs L C Myers at Lot 1 Exeter Road, Croydon", working drawings, undated (amended 19 October 1969. City of Croydon Building Permit 11.385, dated 25 November 1969. City of Maroondah.

Robert Clarke, "Past winners try again", *Herald*, 3 July 1970, p 24.

David Caldwell, *The Church of St Thomas, Langwarrin: A Potted Construction History* (Heathmont: David Caldwell Publications, 1999).

Chad Randl, *A Frame* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004)

## Originally identified by

Built Heritage Pty Ltd.



*Photograph of the house as it appeared soon after completion  
Source: Herald 3 July 1970, p 24.*



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	House	<b>Citation No</b>	HO180
<b>Other name/s</b>	Secomb Residence	<b>Melway ref</b>	50 A12
<b>Address</b>	122 Heathmont Road HEATHMONT	<b>Date/s</b>	1945-46 (house) 1954, 1958, 1971, 1985 (additions)
<b>Designer/s</b>	Frank Secomb (all stages)	<b>Builder/s</b>	Frank Secomb (all stages) George Rawlings (stonemason)



*Photograph by City of Maroondah, October 2020*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential building (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Good (sympathetic changes)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External paint controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior alteration controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls		

### Place History

The house at 122 Heathmont Road, Heathmont, was built in 1945-46 as the residence of architect Frank Secomb (later, a partner in the major firm of Eggleston, McDonald & Secomb), who designed and erected it himself, and was also responsible for several subsequent phases of addition over five decades.

The house was built on what had previously been a large orchard property. A survey map of Ringwood, prepared by the Department of Defence in 1916, shows scant development between Canterbury Road and Dandenong Creek, with five scattered dwellings that included two on Dickasons Road, a canted dead-end road that was still the only side-street between Wantirna Road and the railway line. The land bounded by Dickasons Road and the railway, with narrow frontage to Canterbury Road, was owned by G W Muller, a postal employee, whose brother John farmed the property (known as *Airedale*) as an orchard.

In 1926-27, this wedge-shaped land between Dickasons Road and the railway line, comprising the Muller's property (Crown Allotments 14c) and adjacent Allotment 14a, was subdivided to create Heathmont Road and two new north-south thoroughfares, Bennett Avenue and Orchid Street, linking it to Dickasons Road. The subdivision, known as the *Charm View Estate*, comprised 83 residential allotments, plus a further ten narrow-fronted sites along Canterbury Road, clearly intended for commercial use. Laid out not long before the Depression, the new estate was slow to develop, and an aerial photograph from 1945 shows only a few houses had been built by that time, mostly along the east side of Dickasons Road. In April 1946, a double block on the south-east corner of Heathmont Road and Bennett Avenue, comprising Lots 54 and 55 of the subdivision, was acquired by architect Frank Secomb.

The son of a builder, Francis Newton Secomb (born 1918) grew up in Dandenong, where he attended local state and high schools before transferring to Caulfield Technical School. In 1934, he secured a scholarship from the Education Department that enabled him to commence architectural studies at Melbourne Technical College, with a second scholarship in 1937 allowing him to continue. While still a student, Secomb became involved in his father's building company, preparing basic plans for houses. One such commission, dating from 1936, was a house for Mrs Edith Angles on the *Charm View Estate* at Heathmont, on the north corner of Heathmont Road and Bennett Avenue. Secomb recalls visiting the site during construction, "learning to ride my big brother's Norton 500 motor bike up and down between the fruit trees in Mr Muller's abandoned orchard in a location now known as Bennett Avenue".

In 1940, Secomb enrolled at the University of Melbourne Architectural Atelier, where his classmates that year included such future luminaries as Robin Boyd, John Mockridge, Eric Lyon, Des Smith, Lloyd Orton and Don Lumsden. Atelier classes were held in the evening, which allowed students to work for architects during the day. Secomb took a position with A S & R A Eggleston, a well-known city firm that traced its origins back to the sole practice of Alec Stanley Eggleston (1883-1955), founded in 1907. Eggleston's office thrived, becoming well known for residential work and projects for the Methodist church. In 1934, his son, Robert Alec Eggleston (1911-2000) joined the office and, three years later became full partner in the firm known thence as A S & R A Eggleston. During 1941, the worsening wartime situation not only prompted the closure of the Eggleston office but also the cessation of atelier classes. As Secomb ruefully recalled, "I was in my last year when Pearl Harbour got bombed [on 7 December 1941], so that was the end of that". Responding to these circumstances, the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects initiated a special series of examinations so that students could qualify prior to enlisting for military service. Secomb took his examination and promptly joined the Australian Army in November 1941; nine months passed before he received notification that he had been elected as an associate of the RVIA (*Dandenong Journal* 02/09/1942:8). During the war, Secomb served with the New Guinea Force (1943-44), where he utilised his design skills for setting up fake bomb targets and camouflaging anti-aircraft guns, before joining the Engineer-in-Chief's Staff, Land Headquarters (1944-46), based in St Kilda Road.

In June 1945, while still on active service, Secomb became engaged to a fellow Dandenong resident, Betty Irene Williams (1922-2013). After the couple married in September, they debated whether to build a house on Loughnan's Hill in Ringwood North, or on the corner of Heathmont Road and Bennett Avenue, opposite the house that Frank's father and brother had built for Mrs Angles (to Frank's design) a decade earlier. They opted for the latter, attracted by its elevated position with "a clear view of the Dandenongs". Secomb began to develop a design for the house, conceived on an elongated canted plan to exploit the views. Funded by Secomb's deferred army pay, construction began the day after his military discharge on 4 January 1946. Much of the work was undertaken by Frank himself, with the assistance of his brother, his father, his father's business partner Alan Buchanan, and an elderly Cornish stonemason name George Rawlings, who lived in Boronia and had previously undertaken a great deal of work for Secomb's father's business.

At the time, wartime restrictions on building materials and labour (imposed in 1942 and not fully rescinded until the early 1950s) meant that many homebuilders were obliged to seek alternatives to conventional building techniques or materials. Secomb was able to source several tonnes of stone from a local quarry, which, over the course of several months, was shaped on site by Rawlings, using a machete hammer, and carefully laid in random courses with projecting ledges to create shadow effects across on the façade. The result, as Secomb noted, was "a very good example of the old stonemason's work". The gabled roof of the house was clad in corrugated cement sheeting, and the external walls in timber shingles. The latter choice was not just informed by the unavailability of more conventional materials, but because Secomb found them appealing. He recalled: "I'd had some experience with them, and I was rather attracted by them. I did go to a lot of trouble to sort them out".



Secomb further recalled, “Betty and I moved in when it was at very early lock-up stage. No electricity for the first few weeks, and it took most of my spare time for several years to complete the house and garden”. In its original form, the house comfortably accommodated the family, which duly increased with the birth of sons Roger (1948) and Barry (1950). However, it was the incipient arrival of their third child and first daughter Judith (1955) that hastened expansion of the family home. In November 1954, a building permit was issued for an extension at the south-east end, providing a new master bedroom. Because the land sloped away, the addition was partly elevated on a basic steel frame. As Frank noted, “I sunk holes, put in two five-inch diameter posts, hung a beam on the outside and built a very nice bedroom”.

The year 1954 also saw a significant change in Secomb’s professional life. While stationed in New Guinea during WW2, he had renewed acquaintance with former colleague Robert Eggleston and another younger architect, Roderick McDonald (1922-2014). When the office of A S & R A Eggleston re-opened in 1948, McDonald joined the practice, duly followed by Secomb. When the firm’s founder, Alec Eggleston, retired in 1954, the office was re-configured as a new partnership, styled (in alphabetical order) as Eggleston, McDonald & Secomb. After securing several high-profile early projects (notably the Beaurepaire Centre at the University of Melbourne), the firm rose to become one of Melbourne’s most respected commercially-oriented architectural practices, well known for large-scale institutional work that included major buildings at all three university campuses, as well as factories, hospitals and office buildings. In 1959, the firm opened a branch office in Canberra, and went on to undertake projects across Australia as well as New Zealand, Hong Kong and Indonesia.

As a senior partner within his firm, Secomb became a specialist in contract law and administration. Elected as a fellow of the RAIA in 1964 (“in recognition of notable contribution to the advancement of architecture”), he served as a RAIA councillor for eight years and also as the institute’s representative on the Council of the Standards Association of Australia for four years. Notwithstanding his rising professional status, Secomb chose to remain living in his original Heathmont house for well over fifty years, during which time, as he quipped, “it grew like Topsy”. Additions, for which Secomb not only acted as architect but also as builder, included a detached garage with matching shingled cladding (1958), tool shed (1971), carport (1976) and an *en suite* bathroom to the master bedroom (1977). In 1985, two years after retiring from Eggleston, McDonald & Secomb, he demolished the pergola to the terrace and replaced it with a projecting glass-walled sunroom.

The house remains in the ownership of the Secomb family.

### Physical Description

Occupying a large corner site, the Secomb Residence at 122 Heathmont Road, Heathmont, is a single-storey timber-framed house on an elongated angled plan. The low-pitched roof, originally of corrugated cement sheeting, had since been reclad with metal tray decking. External walls are mostly clad in timber shingles, with contrasting stonework to a wide slab-like chimney at the north end of the house, and a feature wall along the Bennett Avenue side. The stonework is roughly hewn and laid in random courses, with some of the courses slightly projecting to create shadow lines across the surface.

The Heathmont Road frontage, somewhat concealed from public view by dense perimeter planting, incorporates large windows with timber-framed double-hung sashes. At each end of this long canted façade are full-height multi-paned steel-framed window walls. At the south (master bedroom) end, french doors open onto a narrow balcony with simple metal railing. Where the land falls away, the sub-floor area has been infilled with additional multi-paned window walls, creating a conservatory-like space. At the north (living room) end, the original steel-framed french doors, and adjacent projecting sunroom (with full-height timber-framed windows, shingled cladding and projecting rafters) open onto a stone terrace, with wide steps and planter boxes.

The Bennett Avenue elevation is asymmetrical, with a shingled wall that incorporates a long and narrow window (contained fixed panes of reeded glazing), and a blank stone wall with a recessed porch containing the front door. At the right end, a second doorway opens onto a stone terrace and steps.

The property includes the original detached garage (clad in matching timber shingles), the adjacent tool shed (clad in vertical and horizontal sheets of corrugated galvanised steel) and carport (a simple timber-framed trabeated structure). There is also a freestanding barbecue of uncoursed stone construction, with a broad tapering flue, and a tennis court enclosed by a tall cyclone wire fence and brick retaining walls.

## Comparative Analysis

### Architect's own houses

Many architects have resided in the study area in the second half of the twentieth century, of which well over a dozen are known to have designed their own houses. Frank Secomb, who started work on his house in Heathmont in early 1946, must be considered as the first of these local architects to build for himself in the post-WW2 era. In this sense, his closest comparators are Kevin Pethebridge and Frank Bell, who each designed and built a house for himself in Croydon during 1950. Pethebridge's residence, at 82 Hull Road, was a skillion-roofed weatherboard dwelling of innovative modernist design, which attracted considerable press attention in its day. Still standing, it has been recommended for an individual heritage overlay as part of the present study. Bell's house at 24 Dorset Road, a gable-roofed red brick house of more conventional form, was apparently never published in any magazines or newspapers. It was demolished in 2013.

Later examples of architect's own houses include the former residences of W V (Bill) Mitchell at 7 Herbert Street, Ringwood (1954), which has been much altered, and David Caldwell at 13 The Outlook Heathmont (1958), a distinctive timber house on an diamond-shaped plan, which also attracted contemporary publicity. Gerald McKeown's own house at 13 Linden Road, Ringwood North (1959), a minimalist flat-roofed brick dwelling, was demolished in 2019. Ian Smith designed two houses for himself in Heathmont: a basic gabled one-bedroom dwelling at 34 Coven Street (c1959), followed a decade later by a larger and more architecturally sophisticated two-storey system-built house at 4 Swain Court (1970). Another architect who built two houses for himself was Hank Romyn, who initially settled in Croydon in a modest weatherboard house at 225 Dorset Road (1960), later relocating further along the street to a larger and grander two-storey concrete brick house, with detached architectural studio, at No 161-63 (1964). The second residences of Smith and Romyn have both been recommended for heritage overlays as part of the present study.

### The work of Frank Secomb

The first house that Frank Secomb designed in Heathmont was the one that his father and brother built in 1936 for Edith Anges. A relatively conventional double-fronted weatherboard house, it still stands at 118 Heathmont Road, albeit much altered (notably, by a major second storey addition). Secomb's own house at nearby No 122 was the first of several post-WW2 projects that he would undertake in his locality, where he resided for over fifty years. His own house is contemporaneous with a corner shop that he designed at 129 Canterbury Road for Cutting & Dawson's General Store, which was Heathmont's second retail outlet when it opened in March 1946. The shop (which still stands) accommodated early meetings of the Heathmont Advancement League, of which Secomb was a founding member and honorary architect, in which capacity he designed the public hall (later kindergarten) at 41 Viviani Crescent (1950-51). Secomb was also honorary architect for the local Methodist church, and designed its original hall at 81-89 Canterbury Road (1951-52). Still standing, the two halls have much in common. Conceived and built with limited funds and resources, they are simple weatherboard structures with few architectural pretensions. Both have been recommended for heritage protection in the current study, for associations with the growth of Heathmont's community infrastructure in the early post-WW2 period, and with local architect Secomb.

Secomb's involvement with the establishment of the local Methodist Church (of which he was a parishioner) saw him take responsibility for several other building works in an honorary capacity, including the Sunday School hall at the rear of the original church (1956), site master-planning and concept design for the new church (1960), subsequent involvement on the development of the new church (1966-67; documented by Roy Colomb), and a new youth hall (1979). For much of this period, Secomb was otherwise professionally active as a partner in the thriving post-WW2 architectural practice of Eggleston, McDonald & Secomb; the new youth hall was officially designed under that firm's auspices. The firm is also credited with the design of a similar hall at the rear of the nearby East Ringwood Methodist (later Uniting) Church complex at 28 Freeman Street, with which Secomb was presumably also involved.

By his own admission, Secomb became sought-after as an architect in the fledgling Heathmont community, and designed "quite a few" houses in the area. However, he can no longer recall exactly how many, nor the details of clients and addresses. One confirmed example was a house commissioned by Douglas Muller, a grandson of the orchardist who formerly owned the land on which Secomb built his own house. Completed circa 1948 and still standing at 202 Canterbury Road (on the southwest corner of Heathmont Road), Muller's house is a modest two-storey house in grey brick, with low gabled roof and simple detailing. It is far less architecturally distinguished than the architect's own home, just a little further down the road.



Secomb's early work, predating the establishment of Eggleston, McDonald & Secomb in 1954, is otherwise represented by a number of houses that he designed in Dandenong. Amongst those that he designed for his father's building firm was a group of modest weatherboard dwellings in McFarlane Crescent, Dandenong. One example, dating from 1941, still stands at No 16. Secomb went on to design a more prepossessing (but still relatively conventional) brick house at 60 Jones Road (1948-49) for his friends Maurice and Gwenda Jarvis. Neither of these houses, however, is as architecturally interesting as Secomb's own in Heathmont.

It is worth noting also that Eggleston, McDonald & Secomb, of which Secomb was partner from 1954 until his retirement in 1983, was a large commercially-oriented firm that completed a wide range of projects (eg, office buildings, factories, banks, schools and university buildings) but rarely did residential work. While the firm completed a few apartment developments, a ski lodge and an inner-suburban estate for the Ministry of Housing, it did not otherwise embrace the design of single family dwellings.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is significant?*

The Secomb Residence at 122 Heathmont Road, Heathmont, is a single-storey gable-roofed house on an elongated angled plan, with an external cladding of timber shingles and a prominent chimney and feature walls in random coursed rough-hewn stonework. It was designed and built in 1945-46 as the private residence of noted architect Frank Secomb (a founding partner of the eminent post-WW2 firm of Eggleston, McDonald & Secomb), whose family remains in residence.

Significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house (as realised to Secomb's design between 1945 and 1985, the matching shingled garage and the freestanding stone barbecue. Specific elements of significance include the canted plan, low roofline, shingled cladding, stone chimney and large windows. The tool shed, carport and tennis court are not considered to be significant.

### *How is it significant?*

The Secomb Residence at 122 Heathmont Road, Heathmont, satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics
- Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period
- Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.

### *Why is it significant?*

The Secomb Residence is significant for the following reasons:

The house is aesthetically significant as an intact and notably early manifestation of post-WW2 modernist residential architecture. Designed by a member of the new generation of young progressive architects that included Robin Boyd, John Mockridge, Eric Lyon and Des Smith (all of whom had been Secomb's atelier classmates), the house ably expressed the emerging modernist sensibility in its elongated linear plan form (angled to exploit views to the north), low gabled roofline and generous windows opening to a sun terrace. Dating back as far as 1945-46, the house can be considered as one of the first truly confident expressions of post-WW2 modernist residential architecture in what is now the City of Maroondah. While the house has been extended and altered, these works have been executed by its original architect/owner in a sympathetic manner that can only to be considered to enhance, rather than detract, from its significance. (*Criterion E*)

The house is architecturally significant for its unusual form and distinctive materiality, which represent an uncommonly sophisticated approach to homebuilding in the austere period immediately after WW2. The use of materials such as timber shingles and stone, as an alternative to conventional weatherboard and brick, is indicative of a time when conventional building materials and techniques were in short supply due to wartime restrictions, and homebuilders were obliged to seek alternative and often creative solutions. Befitting a dwelling designed by a emerging young architect for his own use, Secomb not only adopted such an alternative palette but expressed it a confident and adroit fashion, with the dark-coloured shingled walls and paler rough-hewn stonework (with projecting courses to create shadow effects) imparting a distinctive organic character to an otherwise conventionally modernist building. (*Criterion F*)

The house is significant for its enduring association with architect and pioneer local resident Frank Secomb. Best known as a founding partner in the important post-WW2 architectural firm of Eggleston, Macdonald & Secomb, he lived in Heathmont for over fifty years. One of the first people to settle in the area after the war, Secomb was a founding member (and honorary architect) of both the Heathmont Advancement League and the local Methodist congregation. The suburb's first and only resident architect during its initial and most important boom of development in late 1940s and early 1950s, Secomb was responsible for the design of Heathmont's first post-WW2 shop, public hall and first purpose-built church, as well as several houses. During his long period in residence, he remained as honorary architect to the Methodist church well into the 1970s, and undertook various phases of addition to his own house into the 1980s. His own house, still occupied by the family, thus provides an important link with an architect who was both significant in the history of Heathmont, as well as in the broader story of post-WW2 architecture in Melbourne. (*Criterion H*)

## References

Certificates of Title, Volume 6940, Folio 874, created 17 April 1946.

*Eggleston, McDonald & Secomb*. No place or date [circa 1982].

Gerry Robinson (ed), *Heathmont Recollections* (2006)

[includes 1996 reminiscence from Frank Secomb; excerpt provided by courtesy Russ Haines]

Neil Clerehan, "Innovator was the driving force behind many of the great post-war buildings of Melbourne", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 November 2015 [obituary for Rod McDonald]

Michael Doran, "Avoid disasters!", *Mountain View Mail*, 30 October 2018, p 1.

[report of Frank Secomb's one hundredth birthday, including some biographical notes]

Interviews with Mr Frank Secomb, 2 September and 22 October 2020.

## Originally identified by

Built Heritage Pty Ltd.



Composite panoramic photograph of the Heathmont Road frontage, taken by City of Maroondah, October 2020  
Note stone terrace, steel-framed window wall to living room (right), projecting sunroom with timber-framed glazed doors, and master bedroom wing (far left) with another steel-framed window wall, balcony and glazed infill below.



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS	<b>Citation No</b>	HO170
<b>Other name/s</b>	LDS Croydon Ward Chapel	<b>Melway ref</b>	51 A3
<b>Address</b>	58-64 Hewish Road CROYDON	<b>Date/s</b>	1962-64 1978 (rear addition)
<b>Designer/s</b>	Maxwell A Maine (based on a standard LDS design)	<b>Builder/s</b>	Gilbert O Nieman



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, June 2020

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Religion	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Church	<b>Intactness</b>	Good (rear additions)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External paint controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior alteration controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls		

### Place History

The building at 58-64 Hewish Road, Croydon, was built in 1963 as a place of worship (also referred to also as a house of worship, meeting-house, temple or chapel) for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (aka LDS, also known as the Mormons), a Christian religious denomination founded in the USA in 1830.

While a few "Mormonite" settlers (as they were then known) were recorded in Adelaide as early as 1840, the LDS did not make formalised inroads into Australia until 1851, when the first missionaries arrived and soon established branches in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Newcastle. These were not entirely successful, and when the missionaries returned to the USA in 1857, only the Melbourne branch remained. Another group of missionaries arrived here in 1869, but local membership did not start to burgeon until the 1890s, when LDS congregations were re-established in Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane.

Australia's first purpose-built LDS chapel, opened at Brisbane in 1904, hastened the end of an era where the church's activities were characterised by open-air "street meetings" or, when limited funds allowed, in hired venues. The inter-war era saw further growth of church infrastructure, with chapels in Melbourne (1922), Adelaide (1923), Sydney (1924), Perth and Hobart (both 1925), and others in the later 1920s and '30s. While LDS missionaries were evacuated to the USA during WW2, they returned in 1946 and, four years later, the mission headquarters moved from Sydney to Melbourne. In 1955, the mother church in Salt Lake City, Utah, announced a multi-million dollar scheme to expand facilities in the Pacific region. Nineteen chapels were proposed for Australia, including three in Melbourne (at Fairfield, Moorabbin and Blackburn), six in NSW and two in WA (*Age* 07/01/1957:3). As these were designed by the LDS architects in Utah, and construction overseen by building staff sent to Australia, there were problems in dealing with local climate, materials and regulations. Nevertheless, the church continued to thrive and, over the next three years, membership of the LDS missions in Australia had doubled to over 10,000. This included a congregation in Croydon, which was formed in September 1959 and initially held meetings in local halls.

In 1960, LDS congregations in Australia was restructured according to the church's new "stake" system: a network of administrative groups (each overseen by a Stake President), divided into a series of wards (each overseen by a Bishop) and smaller branches (each overseen by a Branch President). As Mormon historian Marjorie Newton has reflected, the introduction of the stake system would have "the greatest effect on the growth and stability of the LDS church in Australia". Initiated in October 1960, the Melbourne Stake comprised three wards (for the existing chapels at Fairfield, Moorabbin and Blackburn) and six branches at Croydon, Ballarat, Bendigo, Dandenong, Frankston and Geelong, where new chapels would be built (*Deseret News* 12/11/1960:27). While these new buildings would be based on standard designs prepared by the LDS architects in Utah, it was resolved that a local architect be appointed to adapt them and oversee construction, thus avoiding the pitfalls that plagued the previous phase of chapel construction in Australia. Fortunately, one of the leaders of the Melbourne Stake, who served in the capacity as Second Counsellor (ie assistant) to the Stake President, happened to be a qualified architect: Maxwell Maine.

Maxwell Allan Maine (1923-2017) studied architecture at Melbourne Technical College (now RMIT) and the University of Melbourne, and, during WW2, served with the RAAF for five years. Apparently raised as an Anglican, Maine married at St John's Church, Malvern East, in 1949. By then, he was already working as a draftsman; in 1952, he entered the architectural office of Stephenson & Turner, where he would remain for eleven years. He and his wife had evidently joined the LDS by 1958, when their marriage was solemnised in the New Zealand Temple. Maine held various positions in the local church hierarchy, including clerk of the Bentleigh Branch, Second Counsellor to the respective Presidents of the Victorian District and the Elders' Quorum, and chairman of the Building Finance Committee. He was still working for Stephenson & Turner when, circa 1961, he was appointed as architect to the LDS church in Australia. The post, formally styled as Area Architect to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Australian Construction, seems to have initially been an honorary one, as Maine would remain with Stephenson & Turner until the end of 1963.

Maine's working drawings for the new Croydon Ward chapel, dated February 1962, proposed a single-storey gable-roofed building on a spreading T-shaped plan. The dominant north-south wing contained the chapel proper, meeting hall and facilities, and the smaller east-east wing contained classrooms and offices. While the drawings bear a title block with Maine's name and home address in Highett, the design itself was not entirely his: rather, it was an adaptation of a standard chapel design from the LDS architects in Utah. Reference to the church's catalogue of standard plans confirms that the Croydon building is based on a design formally known as the "Vernon (VE 61-608) Small Mission Standard Plan". Developed in 1961, this standard design was reportedly "used several times in Australia, a few times in the Hawaiian Islands, and at least three times in the southeastern United States" (Jackson:268). Several of its more distinctive features, namely the broad spreading roof, canted front bay, concrete block feature walls and slender tower on a Greek cross plan, all recurred other standard chapel designs of the 1960s and '70s, effectively defining a recognisable aesthetic style for the LDS church around the world.

The new Croydon Ward chapel was to be built on a double-width block on the south side of Hewish Road, comprising Lots 7 and 8 of a 53-lot subdivision that had been laid out in 1940. Formerly owned by Elsie Templeton, a widow from Ashburton, the two lots were acquired in March 1963 by the LDS mother church, formally cited on the Certificate of Title as "the Corporation of the Presiding Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Days Saints of Salt Lake City, Utah, USA". Two months later, the Department of Health approved plans and specifications for the new building, and construction could commence. On 11 May, a "ground breaking" ceremony was held, attended by eighty people including the LDS State President.



In the late 1950s, the LDS mother church developed an initiative known as “building missionaries”, whereby new chapels around the world were erected on a voluntary basis by American church members who were skilled tradesmen. In contemporary documentation, construction of the Croydon Ward chapel is credited to G O Nieman, of Mosman, NSW. This was Gilbert O Neiman (1914-2004), a building contractor from Santa Cruz, California. Work had been completed by June 1965, when the Department of Health granted approval for the building to be opened for public use. By then, the LDS Australian Construction office had relocated from Victoria to NSW. Maine, who resigned from his position with Stephenson & Turner in December 1963, subsequently settled in Sydney and would remain as Area Architect to the LDS church for many years. He still held the position in 1975, when he prepared plans for minor works to the Croydon Ward chapel. Three years later, when the building was extended at the rear, the plans were prepared not by Maine but, rather, by R F Neale & Associates, a Frankston-based architectural and engineering firm.

### Physical Description

The Croydon branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints at 58-64 Hewish Road, Croydon, is a single storey white-painted brick building with a low gabled roof clad in metal tray decking. Originally laid out on an asymmetrical T-shaped plan, presenting an elongated double-fronted façade to the street, the building has since been extended to the rear, with a projecting wing that now forms an F-shaped footprint.

The elevation to Hewish Road is double-fronted and asymmetrical, comprising a wide projecting bay to the left (east) side, and an elongated recessed wing to the right (west). The projecting bay is dominated by a broad gabled roofline, with a mostly blank façade comprising a central canted wall flanked by two feature walls of decorative blockwork. To the left side, the spreading roof envelopes a recessed entry porch with glazed doors, sidelights and highlights. At the corner of the porch is a low planter-box, beyond which a tall brick tower rises up through the roof. The tower is laid out on a rotated Greek cross plan, and terminates in a capped pier-like spire, surmounted by a flagpole. The street façade of the projecting wing, to the west, is simply expressed with continuous bays of windows above a brick spandrel.

### Comparative Analysis

As the only example of a place of worship erected by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, this building is a unique presence in the City of Maroondah. Considered in a much broader context as a local manifestation of early/mid-1960s ecclesiastical architecture, its comparators include the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour in Bedford Road, Ringwood (Burrows & McKeown, 1961), the Ringwood Uniting (former Methodist) Church at 30-32 Station Street, Ringwood (F C Armstrong, 1962-63), the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church at 55-57 Wantirna Road, Ringwood (Hank Romyn, 1965) and the Croydon Uniting (former Presbyterian) Church at 6 Tallent Street, Croydon (Keith & John Reid, 1966). Architecturally and historically, these buildings have little in common with the LDS church, although the Ringwood Uniting Church and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church perhaps bear a superficial resemblance in their use of gabled rooflines, feature walls (respectively of Castlemaine slate and textured blockwork) and slender brick towers (with that of the Uniting Church utilising the same Greek cross plan, albeit in face brick rather than painted). In both cases, however, the overall effect is entirely different from building in Hewish Road, with its almost domestic character and low composition spreading across a double-width sloping site.

In a historical but not architectural sense, the LDS Church at Croydon can be compared to local places of worship that were erected in the post-WW2 era by a growing number of “newer” Christian denominations that were hitherto unrepresented in the study area. These include buildings associated with the First Church of Christ, Scientist, at 26 Station Street, Ringwood (c1957), the Seventh Day Adventists at 17-19 Surrey Road, Croydon (c1962) and at 28 Mullum Road, Ringwood North (1974), the Christian Life Centre at 222 Oban Road, Ringwood (1972; demolished), the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses at 22 Berry Road, Bayswater North (c1973), and the Truth & Liberation Concern in 265 Canterbury Road, Bayswater North (1976).

Ultimately, the building in Hewish Road, built to a standard plan developed by LDS church, can only be compared to other examples of its own sub-type. Places of worship of this same standard design are known to have been erected in elsewhere in Victoria, in the first half of the 1960s. Two regional examples, at 1-3 Grammar Street, Ballarat (c1961), and 55 Kosciuszko Street, Traralgon (c1964), are exactly identical to that at Croydon, while four others appear to be a mirror-reversal of the same design: at 41-45 Garnet Avenue, Wangaratta (c1963), 20 Eagleview Crescent, Bell Park (c1965) and 33 High Street, Yarraville (c1964). An example at 490 Deakin Avenue, Mildura (c1965), is basically the same mirror-reversed design, but with concrete breeze block screen walls instead of the solid blockwork feature walls.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is significant?*

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Croydon Ward), at 58-64 Hewish Road, Croydon, is a single-storeyed white-painted brick building with a broad gabled roofline and an elongated and asymmetrical double-fronted façade incorporating canted bay, flanking feature walls of decorative concrete block, and a recessed entry marked by a slender tower on a Greek cross plan. Erected in 1962-64 as part of a major phase of Australian expansion for the LDS church, it was erected to a standard design supplied by the mother church in Utah, adapted and supervised by Melbourne architect Maxwell Maine, a senior LDS member who had been appointed as the church's "Area Architect".

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire building, excluding rear additions. Specific elements of significance include the broad gabled roofline, concrete blockwork (including feature walls) and the recessed entry porch with integrated planter box and cruciform tower with stepped spire.

### *How is it significant?*

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Croydon Ward) satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

### *Why is it significant?*

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Croydon Ward) is significant for the following reasons:

The chapel is historically significant for associations with an intensive phase of post-WW2 expansion for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, based in Salt Lake City, Utah. While the denomination had been represented in Australia since the mid-nineteenth century, local congregations did not formalize until the 1890s, followed by further growth in the 1920s and even more exponential expansion from the early 1950s. While three chapels were erected in Melbourne in the mid-1950s, this number was to quadruple during the 1960s, after the mother church initiated a major program of building construction. Designed in early 1962, the Croydon Ward building was one of the first of these new chapels in Victoria, and the first one in the Melbourne metropolitan area. It thus provides early evidence of the most significant phase of this church's post-WW2 expansion across Australia, when membership reportedly increased by 2,000%. (*Criterion A*)

The chapel is aesthetically significant for its highly distinctive and unusual architectural style. With a broad gabled roofline, simple fenestration and low, spreading composition across a large double-width allotment, the building exudes an almost domestic character that, at a local level, represents a notable departure from other manifestations of post-WW2 ecclesiastical architecture, both of traditional or more progressive style. These and other key elements of the design, such as the stark white-painted wall surfaces, canted bay with flanking feature walls of decorative concrete blockwork and the slender Greek-cross tower, all form part of a distinctly identifiable aesthetic that, recurring across so many of the standard chapel designs developed by the LDS church in the 1960s and '70s, became "house style" indelibly associated with the denomination's expanding global presence in the latter half of the twentieth century. (*Criterion E*)

## References

- "Melbourne Stake organized from Southern Australia", *Deseret News* [USA], 12 November 1960, pp 3, 15 [includes biographical detail on architect Maxwell Maine]
- "Mormon church plans big building programme", *Age*, 13 May 1961, p 8.
- Certificate of Title, Volume 8388, Folio 816, created 3 July 1962.
- Public Building File No 13,388. Unit 1582, VPRS 7882/P1, PROV.
- Maxwell A Maine, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Croydon Branch", working drawings, dated 26 February 1962 and 25 January 1963. Unit 122, VPRS 8044/P3, PROV.
- Marjorie Newton, *Southern Cross Saints: The Mormons in Australia* (1991).

Richard W Jackson, *Places of Worship: 150 years of Latter-Day Saint Architecture* (2003).  
[especially Chapter 10: "The Building Missionary Program expands, 1960-64"]

**Originally identified by**

Richard Peterson with Peter Barrett, *Maroondah Heritage Study: Stage Two* (2003), Volume 1.





<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HOUSE	<b>Citation No</b>	HO155
<b>Other name/s</b>	Pethebridge Residence (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	51 D3
<b>Address</b>	82 Hull Road CROYDON	<b>Date/s</b>	1947-48
<b>Designer/s</b>	Kevin Pethebridge	<b>Builder/s</b>	C C French



*Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, April 2018*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential buildings (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Good
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Place History

Erected in 1947-48, the house at 82 Hull Road, Croydon, was designed by architect Kevin Pethebridge as a house for himself and his family, incorporating a home office for his professional practice.

Born on 24 August 1921, Kevin Harry Pethebridge commenced his architectural career in 1940 when he enrolled at the University of Melbourne Architectural Atelier and completed two years there, both funded by the RVIA War Memorial Scholarship. Concurrent with these evening classes, he worked during the day for Norman C Smith, a minor architect with city office in Queen Street. Pethebridge remained with Smith for three years and then, in July 1943, enlisted with the Australian Army. There, he became one of a number of young men with architectural aspirations to become attached to the 3rd Field Survey Company, which was responsible for cartographic surveying in remote parts of Australia.

Pethebridge's colleagues in the 3rd Survey Field Company included several other young men who had begun architectural studies and would go on to enter the profession. Chief amongst them were Robin Boyd, Frank Bell, Neil Clerehan, Neil Jessup, Stewart Joy, John Tipping, Duncan Caporn, and Robert "Wally" Hodgson. Whilst serving together, Pethebridge became especially friendly with Boyd and Bell. In June 1945, all three collaborated on an entry in a design competition sponsored by the *Sun* newspaper and resolved that, upon returning to civilian life, they would enter into partnership. Towards the end of the year, they duly established private practice as *Associated Designers*. Early the following year, after they became registered, the name was amended *Associated Architects*. Despite wartime restrictions on labour and materials, the office secured a surprising number of commissions including several houses and a small factory. The partnership ended in mid-1947, when Boyd resigned to become inaugural director of the new Age/RVIA Small Homes Service.

After Boyd's departure, Pethebridge and Bell remained in practice as *Associated Architects*. It was during the immediate post-Boyd phase that Pethebridge designed a new house for himself to be built in Hull Road, Croydon. In 1946, he had married Miss Elizabeth Hilton, and the couple moved into a pre-war house in Kooyong. The birth of their first child, in January 1947, may have been the impetus to seek a larger family home. Pethebridge's drawings for the new house, dated September 1947 and credited to "Associated Architects: K H Pethebridge and F R Bell", depict a skillion-roofed timber dwelling on a stepped rectilinear plan, with bathroom and two bedrooms in the front wing and the kitchen, laundry, dining room and generous living area to the rear. Pethebridge would later revise this layout to include a dividing wall to the master bedroom, creating a small space for his architectural studio.

Erected by Charles French, a local builder who lived in Holloway Road, the house was completed by 1949. In August of that year, it received its first published plaudit when it was declared "Bouquet of the Month" in *Smudges*, broadsheet of the Victorian Architectural Students Society (founded by Robin Boyd, who initiated the amusing regular feature where recent buildings were named as either a Bouquet or a Blot of the Month). The write-up on Pethebridge's house, illustrated with photographs by Frank Bell, drew attention to the vast window wall, high ceilings, contrasting external cladding and lively colour scheme: it was summarised as "a small house, just eleven squares, but everywhere the conception is broad and generous, the development flows freely and naturally and the simple detail completes an organic whole". More publicity ensued. In The house was profiled in the *Age* newspaper in January 1950 (in Robin Boyd's weekly Small Homes column, praised as "an outstanding new house") and then appeared in the May issue of the *Australian Home Beautiful*, including a full colour photograph on the cover. In 1951, the house garnered even wider coverage when it featured in *Architecture*, the national journal of the RAIA. As late as 1954, photographs of the house were still occasionally being re-published in the pages of the *Australian Home Beautiful*.

In the early 1950s, practising from his home office in Croydon, Pethebridge designed numerous buildings in the area, including houses, commercial premises and church-related projects. However, his own residence therein proved short-lived. Around 1957, he and his wife returned to Melbourne's inner south to live in a Boom-style terrace in South Yarra; this coincided with the relocation of the Pethebridge & Bell office to a new city address at 409 St Kilda Road. The partnership ended a few years later, whereupon each resumed sole practice under his own name. While Frank Bell continued to reside in Croydon until the 1970s, his erstwhile partner Kevin Pethebridge remained staunchly an inner suburbanite, later moving to Toorak.

### Physical Description

Set well back from the street frontage, the former Pethebridge Residence at 82 Hull Road is a single-storey skillion-roofed timber dwelling, predominantly clad in weatherboards. Although the house is difficult to see from the street, recent aerial photographs confirm that it retains its original plan form, comprising two offset but interlocking rectangular wings, each with a separate skillions.

The north elevation of the bedroom wing, which remains visible from Hull Road, is distinguished by a continuous bay of tall rectangular windows, with timber-framed casement sashes, and a full-length weatherboard spandrel below. The street side of the rear wing, originally finished with contrasting vertical timber cladding and incorporating a full-height timber-framed window wall and tall pergola, remains obscured by dense foliage and its current condition cannot be readily ascertained from the street.



## Comparative Analysis

Designed in late 1947, Pethebridge's own house in Croydon can be considered one of the first projects to emanate from the office of Associated Architects following the departure of original staff member Robin Boyd earlier that year. Stylistically, the house has much in common with Boyd's own residential work of the period, especially in its use of contrasting types of timber cladding, bold skillion roofs, varied fenestration and incorporation of semi-outdoor spaces such as verandah and decks defined by screens and pergolas. A pertinent local comparator, therefore, would be the Joep House at 30 Bayswater Road, Croydon, designed by Boyd in 1948-49. This also has a stepped plan form, weatherboard cladding and varied fenestration, but has a low pitched roof rather than a skillion. As an early example of a post-war house adopting then then-rare skillion roof form, Pethebridge's own house can be compared to the Hume-Cook Residence at 3-5 Braemar Street, Croydon, designed by Roy McCulloch (1947-48). Even Robin Boyd himself was cognizant of the parallels between these two houses, as he cited both examples when he discussed the post-war re-emergence of the skillion roof in his 1952 book, *Australia's Home*.

While it is reasonable to assume that an architect's own house must surely represent one of the best examples of his or her work, a review of other dwellings by Pethebridge & Bell confirms that the former's house was truly exceptional within the partnership's broader oeuvre in the Croydon area. Even Frank Bell's own house, at 24 Dorset Road (1949-50; demolished) was a more conservative gable-roofed dwelling in red brick and weatherboard, although it similarly incorporated a north-facing window wall. Later houses that Pethebridge & Bell designed in the area do tend to be rather less distinguished than Pethebridge's own, typified by such conventional gable-roofed examples as the Ievers Residence at 299 Dorset Road (c.1953) and the Patience Residence at 7 Dixon Avenue (1954). Another surviving example, at 4 Avalon Grove Ringwood (1964), is a somewhat more interesting two-storey house with window wall, but is of much later vintage, dating from Pethebridge's sole practice after he parted company with Frank Bell around 1959.

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The house at 82 Hull Road, Croydon, is a single-storey skillion-roofed timber house on a stepped rectilinear plan. It was designed in 1947 by architect Kevin Pethebridge as a house for himself and his family, incorporating a small room for his architectural studio. Until his family moved elsewhere in the mid-1950s, he not only resided but also practiced architecture from this address, designing a number of local buildings in partnership with architect and fellow Croydon resident Frank Bell.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house. Specific features of significance include the low gabled roofline, weatherboard cladding, brick chimney, continuous bay of timber-framed windows, and full-height window wall to the main entry.

*How is it significant?*

The former Pethebridge Residence satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics
- Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.
- Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Maroondah's history.

*Why is it significant?*

The former Pethebridge Residence is significant for the following reasons:

The building is significant as an important early example of modernist residential architecture in Victoria. Designed as early as 1947, it demonstrates many of the characteristic forms, details and themes that would recur as local modernism matured into the early 1950s and became ubiquitous thereafter. These include the articulation of the house as separate volumes to express zoned planning within, the use of bold skillion roof, slab-like chimneys and varied fenestration (eg. window walls, strip windows, clerestories). These innovative aesthetic qualities were critically acknowledged at the time, with the house being lauded in publications that included *Smudges*, the *Age*, the *Australian Home Beautiful* and *Architecture* journal. (Criterion E)

The building is significant as one of the first skillion-roofed houses to be erected in Melbourne after the end of the Second World War. Although many flat-roofed houses had been built in Melbourne in the 1930s and '20s (and even earlier), the re-introduction of the skillion roof in post-war residential architecture was seen as a controversial issue, with a number of local councils (including the Shire of Lilydale) refusing to allow such houses to be built. Breaking new ground in post-war modernist residential architecture, and paving the way for innumerable skillion-roofed houses of the 1950s, this pioneering example demonstrates a high degree of creative achievement. (*Criterion F*)

The building is significant as the former home and architectural office of Kevin Pethebridge, a leading Melbourne architect and former associate of Robin Boyd. In partnership with fellow Croydon resident Frank Bell, Pethebridge ran an architectural practice known as Associated Architects that, for most of the 1950s, was Croydon's only resident architectural office. It was responsible for the design of many projects in the during the district's important phase of early post-war expansion, including not only houses but also commercial premises and church buildings. The architect's own home and studio in Hull Road retains a special association with Pethebridge, a person of importance in Maroondah's history. (*Criterion H*)

### References

"Bouquet of the Month", *Smudges*, No 60 (August 1949), np.

Robin Boyd, "Colour", *Age*, 25 January 1950, p 4.

"Skill with Skillions", *Australian Home Beautiful*, May 1950, pp 40-41, 45, 53.

"Victorian Architect's House", *Architecture*, April/June 1951, pp 58-59.

### Originally identified by

Heritage Alliance, *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria: Stage One* (2008).



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	CROYDON CENTRAL SCOUT HALL	<b>Citation No</b>	HO171
<b>Other name/s</b>	First Croydon Scout Hall (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	50 J2
<b>Address</b>	33 Kent Avenue CROYDON	<b>Date/s</b>	1929 1939, 1953, 2001 (additions)
<b>Designer/s</b>	Arthur Pretty?	<b>Builder/s</b>	William McAdam



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, June 2020

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Community facilities	<b>Condition</b>	Good
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Hall - Girl Guide/Scout	<b>Intactness</b>	Good (front/rear additions)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External paint controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior alteration controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls		

### Place History

The building at 33 Kent Avenue, Croydon, was erected in 1929 as a hall for the First Croydon Scout troop, which had been formed fifteen years earlier. Originally located at the south end of Kent Avenue, near the corner of Wicklow Avenue, the building was relocated to its present site in 2001.

As local historian Muriel McGivern has noted, "the scouting instinct was aroused in the boys of Croydon during World War I, inspired by published stories of scouts helping the war effort by guarding coasts and bridges and carrying despatches" (McGivern:266). The 1st Croydon troop was established in 1915, after three local boys approached Frank Gibson, an orchardist from Wonga Park, to serve as their troop leader. These three foundation members were Frank Holdsworth, Frank Wardrop and Arthur Pretty (son of a local butcher and later to become a well-known and prolific architect in the Croydon area).

As McGivern notes, the fledgling troop first met at the mechanics' institute on Mount Dandenong Road, initially in the cloakroom and, when that became unavailable, in the verandah. When that, too, became unavailable, the troop met "beneath nature's canopy aided by a street light outside Hutchinson's Store" (ie, on the other corner of what is now Civic Drive), then in a shed behind a local shop, then in the schoolroom. In 1921, the troop gained use of the old Church of Christ, which they bought for £50 and planned to move to a site owned by Arthur Pretty's father, Horace. This proved too costly, so the church was sold back to the trustees and the scouts established what proved to be their long-term headquarters in the Parish Hall.

The troop's vision to acquire a building of its own was aided in 1925, when a block of land was donated by Flora Clapperton, who owned a vast property fronting Kent Avenue that she later subdivided as the *Wicklow Heights Estate*. In Later that year, it was reported that that "a movement is on foot to erect a Boy Scout hall in Kent Avenue" (*Argus* 02/06/1925:9). It was further noted that "the necessary steps to raise money have been taken". Evidently, and typically, fundraising took longer than anticipated, as it was not until February 1929 that plans and specifications for the new hall were submitted for approval to the Health Commission. The application was made by Henry Bisley Fleming, Main Street radio salesman and Honorary Secretary of the Croydon Scout Committee, while the guarantors for the building comprised foundation scoutmaster Frank Gibson, schoolteacher Frank Hebbard, and agent George Fleming. On Bisley's application form, the proposed building was described as a "single storey weatherboard hall", to comprise a large gable-roofed hall (30 by 35 feet) with skillion-roofed rear kitchen (30 by 10 feet). Set back 40 feet from Kent Avenue, the building was to have a corrugated galvanised steel roof, external cladding of Baltic pine weatherboards and fibro-cement sheeting, and a small flat-roofed front porch with brick piers and timber railings. While surviving documentation does not identify an architect, it is tempting to surmise that the hall may have been designed by founding troop member Arthur Pretty, who, by the late 1920s, was employed as an architect in the PWD. Although not commencing private practice until 1931, he is known to have undertaken a few bootleg commissions in his local area, including the new Croydon Golf Club premises (1927).

Construction was executed by local carpenter William McAdam, who informed the Commission in mid-May that "I expect to be finished the contract early next week". It was planned for the hall to be officially opened at the end of the month, to coincide with "Scout Week", held nationally in late May each year. The event took place on 25 May, with a Melbourne newspaper reporting that "a recently completed scout hall at Croydon was officially opened last Saturday afternoon by Mr Knox, MLA. Members of the 1st Croydon troop, together with district troops, paraded... led by the Box Hill bugle band" (*Age* 29/05/1929:12). The new hall proved an immediate success. During its first year, it became home to the new 1st Croydon Girl Guide troop while also being used by the scouts for regular meetings as well as special events that included a gymnastics display (*Age* 18/12/1929:14) and "a series of euchre parties" (*Age* 16/04/1930:17). When the next "Scout Week" took place in May 1930, the troop held a special event to mark the first anniversary of the hall's opening, and this continued annually into the early 1930s (*Age* 18/05/1932:10). By then, the hall was being used by thirty Cubs, forty Scouts and six Rovers, as well as the Girl Guides and Brownies.

At the troop's annual meeting in July 1930, it was noted that the final payment of £86 for the new hall had increased their debt, although it had been offset by income of £124 generated by hiring the venue to others (*Age* 16/07/1930:13). Use of the hall for non-scouting purposes burgeoned in the 1930s, when it was hired by such groups as the Croydon Horticultural Society (*Australasian* 24/09/1932:57; *Argus* 12/09/1934:16) and local branches of the Australian Women's National League (*Age* 21/02/1933:7; *Argus* 13/10/1936:3) and the Housewives' Association (*Argus* 07/03/1939:6). Residents also hired the hall for private functions, such as a "coming-of-age" party for Thelma Westcott of Croydon South (*Herald* 31/07/1937:28). This venue's use as a *de facto* public hall continued in the 1940s, with events as varied as a Christof Christ youth rally (*Argus* 10/06/1944:8) and the Liberal Party's hustings for the 1945 state elections (*Argus* 25/10/1945:15).

With use of the hall increasing, its kitchen was extended in 1939, followed by the addition of a larger rear wing in 1953, providing a committee room and separate rooms for Cubs, Scouts, Guides and Brownies. At the time that the Shire of Croydon was created in 1961, the hall accommodated three of the municipality's eight scout troops. These included the 1st Croydon and 4th Croydon, which merged that same year to form a single entity, styled as 1st/4th Croydon. Three years later, after the Victorian Boy Scout Association re-organised its divisions to align with council boundaries, these eight troops, hitherto part of the Lilydale Division, were re-grouped as Croydon Division. By then, the hall in Kent Avenue was shared by the 1st/4th, 2nd and 3rd Croydon troops, as well as the Girl Guides and Brownies, and was reported to be "seriously overcrowded". The problem was somewhat alleviated in 1970, when the 1st Croydon Guides and 3rd Croydon Scouts relocated to a new purpose-built hall in Birdwood Road.



In 1979, the hall was upgraded with a new skillion-roofed front wing, of concrete block construction, which provided toilet facilities. By this time, the property was addressed as 1 Kent Avenue, marking the start of a group of non-residential buildings that included several shops, a builder's yard, service station, police station and the entrance to the Croydon Market, the site of which would be redeveloped in the early 1980s as the new Croydon Shopping Centre. In 1999, it was announced that further expansion of the centre would take place, necessitating the demolition of buildings along the Kent Avenue frontage. The scout hall was removed and relocated to its present site at No 33, just north of the centre car park, re-opening in October 2001. As part of the project, a new wing was added to the front of the hall for the Croydon U3A (University of the Third Age), which had operated from the venue since the late 1990s.

At the time of relocation, the hall was still used by the 1st/4th Croydon troop. Since the early 2010s, it has served as the headquarters of an amalgamated entity, the Croydon Central Scout Group.

### Physical Description

The scout hall at 33 Kent Avenue, Croydon, is a single-storey timber-framed structure that was developed in several stages. Its original 1929 extent, comprising a gable-roofed main hall with a projecting skillion-roofed rear wing, has expanded with a large gable-roofed rear addition and a smaller skillion-roofed front addition.

The original hall has a corrugated galvanised steel roof and painted weatherboard walls with timber-framed windows to the side elevations. The street façade is mostly obscured by the skillion-roofed wing, although the original half-timbered gable end, with a boxed timber louvred vent on carved brackets, remains exposed. A narrow painted sign above the vent states: 1ST CROYDON SCOUT HALL. The front wing, added when the hall was relocated to its present site in 2001, is designed in a matching style, with weatherboard cladding, large rectangular windows with plain architraves (some with multi-paned sashes) and a central double doorway opening onto a timber deck with matching ramp and simple balustrade. A second ramp, with balustrade, extends along the south side of the building to a second entrance with a projecting awning.

### Comparative Analysis

Although scouting emerged in the study area in the early twentieth century, with the 1st Croydon (1915) and 1st Ringwood (1916) troops, only the former furnished itself with purpose-built premises prior to WW2. Following a familiar pattern (and one that 1st Croydon had experienced during its early years), local troops met in existing premises such as church halls, schools, park pavilions and even, in one case, a former factory, and this trend continued into the 1950s and '60s. Ultimately, expansion of scout/guide halls across the City of Maroondah has been almost entirely a post-WW2 phenomenon. The first two examples both appeared in Bedford Park, seven years apart: one for the 1st Ringwood Guides (1955) and another for the 1st Ringwood Scouts (1962). The latter, known as *Bill Wilkins Lodge*, is included on the heritage overlay schedule as HO7. A few more scout halls emerged in the later 1960s, namely two at Heathmont (for the 2nd and 5th Ringwood troops) and another at Hubbard Reserve, Ringwood North (7th Ringwood). However, it was not until the 1970s that they increased at a more intensive rate, with new halls at Lusher Street, Croydon (1st Croydon Guides/3rd Croydon Scouts), Ainslie Park Avenue, Croydon (2nd Croydon Guides/9th Croydon Scouts), Belmont Park, Croydon (7th Croydon) and Heathmont Road, Heathmont (2nd Heathmont).

The Croydon Scout Hall in Kent Avenue is not only the oldest purpose-built scout/guide hall in the City of Maroondah, but also the only one erected before WW2. It predates the earliest purpose-built Guide Hall by 25 years, and the next Scout Hall by 33 years. Research suggests that the building is rare on a broader scale, as few other pre-WW2 scout halls appear to survive in the eastern suburbs. Two counterparts, both dating from 1925, formerly stood at 55 Main Street, Box Hill, and 10 Britannia Street, Mitcham, but their sites have long since been swallowed up by large-scale retail developments. Rare survivors, of comparable bungalow character to Croydon's example, include the 1st Camberwell Scout Hall at 12 Palmerston Street, Camberwell and the 1st Moonee Ponds Scout Hall at 79 Clarinda Road, Moonee Ponds (both 1925).

### Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The Croydon Scout Hall at 33 Kent Avenue, Croydon, is a single-storey weatherboard building. Its original extent, as erected in 1929 for the 1st Croydon Scout troop, comprises a hall with a pitched roof of corrugated galvanised steel and half-timbered gable end and a skillion-roofed rear wing, with a later gable roofed rear addition (1953) and skillion-roofed front wing (2001), both sympathetically designed in a matching style.

The significant fabric is identified as the exterior of the 1929 building, excluding post-WW2 additions. Specific elements of significance include the gabled roofline, weatherboard cladding, original double-hung windows (to side elevations) and the half-timbered gable end with louvered vent.

*How is it significant?*

The Croydon Scout Hall satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history;

*Why is it significant?*

The Croydon Scout Hall is significant for the following reasons:

The building is historically significant for associations with the early development of the scouting movement in what is now the City of Maroondah. It was erected by the First Croydon Scout troop, which was founded in 1915 as the first scout group in the study area (predating Ringwood's counterpart by a year) and occupied a succession of temporary premises before securing land and funds to proceed with erection of a purpose-built hall in 1929. It is significant not only as the first such hall to be erected in the City of Maroondah, but also as the only one to be built before WW2, predating the boom of local scout and guide halls that gradually burgeoned from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s. Unique in the study area, it also appears to be a rare in a broader outer-eastern-suburban context as a surviving pre-WW2 scout hall. (Criterion A, Criterion B)

## References

Muriel McGivern, *A History of Croydon: A Second Volume* (1967), pp 266-268.

Croydon Historical Society, Inc, *Croydon: Then and Now* (2012), p 76.

Barbara Allen, *Looking Back, Looking Forward: The History of Croydon U3A 1992-2012* (2012)

## Originally identified by

Richard Peterson with Peter Barrett, *Maroondah Heritage Study: Stage Two* (2003), Volume 1.



*Photograph of the Scout Hall on its original site at No 1 Kent Avenue, prior to relocation and alteration in 2001  
Source: Croydon Historical Society, Inc, Croydon: Then and Now (2012).*



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HOUSE	<b>Citation No</b>	HO157
<b>Other name/s</b>	Dioguardi Residence (former); <i>Villa Rotonda</i>	<b>Melway ref</b>	49 F6
<b>Address</b>	67 Loughnan Road RINGWOOD	<b>Date/s</b>	1959-61
<b>Designer/s</b>	Ringwood Home Planning & Drafting Service	<b>Builder/s</b>	Giuseppe Dioguardi



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, November 2023

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential buildings (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Good (sympathetic additions)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Place History

The house at 67 Loughnan Road, Ringwood, was built in 1959-51 for Italian-born bricklayer Giuseppe “Joe” Dioguardi and his wife Lina. While the plans were drawn up by the Ringwood Home Planning & Drafting Service, it is likely that Dioguardi had a hand in the design; he was also the builder.

Born on 1 May 1931 in Cerda, on Sicily’s northern coast, Guiseppe Dioguardi was one of seven children of cobbler Gaetano Dioguardi and his wife Francesca. Guiseppe and some of his brothers migrated to Australia in the early 1950s and were followed in 1956 by their parents and paternal grandparents. The extended family settled in Park Orchards, where they occupied a capacious house on a large block at Camber Avenue. This may well have been erected by Guiseppe himself, who had already established himself as a bricklayer.

Guiseppe Dioguardi was still residing in the family home in Camber Avenue in 1958, when he married fellow Italian migrant Lina Simari. Intending to build a house for themselves, the couple acquired a steeply sloping block of land on the south side of Loughnan Road in nearby Ringwood. Plans for a new dwelling were prepared by the Ringwood Home Planning & Drafting Service, a business that had operated for some years from the then recently-completed Midway Arcade on Maroondah Highway. The drawings, dated October 1959, depict a compact flat-roofed brick dwelling spread across three levels to accommodate the slope of the site. In order to take advantage of the expansive southerly views, the house was designed on radial plan: a half-round stairwell bay, fronting Loughnan Road, served as the linchpin for the a series of wedge-shaped rooms that curved around the rear so that each one had a window to the view. Although the drawings bear the title block of the drafting service, and the initials of proprietor L H Reid as delineator, it is likely that this unusual design was resolved with input from Dioguardi himself.

The building permit application, dated November 1959, indicates that Dioguardi intended to build the house himself. Construction began in December, when trenches were dug, and continued during 1960. Work was nearing completion in early 1961, when erection of the second floor walls was underway. The interior fitout, (which included what was later described as “a considerable amount of marble”) evidently took some time. The house was finished, and already occupied by the family, when the building inspector made a penultimate visit in May 1964, after which he noted that the garage at the lowest level was being used as a music room. Ultimately, the family would remain living there for few short years before they offered the property for auction in November 1966. The house was deemed unusual enough to warrant a write-up in the property section of the *Age* newspaper, which referred to it *Villa Rotonda*, a name doubtless bestowed upon it by the Dioguardis. It was lauded as “one of Melbourne’s few fan-shaped houses”, and one “built by an Italian familiar with thus type of architecture in Europe”. Attention was otherwise drawn to the interior fitout, with marble staircase, mosaic floors and an indoor garden, as well as the “drive-through garage” (ie, double entry) at the lowest level, which, at the time of the sale, was still used by the family as a music room.

In 1967, Guiseppe and Lina Dioguardi moved back to Park Orchards, where they occupied one of several houses in Milne Road built for various family members. The couple later returned to Ringwood and took up residence in a conventional triple-fronted brick veneer house that he built in Rosebank Avenue. Giuseppe’s brothers continued to live in the Ringwood area (including Giacomo, who was a fruiterer on Maroondah Highway), while their sister and brother-in-law remained in the original family home in Camber Avenue, Park Orchards. Predeceased by his wife, Guiseppe lived in Rosebank Avenue until his own death in 2014.

The house was renovated c.2022, with external changes that included rendering of the original concrete brickwork, repainting of metal window frames (altering the colour scheme from white to black), infilling an external door to the street façade, and removal of the chequerboard tiles to the front terrace and steps.

### Physical Description

*Villa Rotonda*, at 67 Loughnan Road, Ringwood, is a three-storey flat-roofed house of concrete brick construction [given a plain rendered finish, c.2022], laid out on an unusual radial plan. The symmetrical street façade is dominated by a central semi-circular glazed stairwell that extends across the two uppermost levels, containing full-height metal-framed windows [originally painted white, but repainted black c.2022] with ribbed glass. The front entry, set at the lower level of the stairwell bay, has a pair of matching glazed doors that open onto a porch that follows the same curve, with steps leading down to ground level. Porch and steps [formerly enlivened by a chequerboard finish that was removed c.2022] have simple metal railings. Flanking the central stairwell bay, the front walls of the house project back at a slight angle and contain large windows with metal-framed sashes. The flat roof has narrow unlined eaves, echoed by a projecting concrete canopy along the first floor level. The room to the right side of the front entrance has a separate projecting concrete balcony with matching metal railing. The lowest level of the house contains what was originally intended as a drive-through garage, with an entry at each end accessed by steep driveways. In both cases, the original tilt-up metal garage doors have been replaced by glazed infill.

Although the rear frontage of the house is not visible from Loughnan Road, its distinctive curved facade (incorporating a cantilevered full-length concrete slab balcony at the middle level) can be seen from various public vantage points further south, including Williams Street.

*The alterations made to the street façade c.2022 are not considered to have diminished the significance of the place to the point that a heritage overlay is no longer appropriate*

## Comparative Analysis

With its highly unusual plan form, this house has few comparators at the local level. Its nearest counterpart would be a house on a circular plan at 8 Timbertop Road, Ringwood North. This not only occupies a similarly steep site on Loughnan's Hill but also was built by a European migrant bricklayer as his own home: German-born Carl Strehse, who erected it for himself in the late 1960s but, like Guiseppe Dioguardi, lived there for only a short period before building another (more conventional) house for himself elsewhere.

For his part, Dioguardi does not appear to have built another house even vaguely similar to the *Villa Rotonda*. Those that he is known to have built elsewhere (eg in Rosebank Avenue, Ringwood and Milne Road, Park Orchards) are more conventional hip-roofed brick dwellings. The exception would be an early house at 14 Mines Road, Ringwood (c1965) built for another member of the Dioguardi family. Although laid out on a rectilinear plan, the house is still highly unusual for its stark block-like massing, bichromatic brickwork, embellished parapet and symmetrical façade with projecting balconies and iron railings.

When offered for sale in 1966, *Villa Rotonda* was described as "one of Melbourne's few fan-shaped houses". Certainly, no other house on a fan-shaped or radial plan has been identified in the City of Maroondah, and further research confirms it to be rare on a metropolitan or even national scale. Amongst the few examples identified in Melbourne are the McCarthy Residence at Lilydale, an early example of Peter Corrigan's work from 1967, and a quirky holiday house at Point Lonsdale designed by Ian Napier in 1970. Examples outside Victoria include the celebrated and much-published Benjamin Residence in Canberra by Alex Jelinek (1959) and a harbourside duplex in Beauty Point, NSW, by Charles Balint (1958).

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The former Dioguardi Residence at 67 Loughnan Road, Ringwood, is a three-storey flat-roofed concrete brick house that was erected in 1959-61 for Italian-born bricklayer Guiseppe Dioguardi and his life Lina. Although the drawings were prepared by the Ringwood Home Planning & Drafting Service, the design, based on an unusual radial plan and incorporating a curved glass-walled stairwell bay, was likely to have been developed by Dioguardi himself, who also acted as builder.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house. Specific elements of significance include the fan-like plan form, flat roof, canted symmetrical façade and central bowed stairwell with full-height windows and glazed doors with ribbed glass, and balustraded terrace with curving entry steps.

*How is it significant?*

The former Dioguardi Residence satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

*Why is it significant?*

The former Dioguardi Residence is significant for the following reasons:

The house is significant as early evidence of Southern European migrant settlement in what is now the City of Maroondah. Although the study area has a strong association with Dutch and German migrants who settled there after WW2, Italians represented the next largest ethnic group to be represented therein. This house was built for (and by) a Sicilian who was active in the Ringwood area as a bricklayer and builder, and whose siblings included a brother who ran a fruit shop on Maroondah Highway, all typical of the broader post-war migrant experience. While many Italian families would have lived in the area, few would erect houses for themselves that were such overt representations of their European background, adopting what has since been collectively referred to (by Apperley *et al*) as the Immigrants' Nostalgic style (*Criterion A*).



The house is significant as an intact and highly evocative example of an aesthetic sub-style that has been loosely codified by the term “Immigrants’ Nostalgic”. Although evident in churches and other public buildings built by émigré communities, the style is most strongly associated with private residences that were “unabashedly ostentatious” in expression, typically incorporating “very loose references to the Mannerist and Baroque architecture of Southern Europe... [with] no concern for stylistic authenticity”. While the style was sometimes evoked though the simple application of arches, concrete balustrades and terrazzo, the former Dioguardi Residence is an uncommonly grandiose manifestation, with its unusual plan form, curved walls and symmetrical street façade with double-height glazed stairwell. The owner/designer /builder considered the house sufficiently evocative of an Italian country villa to bestow it with the name *Villa Rotonda*, referencing Palladio’s celebrated sixteenth-century residence near Vicenza. (Criterion E)

## References

Ringwood Home Planning & Drafting Service, “Proposed brick residence at Loughnan Road, Ringwood, for Mr & Mrs Dioguardi”, drawings dated 9 October 1959. Held by City of Maroondah.

“Fan shaped house on the hill”, *Age*, 12 December 1966, p 13.

R Apperley, R Irving and P Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1994 [1998], pp 270-271 [per ‘Immigrants’ Nostalgic” style]

## Originally identified by

Built Heritage Pty Ltd.



*The house as it appeared in April 2018, prior to alterations to the street façade shown in more recent photograph*



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	SHOP	<b>Citation No</b>	HO158
<b>Other name/s</b>	Lawson & Carrington (former); Waltons (former);	<b>Melway ref</b>	50 J3
<b>Address</b>	141-145 Main Street CROYDON	<b>Date/s</b>	1953-54
<b>Designer/s</b>	Kurt Popper	<b>Builder/s</b>	Unknown



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, April 2018

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Retail and wholesale	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Shop	<b>Intactness</b>	Excellent
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Place History

The building at 141-145 Main Street, Croydon, was erected in 1953-54 as commercial premises for Lewin & Carrington Ltd, credit retailers, to a modern design by Austrian émigré architect Kurt Popper.

The later 1940s saw a rise in consumerism as Australian families became more aspirational after the lean wartime years. This included a resurgence of what was then known as credit retailing, where customers could pay for items in instalments either as hire-purchase (ie, items taken home whilst payments were in progress) or lay-by (ie, taken home after payments were completed). Although these types of credit had been offered by many leading Melbourne stores prior to WW2, the emergence of dedicated credit retailers, offering goods for sale exclusively on that basis, was a relatively new phenomenon. One such retailer to emerge on the post-war shopping scene was the firm of Lawson & Carrington Ltd.

Established in December 1949, Lawson & Carrington Ltd was an amalgamation of six existing companies: Lawson Trading Company Pty Ltd, Carrington Traders Pty Ltd, Mutual Traders Pty Ltd, Advance Providers Pty Ltd, Dunn's Supply Agency Pty Ltd and Prossers Pty Ltd. All of these companies, some of which dated back to the 1930s, sold household goods on a credit retail basis. Within six months, the newly-merged entity already operated six outlets in the metropolitan area including branches at North Melbourne, Footscray and Mordialloc. At the first annual meeting in June 1950, it was reported that sales had risen rapidly and, despite expenses incurred by with initial expansion, the firm maintained a high profit ratio. Later that year, the firm reported its annual profit at over £10,000, providing shareholders with an enviable 8% dividend.

Business continued to boom; in late 1953, it was stated that sales over the last financial year had exceeded the previous year's figures due to record Christmas spending. As a result, the company was able to purchase the freehold to the property it occupied in Footscray, which was slated for refurbishment. Further expansion was planned. Not only was a branch proposed for Croydon's Main Street, but it was intended as something of a flagship: the annual report explicitly stated that "directors hoped to make the new Croydon store the forerunner of others to be opened in rapidly-expanding areas in the metropolitan district".

To design the Croydon showroom, Lawson & Carrington engaged architect Kurt Popper (1910-2005), an Austrian émigré who had worked in Melbourne since settling here in 1940. One of many European-trained architects to migrate to Australia during the late 1930s to the early 1950s, Popper had studied architecture at *Kunstgewerbschule* (University of Applied Arts) in Vienna and established private practice there in 1935. Concerned by the unstable political climate in Europe, Popper left Austria and, after a brief stint in Paris, migrated to Australia. Arriving in Adelaide in 1939, he worked for a local architect and then moved to Melbourne, where he gained employment with the Housing Commission of Victoria before establishing his own architectural practice around 1946. Although Popper had completed several commercial projects whilst practising in Europe (eg restaurant and cafe fitouts in Vienna and a nightclub interior in Paris), his early practice in Melbourne focused largely on houses. The Lawson & Carrington showroom at Croydon appears to have been one of Popper's first non-residential projects here. He went on complete others, including a shop fitout in the Royal Arcade (1956) and an entire block of shops and offices at Frankston (1959).

Befitting its role as new showrooms for a new company engaged in a relatively new business, the premises that Popper designed for Lewis & Carrington at Croydon was startlingly progressive in design. The street façade was almost entirely glazed, with bays of full-height display windows and a central splayed entry porch. In place of the traditional parapet was a boldly cantilevered canopy at a jaunty upward angle. When Popper's eye-catching design was discussed in the property column of the *Herald* newspaper in November 1953, it was stated that this canopy required special permission from the Shire of Lilydale because proposed amendments to local building regulations had not yet been gazetted. It was also remarked that, as the bold design not only improved streetscape presence but also reduced building costs, "this form of construction, so long banned, is likely to become popular in new shop building"

Ultimately, Lawson & Carrington occupied its stylish new building for only a few years. Despite initial success, the business became less profitable; in May 1958, it was announced that Lawson & Carrington Ltd had been taken over by Walton-Sears Ltd, a company recently formed as an alliance of Australian retailers Waltons Ltd and US-based Sears & Roebuck. Consequently, former Lewis & Carrington outlets, including the one in Croydon, were re-badged as Waltons stores. Waltons, in turn, collapsed after it was acquired by Alan Bond in 1981. The outlet in Main Street, Croydon, ceased trading in August 1982.

### Physical Description

The former Lawson & Carrington showroom at 141-145 Main Street, Croydon, is a single-storey skillion-roofed brick building with a triple-width frontage (60 feet; about 18 metres). The symmetrical street façade is almost entirely glazed, with a central recessed entry flanked by eight bays of full-height display windows. The main entry has a splayed ingoing with a gentle concrete ramp leading up to a pair of glazed doors with large highlight window. All of the flanking displays windows, including those to the splayed entry, slope slightly outward and rise all the way to ceiling height. A low spandrel of narrow Roman-style bricks (now painted dark grey) runs along the ground level, with matching piers at each end of the facade.

The building's skillion roof projects forward to create wide cantilevered canopy that runs the entire width of the street façade, with a distinctive upward slope. The underside of the canopy is panelled and incorporates a rectangular light box suspended by metal rods.

## Comparative Analysis

The former Lawson & Carrington showroom in Main Street is associated with the broader theme of local shopping strips being upgraded in the early post-war era to reflect changing retail patterns and consumer expectations, burgeoning affluence and the influence that new developments, such as television advertising and growing motor car ownership, had on the shopping experience.

Dating from 1953, the building is a notably early manifestation of this theme, both in terms of the immediate context of Main Street and the wider context of local shopping strips in what is now the City of Maroondah. Main Street was still wholly defined by a pre-war character as late as 1950, when George Pile opened his accountancy business there and reported that no new buildings had been erected since the War. The Lawson & Carrington showroom was not only one of the first new commercial premises to appear on Main Street after 1950, but the first to be conceived in the new spirit of progressive retailing. It paved the way for other Main Street commercial premises in a modernist vein, including a small shopping arcade for estate agent J F Mardling at No 166 (1958) and the respective branches of the National Bank at No (1958) and the State Savings Bank at No 161 (1961). Most comparators, however, have either been demolished or significantly altered. The former Lewis & Carrington showroom is not only important for its early date, but also for the fact that its eye-catching street presence remains remarkably intact.

Elsewhere in the City of Maroondah, the Lawson & Carrington showroom can be compared to a number of similarly progressive architect-designed retail premises that developed along the Maroondah Highway at Ringwood in the mid-1950s. Some of these, such as the so-called drive-in shopping centre at No 86 (1953) and the *Midway Arcade* at No 145-47 (1955) remain substantially intact while others, such as the Olympic Shopping Centre at No 107 (1955-56), have been demolished or extensively altered. While there are many retail premises of comparable vintage along the major local shopping strip at Canterbury Road, Heathmont, these, too, have been much altered over the years and none remains as potently evocative of the 1950s.

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The former Lawson & Carrington showroom at 141-145 Main Street, Croydon, was erected in 1953-54 as premises for a new and successful credit retailing chain. Designed by Austrian émigré architect Kurt Popper, the building included a virtually full-glazed street façade with boldly cantilevered and angled canopy.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire showroom. Specific elements of significance include the angled canopy, large metal-framed shop windows and the central recessed entrance.

*How is it significant?*

The former Lawson & Carrington showroom satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

*Why is it significant?*

The former Lawson & Carrington showroom is significant for the following reasons:

The building is significant as an intact and evocative representation of modernist architecture as applied to medium-scaled retail premises. With a virtually full-glazed street façade of sloping windows and a boldly upswept cantilevered canopy, the building represented a major departure from pre-war shops that were still characterised by flat masonry or timber frontages with relatively small display windows and roofs concealed behind parapets. Designed as early as 1953, the Lawson & Carrington showroom building ushered in a new era of modernist commercial architecture, not merely in Main Street, Croydon, but across the broader study area. Notably intact, it remains an eye-catching element in the retail streetscape. (*Criterion E*)

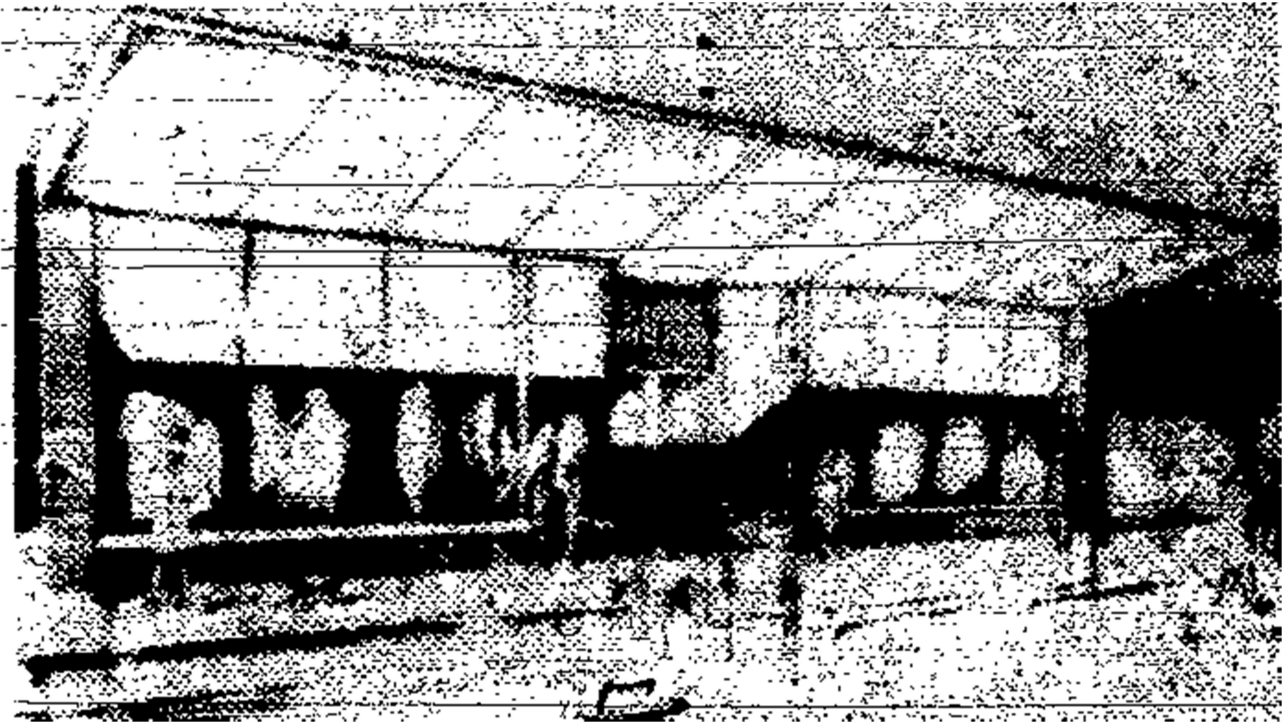
## References

"Shop building costs cut", *Herald*, 6 November 1953, p 12.

Harriet Edquist. *Kurt Popper: From Vienna to Melbourne, Architecture 1939-1975*.  
 Melbourne: RMIT School of Architecture & Design, 2005.



Originally identified by  
Built Heritage Pty Ltd.



*Kurt Popper's original perspective drawing of the Lawson & Carrington showroom in Croydon  
(source: Herald, 6 November 1953, p 12)*



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HOUSE	<b>Citation No</b>	HO160
<b>Other name/s</b>	Kotzman Residence (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	50 C9
<b>Address</b>	17 Malcolm Court RINGWOOD EAST	<b>Date/s</b>	1952-53
<b>Designer/s</b>	Douglas Alexandra	<b>Builder/s</b>	Unknown



*Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, April 2018*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential buildings (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Good
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Fair (some major alterations)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Place History

The house at 17 Malcolm Court, Ringwood East, was built in 1952-53 for Slovakian-born engineer William Kotzman and his wife Anne, to a design by Melbourne architect and academic Douglas Alexandra.

Villem (William) Kotzman was born in Solivar, in present-day Slovakia, on 30 September 1920. Migrating to Australia in 1949, he landed in Sydney on 20 March but duly settled in Naracoorte on South Australia's Limestone Coast. Kotzman had moved to Melbourne by January 1952, when he became engaged to Miss Anne Carrington, daughter of a Balwyn physician. In October, the couple married at St Michael's Church in Dandenong. Intending to make their home in the developing Ringwood East area, they acquired land for a house on the south side of Alexandra Road.

Coincidentally, the architect that the Koztmans engaged to design their new house shared his name with the street on which it would be built. Born in Shepparton to parents of Greek descent, Douglas Diomedes Alexandra (1922-2000) worked as a teenage draftsman before WW2 and, after a stint with the RAAF, commenced architectural studies at Melbourne University in 1946. Upon graduating in 1950, he was offered a full-time teaching position at the university with the right to private practice. Although he undertook relatively few commissions during this early phase, his work (largely in the residential sphere) attracted attention, with several houses published in magazines and newspapers. In 1962, he joined up with university colleague Ray Berg (1914-1985) to form the partnership of Berg & Alexandra, which went on to become well-known for the design of civic buildings that included some highly-regarded public libraries, art galleries and municipal offices in regional centres.

It is unknown how Koztman came to engage Alexandra as his architect, although the former's engineering business might hint at a prior professional connection. At the time the house was commissioned, Alexandra had completed only a few houses, notably one for himself in Burwood and another for a private client in Cheltenham (both were published). Alexandra's sketch plans for the Koztman House are dated March 1952, confirming that the project was initiated over six months before the couple married in October. The plans depict a flat-roofed timber house of stark box-like form, elevated on projecting stone walls to create enclosed space and a carport. Construction proceeded, and the house was noted as "recently completed" when published in the *Argus* newspaper in February 1954. Attention was drawn to the way in which the house "very completely fits in among the tall, stringybark gums growing on the site", and how these surrounding has informed the external colour scheme of olive green, terracotta, white and primrose. The house was also profiled in *Australian Homemaker* magazine and later appeared on the front cover of a monograph entitled *The New Australian Homes* (1954), which devoted several pages of discussion and images of the house.

Soon after his house was completed, William Koztman became a naturalised Australian citizen; he and wife Anne would remain living there for some years. As the family increased with the birth of son David (1954) and daughter Mandy (1956), the modest two-bedroom dwelling soon became inadequate. In the early 1960s, the Koztmans decided to leave Ringwood East and move closer to Melbourne. However, such was their high regard for their original house, and its designer, that they turned again to Alexandra to design their second house, which was built in Lydia Court, Balwyn. Koztman went on to become a leading consulting engineer. His firm, rebadged in 1973 as Simpson, Koztman & Partners Pty Ltd, still operates today.

The first Koztman Residence in Ringwood East, originally designated as 68 Alexandra Road, obtained its present address when contiguous land was subdivided to create Malcolm Court in 1969. The house was retained on a large block on the west side of the new cul-de-sac, this, in turn, was split into two smaller blocks in 1981, with the original house designated as No 17 and a new dwelling built alongside at No 18.

### Physical Description

The house at 17 Malcolm Court is a double-storey skillion-roofed timber house on an elongated rectangular plan. The principal living areas are concentrated at the upper storey, which is expressed as a single large rectilinear volume that projects above the lower storey, which is visually de-emphasised by being lower in height and partially recessed, including an open undercroft that serves as a double carport, supported on timber posts. The broad skillion roof has wide eaves along the north side, with exposed rafters. Windows are substantial, and include full-height bays at the upper level (one of which opens onto a side balcony) and a narrower continuous bay at the ground level. All contain multi-paned timber framed sashes. External walls are clad with weatherboards. At the Malcolm Court end, the house is dominated by a vast chimney of uncoursed stonework, echoed in feature walls (on of which slightly protrudes) to the undercroft.

When compared to early photographs, it is immediately apparent that the house has been subject to a number of major alterations. These include replacement of the original vertical timber cladding with conventional weatherboards, the removal of the original timber-framed front deck and stairs (which formerly provided direct access to the upper level), the infilling of the recessed front porch, rear deck (although the projecting balcony portion still remains visible) and part of the undercroft, the replacement of original large windows with multi-paned sashes, and the installation of colonial-style light fittings to the undercroft *pilotis*. While some of these changes are significant and others perhaps not entirely in accordance with the minimalist modernist style of the house, they are not considered to have altered it to the point that its original form and expression can no longer be readily interpreted.



## Comparative Analysis

Douglas Alexandra is known to have designed another house in Alexandra Road in the early 1950s. Like the former Kotzman Residence, the property has since been subdivided and it now has frontage to a side street, addressed as 14 Grandview Avenue. This large single-storey timber house, for which original drawings are dated October 1953, has a more orthodox articulation with a long T-shaped plan and broad gabled roof. While it has a few broad elements in common with the earlier Kotzman Residence, such as weatherboard cladding, large windows, exposed rafters and wide chimneys (albeit integrated into the house and not boldly expressed on the front wall), the house remains as a more conventional and much less striking example of Alexandra's work of the era.

Doug Alexandra is otherwise represented in the City of Maroondah by a later house at 64 Richardson Road, Croydon (1967), dating from his period in partnership as Berg & Alexandra. While the house cannot be seen from the street, photographs from recent online real estate listings show that it has much in common with the Kotzman Residence. A comparably scaled two-storey house with principal rooms at the first floor level, it has a similarly bold skillion roof with wide eaves and exposed rafters, and bays of full-height windows at the upper level. Although the house remains as a fine consolidation of these modernist themes and motifs, it must also be considered a very late example. Designed fifteen years earlier, the Kotzman Residence was far more ground-breaking in its exploration of themes and motifs that would later become widespread in modernist residential architecture in Melbourne. In the City of Maroondah, this is demonstrated by many houses of the late 1950s and early '60s that are similarly expressed with upper storeys emphasised over recessed lower levels or undercrofts notably the Bennett Residence at 52 Loughnan Road, Ringwood North (Royce Bennett, 1957-58), the Wareham Residence at 2 Noora Court, Croydon (George Campbell, 1962) and the De Shrynmakers Residence at 4 Wendy Court, Heathmont (Shaw & Warmington, 1962).

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The former Kotzman Residence at 17 Malcolm Court, Ringwood East, was built in 1952-52 for Slovakian-born engineer William Kotzman and his wife Anne, to a design by Melbourne architect and academic Douglas Alexandra. One of the architect's first commissions, it is a substantial two-storey skillion-roofed timber house in a strict modernist idiom, with the upper level prominently expressed as a box-like volume above a recessed lower level with undercroft, and a massive stone chimney with projecting wing wall.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house. Specific elements of significance include the skillion roofline, broad eaves with exposed beams, the articulation of the upper storey as a large mass elevated on exposed posts and beams, and the stone chimney with matching ground floor feature wall.

*How is it significant?*

The former Kotzman Residence satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics
- Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

*Why is it significant?*

The former Kotzman Residence is significant for the following reasons:

The house exhibits many of the characteristics that defined modernist residential architecture in the 1950s. Not only was the house conceived with the trademark articulation of an elevated box-like upper storey that projects over a recessed lower level, but it also integrated the bold skillion roof with broad eaves and exposed rafters, generous windows, *pilotis* (undercroft columns) and a massive slab-like stone chimney with a matching stone wing wall projecting from the undercroft. Despite a number of later alterations, such as recladding, replacement of window sashes and partial infill of open areas, the original minimalist articulation of the house can still be readily interpreted. (*Criterion E*)



The house demonstrates creative achievement in that its confident expression of modernist themes and motifs was notably early in the context of Melbourne architecture. While many of these themes, including the volumetric massing, undercroft, *pilotis*, projecting stone walls and large windows, had been popularised via the published work of Harry Seidler in Sydney, they were effectively introduced into Melbourne by this modest suburban example by Douglas Alexandra which was designed as early as 1952, only a few years after Seidler's celebrated house for his mother and other high-profile dwellings. (*Criterion F*)

### References

Douglas Alexandra, 'New timber-framed residence at Alexandra Road, Ringwood, for Mr W Kotzman', working drawings dated 31 March 1952. Private collection, Melbourne.

"House among the gum trees", *Argus*, 8 February 1954, p 10.

"Other people's homes", *Australian Homemaker*, July 1956, pp 36-37.

Kenneth McDonald, *The New Australian Home* (Melbourne: Self published, 1954)

### Originally identified by

Heritage Alliance, *Survey of Post War Built Heritage in Victoria: Stage One* (2008).



Photograph of the Kotzman Residence soon after completion, 1954  
(Source: Kenneth McDonald, *The New Australian Home*)

<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	NEON SIGNAGE (BEAUREPAIRES)	<b>Citation No</b>	HO161
<b>Other name/s</b>	Yarra Valley Tyre Company Pty Ltd (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	49 F9
<b>Address</b>	50 Maroondah Highway RINGWOOD	<b>Date/s</b>	1964
<b>Designer/s</b>	Claude Neon Ltd	<b>Builder/s</b>	Claude Neon Ltd



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, April 2018

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Retail and Wholesale	<b>Condition</b>	Fair (some damage/neglect)
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Advertising Sign	<b>Intactness</b>	Fair (neon tubing missing)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Place History

The tyre-shaped neon signage mounted on the roof of the commercial premises at 50 Maroondah Highway, Ringwood, dates back to the building's original occupancy by the Yarra Valley Tyre Company Pty Ltd, which erected the building in 1963 and added the rooftop sign early the following year.

Established in 1952, the Yarra Valley Tyre Company Pty Ltd originally occupied a building at the corner of Whitehorse and Nelson Roads, Box Hill, formerly occupied for many years by W H Vial's Criterion Bakery. The new tyre business was evidently a success, prompting the company to establish a second outlet further along the Maroondah Highway at Ringwood, which was then developing as a major epicentre for Melbourne's automotive trade and related businesses.



Drawings for the original Yarra Valley Tyre premises at 50 Maroondah Highway, dated June 1963, depict a modest single-storey brick building comprising a large drive-in workshop, store, and smaller showroom and office area. After construction had already commenced, the plans were amended to include an additional storage area as a partial second storey. Both sets of drawings bear only the name of builder E K Pretty, suggesting that no architect was involved. The amended drawings, for which a second building permit was issued in July 1963, do not yet indicate a roof-mounted neon sign as part of the scheme.

Documentation in the property's building file confirms the tyre-shaped sign to have been one of two pieces of advertising infrastructure incorporated into the finished building. Correspondence dated 27 September 1963 shows that separate application was made by the Goodyear Tyre & Rubber Company "for the erection of an illuminated sign at the corner of New Road and Maroondah Highway, Ringwood". This referred to a diamond-shaped pedestal sign to be erected near the New Street frontage. On 17 January 1964, a second application was made, this time by Claude Neon Ltd. The undated drawing accompanying the application shows the present tyre-shaped neon sign, to be mounted 24'6" (about 7.5 metres) above ground level. Both signs had been completed by April 1964, when a final inspection was made.

One of Melbourne's leading specialists in the field, Claude Neon Ltd traced its origins back to the pioneering illuminated signage company founded by French engineer Georges Claude, who had patented gas-filled tube lighting in the 1910s and introduced the technology to the USA when he sold neon signs to a Los Angeles car dealer in 1923. Claude began licensing his patent around the world, with interest from Australia as early as 1925. Three years later, the Australian and New Zealand rights were vested in a new entity, Claude Neon Lights of Australasia, with an offshoot commencing operation in Melbourne in 1931 under the name Claude Neon Lights (Victoria) Ltd. That company went on to design and build some of the city's most iconic signs including the PELACO sign at Richmond (which survives) and the Esso, Laconia and Allen's Sweets signs, all in South Melbourne (since dismantled). In the mid-1950s, the company began operating from a factory in Mount Alexander Road, Ascot Vale, where it remained until production ceased in 1990.

Meanwhile, Yarra Valley Tyre Pty Ltd remained in business at 50 Maroondah Highway (as well as its original Box Hill premises) into the 1970s. Later that decade, however, the company ceased trading and was voluntarily wound up in October 1978. Its former Ringwood outlet was taken over by Kevin Donnellan's Performance Tyres, a successful chain already with branches at North Melbourne, Frankston, Moorabbin, Dandenong, Glen Waverley, Preston and Kew, but was hitherto unrepresented in the outer eastern suburbs. During the late 1980s, the building became an outlet for Beaurepaires, which remains in business there.

### **Physical Description**

In the parlance of illuminated signage, the example at 50 Maroondah Highway can technically be classified as both a blade sign (ie, expressed vertically, projecting to the street) and a sky-sign (ie, roof mounted to be perceived with the sky as a backdrop). In this case, the sign proper projects outward from a vertical steel frame supported by angled struts, thus remaining visible in either direction along the Maroondah Highway. Two guy wires, fixed to a narrow metal plate at the outer edge of the sign, provide further support.

The sign itself is a roughly ovoid metal tray that, according to the original drawings, measured eleven feet high (3.3 metres) and 6'8" wide (2.0 metres). Its front and rear faces are identical, each providing a realistic depiction of a car tyre in a foreshortened perspective view. The metal surface is painted in a monochrome colour scheme, with the tread area and wheel hub in black and the grooves and sidewall in white. The neon tubing, which protruded through rows of small holes, originally outlined the wheel rim (as a series of curves) and the tread grooves (as a series of zigzags). Much of the original glass tubing has broken off, leaving only a few remnants on either side. The narrow edge of the neon sign, facing the street, incorporates a row of access hatches as well as the name badge of the manufacturer, CLAUDE NEON.

### **Comparative Analysis**

The neon signage at 50 Maroondah Highway is an example of the prominent roadside advertising that strongly characterised the suburb's major thoroughfare from the 1950s to the 1980s. It is a manifestation of a broader post-war commercial vernacular tradition where illuminated signage, billboards, bunting and other deliberately eye-catching elements proliferated along main roads to attract the attention of passing motorists. While admittedly fulfilling its intended function to the satisfaction of vendor and consumer alike, concern would be expressed about the effect on the visual environment.



Robin Boyd would famously decry the phenomenon in his 1960 book, *The Australian Ugliness*, lamenting the growing tendency to ape American culture that included “the mad scramble for the commercial strip, with its screaming signs, flashing lights, plastic stone and paper brick”. Although Boyd’s book cited only the specific case study of used car lots in Richmond (illustrating one example), he could well have been referring to Maroondah Highway, Ringwood. Ironically, he himself would have driven along there on his way to the offices of Penguin Books, which published the revised edition of *The Australian Ugliness* in 1963.

Thirty years later, the nexus between Boyd’s writings and Ringwood’s prime commercial strip was aptly noted by journalist John Stevens, who even adopted a Boyd-like turn of phrase in his own curt dismissal:

*In the thirty years since Robin Boyd wrote The Australian Ugliness, most suburbs have been shamed into looking a little less ugly, but not Ringwood. Ringwood goes unconcerned on its psychedelic way growing uglier by the hour. The awfulness of the main drag is monumental. To descend the Maroondah Highway hill to the town centre is to be drawn helplessly into a vortex of visual chaos. Buildings painted in indescribable pinks, blues and yellows shriek for attention against hysterical advertising signs and billboards. Garish plastic bunting of used-car lots shimmers with fake excitement and overhead wires, parking signs, poles and traffic lights come at you from all directions.*

With nearly another thirty years passing since Stevens made this observation, the Maroondah Highway has become de-cluttered, updated and gentrified so that little evidence now remains of the commercial vernacular that characterised the strip. Minor landmarks such as the illuminated circular logo of the former Iceland skating rink, and the bowling pin in front of the Hi-Way bowling alley, have long since disappeared. The car-yards that once defined the strip have mostly gone, although their tradition of bunting and billboards is still evident at Car City (415 Maroondah Highway), on the other side of central Ringwood. While the stretch of highway between Heatherdale Road and the Ringwood Bypass obviously includes much “active” signage of relatively recent origin, the neon sign at No 50 remains as rare evidence of the earlier era of post-war commercial vernacular. Its closest counterpart in the immediate vicinity would probably be the empty billboard frame that rises forlornly above a shopfront at No 60.

By definition, street advertising can be transient and ephemeral. A survey undertaken by Heritage Alliance in 2002 established that the survival of large-scale vintage neon signage, especially when associated with advertising, is rare in a metropolitan context. No major survivors of comparable vintage have been identified in the City of Maroondah. The former G J Coles store at 104-112 Main Street, Croydon, has a parapet with a tapering fin-like element that would have once included illuminated signage, but the signage itself has long gone. The only pertinent comparator yet identified is a pedestal neon sign at a scrap metal dealer at 242 Canterbury Road, Bayswater North. Mounted on poles at the property’s street frontage, it depicts an anthropomorphic soft drink can bearing the title ‘Cash-a-can man’ and the words METAL FOR SALE. The former, alluding to a popular aluminium can recycling campaign promoted by Alcoa in the late 1970s and early ‘80s, would infer that the sign dates from that era.

At the local level, the neon sign is rare even when considered more broadly as evidence of generic street advertising of the 1960s and ‘70s, including other types of illuminated signage and even simple painted signs. Few examples of this appear to survive elsewhere in the City of Maroondah. Those identified include a newsagent at 150 Canterbury Road, Heathmont, with a painted fascia that still advertises the long-defunct *Listener-in* TV magazine (published from 1955 to 1976) and a bakery in the Burnt Bridge Shopping Centre in Croydon, with a suspended light box sign that quaintly identifies the premises as an ‘Australian and Continental Hot Bread Kitchen’.

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The neon signage at 50 Maroondah Highway, Ringwood, was erected in 1964 on the roof of the building that was completed the previous year as new commercial premises for Yarra Valley Tyre Pty Ltd, formerly based at Box Hill. The sign, designed and fabricated by the leading firm of Claude Neon Ltd, depicts a perspective view of an overscaled car tyre (approximately 3.3 metres tall by 2 metres wide). It is no longer operable.

The significant fabric is defined as the entire sign and its associated supporting structure. Specific elements of significance include the tyre-shaped form of the sign, the painted colour scheme and the layout of the neon tubing (although not the actual tubing). The building itself is not considered to be significant.

### *How is it significant?*

The neon sign satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

### *Why is it significant?*

The neon sign is significant for the following reasons:

The sign is associated with the major boom of commercial activity that occurred along this key stretch of the Maroondah Highway in the post-war era, when a proliferation of retail businesses (many involved in aspects of the automotive trade) and recreational facilities (including an ice skating rink and tenpin bowling alley) competed to attract the attention of passing motorists through the use of eye-catching elements such as illuminated and painted signage, bunting and billboards. (*Criterion A*)

The sign represents a unique survivor in the City of Maroondah of vintage neon signage dating from the key period, spanning the 1930s to the 1970s, when the popularity of such signage was at its peak. Substantial examples of neon signage from that period are rare survivors on a broader metropolitan scale, especially when prominently located on major thoroughfares, and when associated with businesses or products long since defunct. While some later examples of neon signage are recorded in the City of Maroondah, as well as a few contemporaneous painted or other illuminated signs from the 1960s and 70s, this one possesses rarity as the only example of a neon sign to survive (albeit in a damaged and currently inoperable state) from the mid-century heyday of illuminated signage. (*Criterion B*)

The sign exhibits particular aesthetic characteristics as a landmark along this major commercial streetscape. More than three metres tall and two metres wide, the distinctive tyre-shaped sign still occupies its original prominent position on the rooftop of a large double-storey building on a conspicuous corner site. Designed with the sole intention of attracting the attention of passing motorists, the sign continues to do so after more than fifty years. Although currently inoperable, it remains an eye-catching and evocative example of the distinctive vernacular style of 1960s commercial art. (*Criterion E*)

### **References**

Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness* (Ringwood: Penguin 1963), pp 82-83.

John Stevens, "It's bypass blues for Ringwood", *Age*, 19 September 1992, p 2.

Heritage Alliance, *Historic Electric Signage in Victoria: A Study of Historical Illuminated Signs* (2002).

### **Originally identified by**

Heritage Alliance, *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria: Stage One* (2007).

<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	MOUNTVIEW CORNER HOUSE	<b>Citation No</b>	HO159
<b>Other name/s</b>	Burns Residence & Clinic (former); <i>Burnbrae</i>	<b>Melway ref</b>	50 J4
<b>Address</b>	4 Mount View Street (171 Main Street) CROYDON	<b>Date/s</b>	1940-41
<b>Designer/s</b>	Dr W J & Mrs R E Burns	<b>Builder/s</b>	Eric Radden



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, April 2018

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential buildings (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Excellent (appears unaltered)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Place History

*Burnbrae*, at 4 Mount View Street, Croydon, was built in 1940 as a house and clinic for Dr William Burns, Croydon's first resident physician, who lived and worked from there for over three decades.

Born in 1902, William James Burns studied medicine at the University of Melbourne and completed the final examinations for his MBBS in March 1925. The following month, he became one of twenty new graduates to be appointed as resident medical staff at the Melbourne Hospital, which was then still located on Lonsdale Street. His long and significant association with the outer eastern suburbs began in 1926 when, while still completing his residency at the Melbourne Hospital, he travelled out to Croydon to serve as *locum tenens* for Dr Keith Hallam, who had commenced his medical practice in Coolstores Road in 1923 and later relocated to a purpose-built residence/consulting rooms at 61 Wicklow Avenue.



According to Muriel McGivern, Dr Burns enjoyed working in Croydon and when Dr Hallam's wife died in October 1926, he expressed interest in purchasing the Wicklow Avenue practice from him. Preferring to keep it in the family, Hallam sold it instead to a Dr Cameron, a relative by marriage. Undeterred, Dr Burns purchased an existing house on the west side of Mount View Street, adjacent to what was then the Methodist Church, and commenced his own practice there in 1929. This evidently coincided with his marriage, in June of that year, to Ruth Evelyn Williams (1900-1984). As one of few resident doctors in the area at that time, Dr Burns' practice thrived and, towards the end of the 1930s, he eyed an expanse of vacant land on the opposite side of the street as the ideal location for a new purpose-built residence and clinic. This large and prominent site, with frontages also to Croydon Road and Main Street, comprised four adjacent allotments (Lots 24-27) that still remained unsold from a pre-war subdivision.

According to Dr Burns' son Jim, his father admired the curved frontages of several eye-catching Moderne buildings that had recently been built in the immediate vicinity, namely the newly-remodelled Croydon Hall on Mount Dandenong Road (1937) and Tate's Motor Garage on the Main Street corner (1938). Both had been designed by local architect Arthur Pretty (1903-1977). The son of a Main Street butcher, Pretty began his architectural career in the 1920s as a draftsman with various city firms, followed by a stint in the Public Works Department. Attending night classes at the Melbourne University Architectural Atelier, he completed his diploma in 1930 and then established his own practice in Croydon the following year. Working from an office on Main Street, Pretty remained professionally active in the area for the rest of the decade. Although Jim Burns states that his parents would surely have known of Pretty during that period, the architect left the district in 1939, just before Dr Burns and his wife came to build their new house.

Ultimately, no architect was directly involved in the design of Dr Burn's residence. Jim burns states that, keenly aware of the type of house they wanted, his parents effectively designed it themselves, integrating the sweeping Moderne-style curves that Dr Burns admired in Pretty's work. They were assisted by their friend Eric Radden (1911-1988), a builder who lived in Alto Avenue and had worked on several local construction projects the Methodist Church next door to Dr Burns' former house in Mount View Street. The builder's father, William Horace Radden (1868-1943), who lived with him in Alto Avenue, worked as a government architect. This has prompted Jim Burns to speculate on whether the elder Radden may have been consulted on the design of Dr Burns's house. Eric Radden himself was evidently not without some talent as a designer, with Muriel McGivern noting that he was involved in the design of the new sports pavilion in Croydon Park as late as 1959.

Jim Burns confirms that his parents' house was completed in 1941, just in the nick of time before labourers and tradesmen began to be swept up in wartime service and reserved occupations. The new house, which was amusingly christened *Burnbrae*, served as Dr Burns' family home and clinic for many years. Directory listings confirm that he could still be consulted there in the early 1970s. At the time of his death in March 1977, the property (described as "the matrimonial house and surgery of the deceased") was valued at \$250,000. His widow Ruth remained living there until her own death in 1984, when ownership of the property was vested amongst the Burns' three children: sons Ivon and Jim (who respectively became a doctor and a pharmacist) and daughter Yvonne. Since then, the property has maintained its use for health-related purposes. By the 1990s, it was occupied by the Ringwood & Croydon District Health Council and more recently as *Mountview Corner House*, a drug addiction treatment centre.

### Physical Description

Occupying a substantial triple-width block with three street frontages, *Burnbrae* is a large hip-roofed brick building in the Streamlined Moderne style, comprising a two-storey residence with a single-storey medical surgery at the rear. These two components are consistently expressed in orange brick with a contrasting brown brick plinth, and have broad hipped roofs clad in glazed terracotta tiles with slatted eaves. Windows vary in size but are similarly detailed with plain brick sills and timber-framed double-hung sashes.

The principal elevation of the main house, facing Croydon Road, is double-fronted and asymmetrical. The slightly projecting bay to the left side culminates in a sweeping curved corner that incorporates a matching curved window at the upper level and a recessed porch below, with the name of the house (in cursive metal lettering) emblazoned between. The front porch opens onto a tiled patio defined by dwarf walls (both curving and straight) in brown brick with cream brick capping, with a low flight of matching tiled steps leading down to the front path.

The former medical surgery has independent access from Mount View Street, via a separate tiled patio with a hip-roofed porch. There are two entry doors, one of which is set into a splayed wall. At its northern end, the medical surgery wing incorporates a double garage.

The building is enhanced by its carefully-considered siting on a large block with three street frontages, allowing for a generous setback with expansive lawn area in front of the house and remnant hard and soft landscaping that includes mature deciduous trees, low plantings and gravelled pathways. The simple fence along the property line, with metal pipes supporting Cyclone wire, contributes to its streetscape presence, as does the brick gate piers with mild steel gates.

### Comparative Analysis

The Streamlined Moderne style is well represented in the City of Maroondah, and particularly that part of Croydon in the immediate vicinity of *Burnbrae* where examples (most of which, incidentally, were designed by Arthur Pretty) include the Croydon Hall at 212 Mount Dandenong Road (1937), the considerably altered Tate's Motor Garage at 192 Main Street (1938), the former Gibson's Café at 207 Mount Dandenong Road (c1940) and the Grey & Burns pharmacy at 161 Main Street (1953). While some small-scaled dwellings in the Moderne style are recorded, including the remarkably late example at 6 Hill Street, Ringwood (1961), more substantial ones are conspicuously less common in the City of Maroondah.

The duplex at 76-76a Warrandyte Road, Ringwood, erected circa 1952 for the Barro family, was conceived as a semi-detached pair of dwellings but is articulated as a one substantial residence. Set well back from the street on its large site, the house has many elements in common with *Burnbrae*, including the prominent hipped roof with dark-coloured tiles and the combining of single- and double-storey sections. A late manifestation of the Moderne style, its decorative embellishments (namely, the incised ornament to the rendered balcony, and the metal railing above it) place it in the livelier Jazz Moderne tradition, as distinct from the Streamlined Moderne evoked by the sweeping curves at *Burnbrae*. A similarly-scaled but more simply expressed house at 60 Oliver Street, Ringwood (c1950) combines the dark-coloured hipped roof with rendered walls and steel-framed windows, but with more overt Moderne touches limited to a lively metal balustrade across the front balcony and a sundeck above the flat-roofed garage.

*Burnbrae* is perhaps more comparable to a compact three-storey house on a double block at 17-19 Reserve Road, Ringwood (c1950), which is similarly expressed in cream and clinker brick with a hipped roof of dark-coloured tiles, and an asymmetrical façade with slightly curving corner and recessed entry porch. It also includes a concrete-slab sundeck, waterfall chimney and the trademark Moderne porthole windows. However, the overall effect seems a little less confidently expressed than at *Burnbrae*, despite the fact that the latter was designed without professional input from an architect.

### Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

*Burnbrae*, at 4 Mount View Street, Croydon, is a double-storey hip-roofed brick house in a loosely Streamlined Moderne style, occupying a large block with three street frontages. Erected in 1940-41 as a combined residence and medical clinic for local physician Dr W J Burns and his family, the house was designed by the Burnses themselves (taking inspiration from several nearby buildings designed in a similar style by local architect Arthur Pretty) and was erected by local builder Eric Radden.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house as well as its landscaped setting, dwarf walls, piers and fences. Specific elements of significance include the face brickwork, slatted eaves, curved corners (and curved window), continuous window bays with timber-framed sashes, and cursive metal sign.

*How is it significant?*

*Burnbrae* satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.
- Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Maroondah's history.

*Why is it significant?*

*Burnbrae* is significant for the following reasons:

The house is significant for associations with the emergence and early development of formalised medical facilities in Croydon in the inter-war period. The owner of the house, Dr W J Burns, was one of the first resident doctors in the district when he began locum services there in 1926, later commencing his own practice from an existing house on the opposite side of Mount View Street before building the present building in 1940-41. While predated by an earlier purpose-built house and medical clinic at 61 Wicklow Avenue (c1924), *Burnbrae* has notably maintained its core use as a medical facility for over seven decades, housing Dr Burns' practice into the 1970s and, more recently, other community health services (*Criterion A*).

The house is notable example of a large detached house in the Streamlined Moderne style that was perennially popular from the mid-1930s into the 1950s. Designed by the owners themselves without the input of an architect, it is a surprisingly confident expression of the idiom, exhibiting its trademark contrast of pale and dark face brickwork, block-like massing and curved corner incorporating the minor technical achievement of a curved glass window. Taking direct inspiration from several non-residential buildings in the immediate vicinity designed in the Streamlined Moderne style by local architect Arthur Pretty, *Burnbrae* stands out as a substantial, prominent, well-sited and notably intact example of the style's application to a private dwelling. (*Criterion E*)

The house retains important associations with its original and long-time owner Dr W J Burns, who was not only one of the first resident doctors in Croydon but also its longest serving. His professional presence in the area spanned a remarkable five decades, from the time that he first practiced there as a locum in 1926 before setting up his own clinic in 1929, then erecting a purpose-built counterpart in 1940-41 where he continued to practice until the mid-1970s. The important connotations between the Burns family and local health care otherwise remain perpetuated through the pharmacy business that Dr Burns' son James has operated in Main Street, in a similarly progressive Moderne-inspired building, since 1953. (*Criterion H*)

## References

Interview with Mr Jim Burns, 12 July 2018.

Muriel McGivern, *A History of Croydon: A Second Volume*, pp 207, 245.

## Originally identified by

Richard Peterson with Peter Barrett. *Maroondah Heritage Study: Stage 2* (2003)



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HOUSE	<b>Citation No</b>	HO162
<b>Other name/s</b>	Fitzpatrick Residence (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	37 C11
<b>Address</b>	3 Parsons Street CROYDON	<b>Date/s</b>	1959-60
<b>Designer/s</b>	Chancellor & Patrick	<b>Builder/s</b>	H E Zegelis & Company



*Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, April 2018*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential buildings (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Excellent
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Place History

The house at 3 Parsons Street, Croydon, was erected in 1959-60 for local veterinary surgeon Malcolm Fitzpatrick and his wife Jill, to a design by the leading architectural firm of Chancellor & Patrick.

The only son of an accountant, Malcolm Lionel Fitzpatrick was born in Malvern in 1926 and attended Scotch College. It was during his schooldays that he befriended future architect David Chancellor, who was the same age but attended Wesley College. The two men renewed their acquaintance when both served with the Royal Australian Navy in the closing overs of WW2. Fitzpatrick enlisted in February 1945, and Chancellor followed by a month later. The two men served respectively with the Flinders Naval Depot and HMAS *Lonsdale*, and both were discharged towards the end of 1946 with the rank of Able Seaman.

Resuming civilian life, Malcolm Fitzpatrick commenced veterinary studies at the University of Sydney and, whilst there, became engaged to Miss Jill Newman in October 1951. After taking his Bachelor of Veterinary Science in 1952, he returned to Melbourne. In March, he established private practice in Croydon as a veterinary surgeon, operating from a clinic adjacent to the Croydon Sale Yards (*Healesville Guardian*, 23/2/1952:2). By July, he had expanded his professional presence into Healesville, where he made himself available for consultation every Thursday afternoon from a local pharmacy. Directory listings indicate that, in the early 1950s, there were fewer than twenty veterinary surgeons in practice in the entire metropolitan area, with Fitzpatrick evidently the only one with a permanent practice east of Box Hill.

It was also during 1952 that Fitzpatrick approached his old friend David Chancellor to design a combined house/veterinary clinic for a site in Barina Crescent, Croydon. At the time, Chancellor had recently left his job with Yuncken, Freeman Brothers, Griffiths & Simpson to open up his own office, working from the house he had just designed for himself in Frankston. One of the young architect's earliest commissions, the first Fitzpatrick Residence turned its back on the street so as to exploit rear views across to the Dandenongs. Where the slope of the land fell away, Malcolm's veterinary clinic (comprising surgery, consulting room and waiting room) was consolidated as a basement level with separate access. While the project had reached the working drawing stage by early 1953, construction did not proceed. Instead, Malcolm and Jill remained living in an existing dwelling in Alto Avenue, while his professional practice (by then known as the Croydon Veterinary Clinic) operated from a shopfront at 69 Main Street.

It was not until 1959 that Malcolm returned to David Chancellor with a follow-up commission for a new house, to be built on a different in Parsons Street, Croydon. In the intervening years, the architect's practice had been reconfigured as the partnership of Chancellor & Patrick, following the admission of his former Yuncken Freeman colleague Rex Patrick (1927-2017) as a partner in 1954. By the time that he received the second commission from the Fitzpatricks, Chancellor had moved from Frankston to Box Hill, relocating the firm's head office to South Yarra while retaining the original Frankston office as a branch.

The proposed site in Parsons Street, a steeply sloping triangular block, proved no impediment to the architect, who came up with an ingenious scheme for a split-level house on an elongated and narrow linear plan. This provided four bedrooms and two bathrooms at one end and, at the other end, a large open-planned living with laundry, kitchen and study along one side and a massive cantilevered balcony to the other, with views across the Dandenongs. This time around, a veterinary clinic was not to be incorporated into the design. Instead, allowance was made for future rumpus room at the lower level (which was ultimately realised). The striking design of the Fitzpatricks' house attracted a certain amount of press attention. During 1960, articles appeared in the property column of the *Herald* newspaper and the Melbourne-based architectural journal *Foundations*, both illustrated by Chancellor's distinctive plan and eye-catching perspective drawing. Construction, completed during that year, was undertaken by the firm of H E Zegelis & Company, which went on to build other houses for Chancellor & Patrick.

Malcolm and Jill Fitzpatrick, who had three children, remained living in Parsons Street for more than two decades. Malcolm maintained his friendship with David Chancellor and, in 1962, he commissioned the office of Chancellor & Patrick to design some additions to his veterinary clinic in Main Street. Towards the end of that decade, the clinic relocated to a former residence at 167 Mount Dandenong Road. In the later 1970s, Malcolm was joined in partnership by Dr John Cooper, who ran the practice until his own retirement in 2005. Still known as the Croydon Veterinary Clinic, it continues to operate from the same address.

### Physical Description

Occupying a steeply-sloping triangular site, the former Fitzpatrick Residence at 3 Parsons Street, Croydon, is a predominantly single-storey house on an elongated and narrow plan, with a broad gabled roof over that main house and a lower flat roof over the projecting service wing. The house is distinctly articulated with a series of massive masonry components contrasted against weatherboard cladding and glazed infill. These masonry elements, which include the walls of the service wing, the massive pier-like elements to the rear deck, and the unusual prow-like end wall with matching diamond-shaped chimney with notched corners, are of split-faced grey Besser concrete block. The walls of the bedroom wing, the deck balustrade and the two projecting bays either side of the end wall, are clad with square-edged shiplap weatherboarding (now painted grey). The bedroom wing otherwise has a narrow horizontal strip window along the street side and a continuous row of taller windows to the rear, with matching corner windows to the projecting end bays.



The main gabled roof, clad in concrete tiles, projects beyond the northern end of the house to define a double carport with the massive beams left exposed. The roof otherwise has wide timber fascias and broad eaves, which extend at an angle at each end of the house, echoing the distinctive prow-like form of the chimney wall. The flat-roof to the smaller service wing has exposed beams and metal tray decking.

## Comparative Analysis

The prolific partnership of Chancellor & Patrick became even more so after Chancellor relocated its head office from Frankston to South Yarra in 1958. Of the many houses designed across the metropolitan area during the firm's peak period from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, six have been identified in what is now the City of Maroondah. One of the firm's first forays into the study area, the Briant Residence at 7 Reserve Road, Ringwood (1957), is somewhat conventional in scale, plan and massing, but otherwise anticipates the Fitzpatrick Residence with its low gabled roof, continuous windows with alternating spandrels of concrete blockwork and weatherboarding, and a chimney that, while rectangular, has notched corners. The Guest Residence, at 35 Royal Avenue, Heathmont (1958) also combines weatherboard with masonry, although the masonry has been rendered. With its orthodox T-shaped plan and hip roof, the house is only a representative example of the firm's work rather than an exceptional one. The Cathie Residence at 14 Culverlands Road, Heathmont (1958) is more comparable to the Fitzpatrick Residence in scale and articulation. A large elevated house on an elongated plan, it has a similar low gabled roof with broad eaves and exposed beams, and the characteristic window bays with weatherboard spandrels. However, it is simpler in detailing and finishes, with face brickwork rather than textured concrete block, and lacks the quirky prow-like end wall.

Of the two other Chancellor & Patrick houses in the City of Maroondah dating from the early 1960s, the Hoyling Residence at 245 Bayswater Road, Bayswater North (1964) is also merely a representative example, with its low gabled roof, broad eaves and pier-like elements expressed in face brickwork. The setting of the house, however, has been severely compromised by the subdivision of the site and the construction of multiple dwelling units that virtually engulf the original house both sides. Finally, the house at 1 Aringa Court, Ringwood (1964), which Chancellor & Patrick designed for noted cartoonist Bill "Weg" Green, is an exceptional example of their work, acknowledged by its inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule (HO136). With its clinker brickwork, stepped plan, window boxes, timber posts and nests of intersecting gabled roofs with exposed rafters, its more explicit Wrightian expression contrasts with the earlier but no less striking Fitzpatrick Residence in Croydon. Together, both houses significantly demonstrate the development and maturing of the firm's house style from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s.

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The former Fitzpatrick Residence at 3 Parsons Street, Croydon, is a gable-roofed house of split-faced concrete brick and weatherboard construction, laid out on an elongated rectangular plan with a canted end bay incorporating a diamond-shaped chimney. Erected in 1959-60 for local veterinary surgeon Malcolm Fitzpatrick and his wife Jill, the house was designed by noted architects Chancellor & Patrick.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house. Specific elements of significance include the elongated and narrow plan, low gabled roofline, exposed beams, textured blockwork, weatherboard spandrels and balustrades, timber-framed sash windows and diamond-shaped chimney.

*How is it significant?*

The former Fitzpatrick Residence satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics
- Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

*Why is it significant?*

The former Fitzpatrick Residence is significant for the following reasons:



The house is significant as an unusual and highly distinctive expression of modern residential architecture. Dating from the late 1950s, it was designed at a time when David Chancellor's initial fascination with the stark modernism of Richard Neutra was tempered by his growing interest in the more organic stylings of Frank Lloyd Wright. The Fitzpatrick Residence demonstrates the deft melding of both influences in the architect's mind: while the prominently exposed roof beams and rafters pay homage to Neutra's structural expressionism, the prow-like end wall and diamond-shaped chimney is more suggestive of the playful geometry of Wright. With its unusual plan form and detailing, and striking contrast of split-faced grey-masonry against dark-coloured weatherboard cladding and large expanses of glazing, the house remains an idiosyncratic re-interpretation of modernist architecture. (Criterion E)

The house demonstrates a high degree of creative achievement in the way that architect Chancellor deftly responded to the limitations of a challenging site, triangular in shape with a steep slope down from the street. Opting for an unusually long and narrow plan, the house effectively turned its back on the street, with continuous window bays and a prominent sundeck taking advantage of panoramic views to the rear, and the fall of the land allowing for the addition of a rumpus room underneath the house. (Criterion F)

## References

"Planned for a triangular lot", *Herald*, 15 July 1960, p 26.

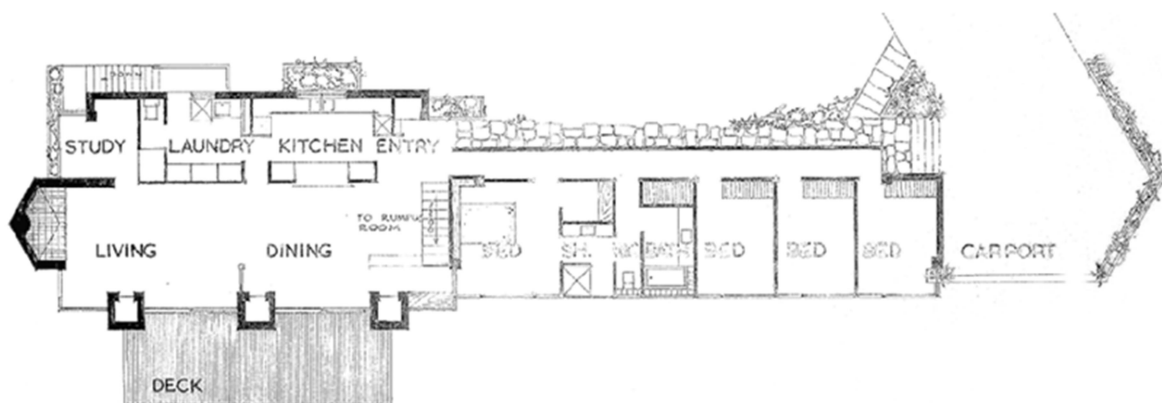
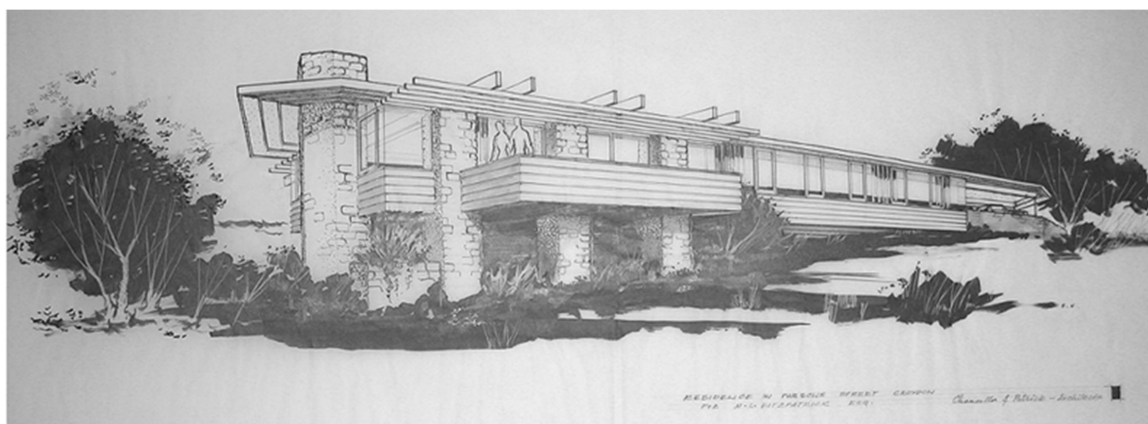
"House in Parsons Street, Croydon, Victoria", *Foundations*, No 8 (1960), p 29.

Winsome Callister, "Anchoring Identify: The Architecture of Chancellor & Patrick, 1950-1970", PhD thesis, Department of Visual Arts, Monash University, 2007.

"Croydon Veterinary Clinic", <<[www.croydonvet.com.au](http://www.croydonvet.com.au)>>

## Originally identified by

Built Heritage Pty Ltd.



Perspective drawing and sketch plan of the Fitzpatrick Residence in Parsons Street, Croydon  
(Source: W Callister, "Anchoring Identify: The Architecture of Chancellor & Patrick, 1950-1970")

<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HOUSE	<b>Citation No</b>	HO173
<b>Other name/s</b>	FLER House (Type H17); Finch Residence (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	64 A2
<b>Address</b>	8 Possum Lane HEATHMONT	<b>Date/s</b>	1962
<b>Designer/s</b>	Grounds, Romberg & Boyd (Robin Boyd)	<b>Builder/s</b>	Fler Staff & Company Pty Ltd



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, June 2020

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential building (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Excellent (rear addition)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External paint controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior alteration controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls		

### Place History

The house at 8 Possum Lane, Heathmont, was erected in 1962 for schoolteacher Arthur Finch and his wife Lorraine, to a standard design purchased from well-known furniture manufacturers Fler Company & Staff Pty Ltd, which had entered the project housing market four years earlier.

Dating back to 1946, the Fler Company was founded by German-born Fritz Lowen (1919-2005) and Austrian-born Ernest Rodeck (1919-2013), who, both declared as enemy aliens, were transported to Australia aboard the *Dunera* and met whilst detained at the Tatura internment camp. After WW2, Lowen started up business in Melbourne as a woodcarver, and invited Lowen to join him. Initially focusing on small household items, they duly expanded into furniture. The Fler Company (a name coined from their four initials) proved a success and, in 1955, relocated to a purpose-built factory in Rooks, Road, Vermont.



By that time, Fler furniture was already a household name, and the company's directors were keen to expand into other areas. It was Rodeck's idea to enter the new field of project housing, which was still a novel and innovative concept at the time. Australia's first project house, the *Peninsula*, was introduced in 1955 by Contemporary Homes Pty Ltd, and prompted many other companies to offer standardised dwellings. While Fler's new factory was designed by Peter Spier, and Lowen himself had recently engaged John & Phyllis Murphy to design his own house at Warrandyte, the commission for the Fler House was entrusted to Robin Boyd. This decision was doubtless informed by Boyd's prior experience in standardised housing, which included designing the aforementioned *Peninsula* house as well as his significant six-year tenure as foundation director of the popular and successful Age/RAIA Small Homes Service.

For the Fler project house, Boyd proposed a deceptively simple gable-roofed timber dwelling on a modular plan that was available as two options. The basic version, known as the H12, provided two bedrooms in a shed-like structure with a flat façade, while the larger H17 added a projecting central bay (providing space for an enlarged living area or third bedroom) flanked by integrated carports. In this way, clients could build the larger house in a single stage, or opt for the smaller one and extend it later. The modular planning and standardised construction system meant that the components of the house could be fabricated in Fler's Vermont factory, and easily transported to the client's land for quick and easy assembly. Early publicity for the Fler house not only emphasised its flexibility and efficiency, but also such innovations as extensive built-in cupboards, a "scientifically laid out kitchen" (with double sink and space for a dishwasher), a large utility room with "extra-large" hot water service, a bathroom split into separate areas for bath, WC and shower, and, not least of all, its "attractive and individual outside appearance".

During 1958, the Fler Company built a display version of the Fler House at 150 Canterbury Road, Blackburn South, which was officially opened by the Premier, Henry Bolte, on 8 September. The venture attracted considerable press attention, with the *Age* newspaper noting that "it promises to break new ground in small-house design and it is latest example of the growing number of 'brand name' houses. It is also the first to bear a name already well known to home builders". In the *Herald*, there was praise for the flexibility of the design (able to be enlarged "with a minimum of interference and cost") and its compact but efficient plan ("although small, the house has an air of spaciousness"). As the prototype was built with the enlarged living area and flanking carports, it clearly showed how adaptable the house could be, with such features as movable bookshelves as room dividers, and a service hatch to the kitchen. Attention was also drawn to innovations such as the "storage wall" between the two bedrooms, a wood store and drying cupboard concealed in the rear of the fireplace, and space for "the now popular indoor plants". Photographs of the display house later appeared in magazines, including *Architecture & Arts* and *Australian Home Beautiful*.

As a business venture, the Fler House proved a modest success. The firm's Housing Division, managed by staff member Ernest Rothschild, reportedly sold around 100 dwellings over a period of three or four years. While Robin Boyd himself had prepared the documentation and supervised construction of the display house, subsequent examples sold to private clients were usually documented in Fler's in-house drafting office and supervised by others, including the firm of Borland & Trewenack. By the early 1960s, with the demand for modern furniture rising at a rapid rate, the Fler Company decided that its housing sideline represented an "unnecessary distraction". This, coupled with the fact there was increasing competition from a steady stream of rival project housing companies, prompted the closure of Fler's Housing Division in 1963.

Sales of the Fler House were still in full swing in September 1960, when Arthur and Lorraine Finch acquired a land in Heathmont, constituting Lot 31 of a 31-lot subdivision laid out two years earlier, creating Muller Court, Kenbry Road and part of Possum Lane. It is unconfirmed how the Finches, who previously resided in a Victorian-era villa in Hawthorn, became aware of the Fler House as an option for their new home in Heathmont, although the proximity of the firm's factory in Vermont, not to mention the much-publicised display house in Blackburn South, are likely to have been factors.

Drawings for the Finches' new house, with the title block of Fler Company & Staff Pty Ltd of Rooks Road, Vermont, are dated 13 March 1962 and bear the initials of an unidentified delineator in the firm's drafting office. While the Finches opted for the larger H17 model (with projecting front wing and flanking carports), the standard design was modified to suit the topography. As the site sloped down from the street, extra sub-floor walling was incorporated where the land fell away to the rear (providing space for a workshop at the lower level). While the front part of the house would be clad in vertical timber boarding (the standard finish for a Fler House), the sides and rear, including sub-floor walling, were to be brick veneer construction.



According to council records, the City of Ringwood issued a building permit on 22 March 1962, with the builders cited as the Fler Company & Staff, and the cost of the house as £4,956. The property remained in the ownership of the Finch family for five decades, during which time few significant changes were made. In 1973, a small rear wing was added, providing a new master bedroom (with en suite bathroom) and a storeroom below, accessed by an internal stair. In 1980, a large radio mast was erected in the backyard by the Finches' son Brendan, who was an amateur radio enthusiast. The house came up for sale, for the first time, in 2013.

### Physical Description

Occupying a site that slopes downward from the street, the house at 8 Possum Lane, Heathmont, is a mostly single-storey timber-framed dwelling with a partial lower storey to the rear, where the ground falls away. As seen from the street, the house displays all of the characteristics of a Fler House (Type H17). It has a low gabled roof clad in corrugated iron and a symmetrical façade with a projecting central bay flanked by a pair of integrated carports, supported on timber posts. The projecting bay contains a central pier of concrete blockwork, with a narrow full-height window to either side. The west side of the bay has a multi-paned full-width window wall, while the east side has vertical timber cladding, with the front door at the far end. The walls at the far end of the carports also have vertical timber cladding, while the side and rear walls of the house (not visible from the street) are of brick veneer.

A flat-roofed detached carport stands to the north-east side of the house.

### Comparative Analysis

Although Ernest Rodeck himself recalled that around one hundred Fler Houses were built during his firm's four-year foray into project housing, ongoing research by Tony Lee (founder of the Robin Boyd Foundation) has identified less than one third of that total. While a few Fler Houses have been noted in regional Victoria and the Mornington Peninsula, most were to be found in the outer eastern suburbs that saw rapid residential growth in the 1950s and '60s, such as Blackburn, Mitcham, Nunawading, Vermont, Doncaster, Donvale, Mount Waverley and Glen Waverley. Most examples documented by Lee were built prior to 1960, and the bulk of them (about 80%) represent the larger H17 design (with projecting front wing and carports) rather than the simpler H12 (with flat façade). Some examples have already been confirmed demolished, while those that remain standing exhibit varying degrees of physical intactness.

Of the thirty Fler Houses identified to date by Tony Lee, only one has been conclusively located within what is now the City of Maroondah: the subject building at 8 Possum Lane, Heathmont. Research by Built Heritage Pty Ltd has located a newspaper advertisement for a "Fler Home" in Ringwood that was offered for sale in 1966; although no address was cited, it was said to occupy a one acre block, located  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from Ringwood station. While these clues are not quite sufficient to pinpoint the house, they suggest that it was probably located north of Loughnans Road, where there are larger-than-average blocks just over  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile (1.2 km) from the station. However, research and fieldwork (both virtual and actual) has so far failed to locate any surviving Fler Houses (of either type) in this particular part of the study area. It is assumed, therefore, that the example mentioned in the 1966 advertisement has been demolished or altered beyond recognition.

### Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The former Finch House at 8 Possum Lane, Heathmont, is a predominantly single-storey timber-framed house on a T-shaped plan with a broad gabled roof and a symmetrical façade comprising a projecting central bay flanked by a pair of integrated carports. Erected in 1962 for Arthur and Lorraine Finch, it was built to a standard design offered by the Fler Company, the well-known furniture manufacturer making a brief foray into the field of project housing.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house. Specific elements of significance include the broad gabled roofline and symmetrical street façade with central face brick pier, flanking full-height windows and integrated twin carports. The flat-roofed detached carport is not significant.

*How is it significant?*

The former Finch House satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history;
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics
- Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.

*Why is it significant?*

The former Finch House is significant for the following reasons:

The house is architecturally significant as a representative and uncommonly intact example of an innovative architect-designed project house marketed by the Fler Company. Well established as designers and makers of modern furniture, the company expanded its remit by embracing the burgeoning project housing market in the late 1950s, and engaged Robin Boyd to design a standardised dwelling with a modular plan and simple structural system that allowed for ease of construction, flexibility of use, and capacity for future expansion. A modest success, around one hundred Fler Houses are believed to have been erected across Victoria before the venture was discontinued in 1963. This particular example is rare as the only known Fler House in the City of Maroondah, and, with a virtually unaltered street frontage (consequent to being owned by the same family for over fifty years), as one of the more intact surviving examples yet identified in a broader metropolitan context. (*Criterion B*)

The house is also architecturally significant as an example of the work of celebrated architect Robin Boyd. While Boyd is well represented in the City of Maroondah by a number of individually commissioned houses spanning the entire length of his professional career (from the late 1940s until the early 1970s), this house is of note as a representative and intact example of a standardised dwelling associated with one of the more commercially successful of Boyd's several forays into the field of project housing. (*Criterion H*)

## References

Certificate of Title, Volume 8202, Folio 243, created 9 October 1958.

"The Fler House", 4pp publicity brochure, circa September 1958 (courtesy Tony Lee).

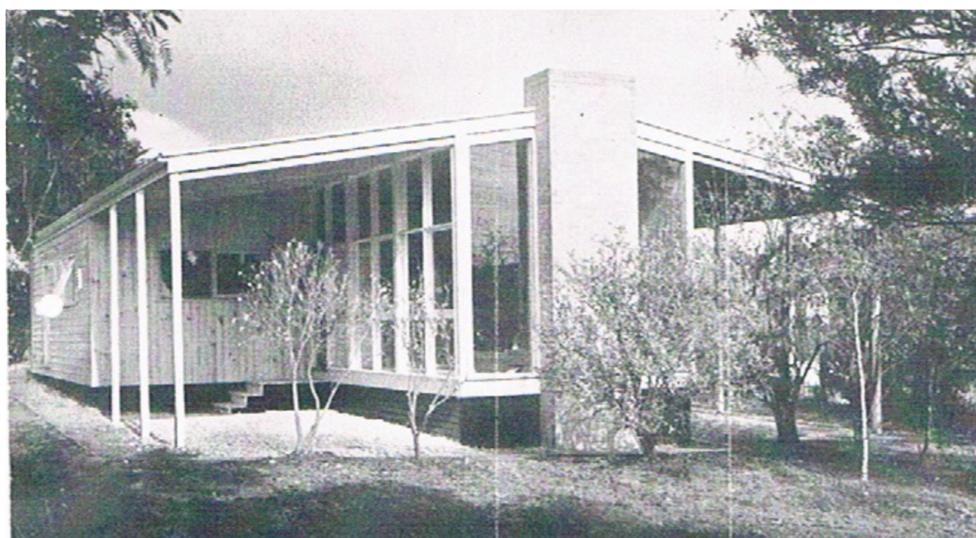
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Tony Lee, notes of interview with the late Ernest Rodeck, 11 December 2008 (courtesy Tony Lee).

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*Photograph of prototypical Fler House, Type H.17 (not the example in Possum Lane)  
Source: The Fler House, publicity brochure, circa September 1958 (courtesy Tony Lee).*



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HOUSE	<b>Citation No</b>	HO163
<b>Other name/s</b>	Lovig Residence (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	36 H11
<b>Address</b>	90 Richardson Road CROYDON NORTH	<b>Date/s</b>	1966-68
<b>Designer/s</b>	Charles Duncan	<b>Builder/s</b>	Unknown



*Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, April 2018*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential buildings (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Excellent
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Place History

The house at 90 Richardson Road, Croydon North, was erected in 1967-68 for Robert Lovig and his wife Barbara, to a design prepared architect Charles Duncan in 1966.

Born in Carlton in 1921, Robert Harold Lovig enlisted with the Army at the age of 21 years and, during WW2, served with the 12th Field Ambulance Division of the AAMC until he was discharged in late 1945. Resuming civilian life, he married Barbara Dalton in July 1948. The couple initially made their home in Camberwell, but had relocated to Glen Iris by the early 1960s. By then, Lovig, who had previously found civilian employment as a driver, was working as a manager. By the late 1960s, when the family moved to Croydon and took up residence at 44 Bayswater Road, his occupation was listed as a contractor.



Proposing a new residence for on a hilly site at Lot 36, Richardson Road, the Lovigs engaged architect Charles Duncan. Born in 1933, Duncan attended Melbourne Grammar School and then enrolled in the architecture course at RMIT, receiving his Fellowship Diploma of Architecture in 1959. During and just after his studies, he gained well-rounded professional experience in some of the most prominent offices of the day, including Peter Jorgensen, Chancellor & Patrick, Eggleston McDonald & Secomb, McGlashan & Everist and Hassell & McConnell. In June 1962, he commenced his own private practice in South Yarra. When one of his first commissions, the Williams Residence in Glenard Drive, Heidelberg (1963), attracted a flurry of publicity and went on to receive the Victorian Architecture Medal for 1965, Duncan thereafter focused almost exclusively on residential work, much of which would attract comparable attention.

As shown in an undated sketch plan, the house that Charles Duncan designed for the Lovigs had a simple rectangular plan generated by rows of massive brick piers along two sides. On the north side, overlooking the views down the hill, these bays were infilled with large windows and sliding doors that opened onto a huge deck with a weatherboard balustrade. A third row of brick piers, on the street side, defined a double carport that also served as a *porte-cochere* to the central front entrance; these two parts of the house were linked by a huge enveloping skillion roof. Inside, the house was dominated by a vast open-planned living area that separated the master bedroom suite and the east end from the kitchen, laundry, study and second bedroom (for the Lovig's only child, son Robert Norman) at the west end. Few revisions were made to this bold design when Duncan developed the idea into full working drawings in November 1966. A building permit was issued by the City of Croydon in June 1967, and construction duly proceeded. The house appears to have been completed during 1968.

As it turned out, the Lovig family lived together in their new house for less than a decade. Following Barbara Lovig's early death in November 1976, and the marriage of son Robert a few years later, Robert Lovig senior continued living there alone into the 1980s. He later moved in with his son, who practiced as a doctor in the Balnarring area. Robert Lovig senior died in November 2005.

### Physical Description

Located on a steep bush block that slopes down from the street frontage, the house at 90 Richardson Road, Croydon, is a skillion-roofed brick house on an elongated rectangular plan. It has a distinctively overscaled trabeated expression, with rows of huge brick piers and massive exposed timber beams that support the low roof, clad in metal tray decking. One row of four piers defines the drive-through quadruple carport (which also acts as a *porte-cochere* to the front entrance), while two more rows of eight piers define the extent of the house. On the street side, the bays defined by the brick piers are infilled with timber cladding (some with full-width windows), while those on the north side (not visible from the street) contain full-height windows and glazed sliding doors. The east and west (end) elevations are infilled with timber cladding.

### Comparative Analysis

An undergraduate thesis on the work of Charles Duncan identified more than fifty projects that the architect completed between 1962 and 1983. Of these projects (of which all but one were private houses), only two were located in what is now the City of Maroondah. The Lovig Residence, dated as 1967-68, was the earlier of the two. The other, dated from 1973, was a house in Croydon South for builder Paul Stjepanovic. Still standing at 34 Andrew Crescent, the house is quite different to the earlier Lovig Residence. Located on a large and sloping corner block, the Stjepanovic Residence is a sprawling split-level solid brick dwelling with an irregular roofline of low intersecting gables and a matching log-framed pergola that follows the slope. Although unusual in appearance and detailing, the house lacks the striking minimalist monumentality of the Lovig Residence, with its overscaled trabeation and contrasting expressions of mass and void.

Considered more broadly across the municipality as a manifestation of the organic style of residential architecture popular of the 1960s, the Lovig Residence can be compared to the *Sunbower In-Line* project house that Don Fulton designed at 20 Rawson Court, Heathmont (1967), which has a similar expression of massive brick piers. Otherwise, the Lovig Residence can really only be compared with other examples of Charles Duncan's residential work from the same era, typified by the Tozer Residence in Beaconsfield (1963-64), the Welsh Residence in Heidelberg (1966-67) and the Glaspole Residence in Vermont (1967-68; demolished), all of which exploit the architect's trademark motifs of rugged brickwork, massive piers and exposed roof beams.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is significant?*

The former Lovig Residence at 90 Richardson Road, Croydon North, is a large skillion-roofed brick house on a sloping site, expressed as a series of massive brick piers and exposed beams supporting an enveloping roof clad in metal decking. The bays, defined by the brick piers, are infilled with solid wall or half-height windows along the south side and full-height windows and glazed sliding doors on the north side. Designed by architect Charles Duncan, the house was built for Robert and Barbara Lovig in 1966-68.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house. Specific elements of significance include the modular planning defined by rows of large brick piers, the flat roofline, exposed beams and face brickwork, and the prominent drive-through carport/*porte-cochere*.

### *How is it significant?*

The former Lovig Residence satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics
- Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

### *Why is it significant?*

The former Lovig Residence is significant for the following reasons:

The house is significant as an outstanding example of residential architecture in the distinctive organic style associated with Frank Lloyd Wright. Although introduced to Australia in the pre-war era by Walter Burley Griffin, the style became increasingly popular amongst local architects in the years before and just after Wright's death in 1959, and remained so into the 1960s and beyond. Acknowledged by Philip Goad as "one of the most gifted of the 1960s Wrightians in Melbourne", Charles Duncan developed his own distinct stylistic vocabulary based on the use of rough brickwork and timber with layered rooflines, planar walls and the use of massive piers to frame full-height windows, all of which were adroitly consolidated in the design of the Lovig Residence at Croydon (*Criterion E*).

The house demonstrates a high degree of creative achievement on several levels. Firstly, it is notable for the way in which Duncan, following the guiding precepts of organic architecture, attempt to integrate the house into the landscape by slightly steeping the plan down the slope and using an expansive skillion roof to link discrete parts of the building: both are recurring themes amongst houses that he designed on hillside sites. Secondly, while Duncan's work is characterised the use of brick piers and timber beams, this manifestation, where piers of especially huge proportion effectively define the entire plan, linked by comparably massive timber beams, evokes a humbling sense of overscaled trabeation that is exceptional even when considered amongst the architect's other celebrated houses of the period. (*Criterion F*)

## References

Charles Duncan, 'R H Lovig House, Lot 36, Richardson Rd, Croydon', working drawings dated 22 November 1966, etc. Held by City of Maroondah.

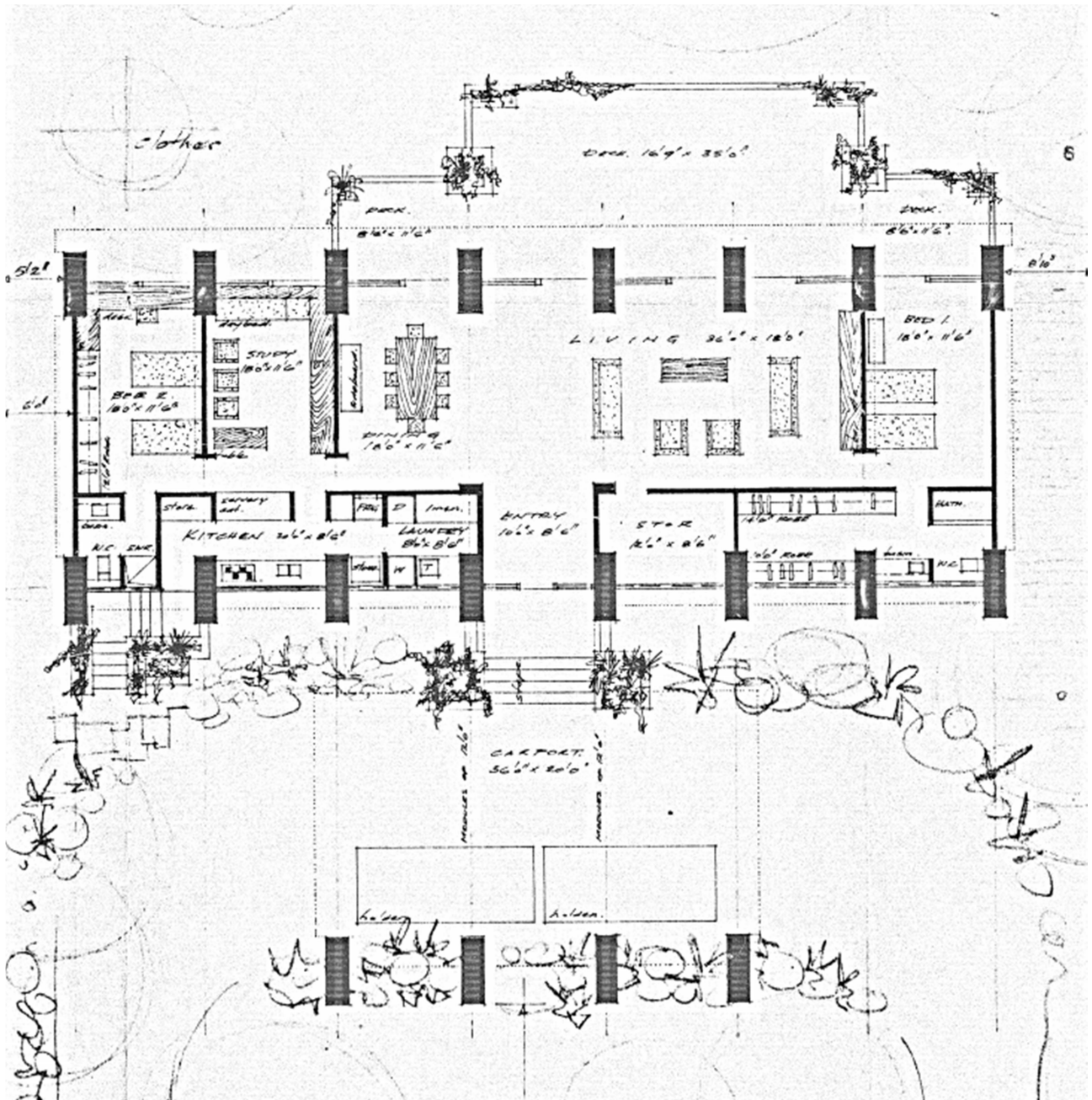
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Philip Goad, "The Modern House in Melbourne, 1945 to 1975", PhD thesis, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne, 1992.

Alex Njoo, "Organic Architecture: Its origins, development and impact on mid-twentieth century in Melbourne architecture. M Arch thesis, School of Architecture & Design, RMIT University, 2008.

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Detail of Charles Duncan's original (undated) sketch plans for the Lovig Residence  
(Source: City of Maroondah)



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	RINGWOOD UNITING CHURCH	<b>Citation No</b>	HO184
<b>Other name/s</b>	Ringwood Methodist Church (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	49 H9
<b>Address</b>	30-32 Station Street RINGWOOD	<b>Date/s</b>	1962-63 (new church) 1954-58 (halls and kindergarten)
<b>Designer/s</b>	F C Armstrong (new church and kindergarten)	<b>Builder/s</b>	Evan A Wigley (new church)



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, April 2022

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Religion	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Church	<b>Intactness</b>	Good (addition to west side)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External paint controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior alteration controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls		

### Place History

The building at 30-32 Station Street, Ringwood, was built in 1962-63 as a place of worship for the local Methodist congregation. The following background information is quoted from the 2003 heritage study

*The Ringwood Uniting Church was built for the Methodist Church in 1963 and replaced an earlier church on the site. Methodism in Ringwood had its beginnings in a small converted cottage in Whitehorse Road, near Sherbrooke Avenue, when Andrew Kennedy and George Fuller opened a Sunday School in 1872. A church was built in Whitehorse Road between Mount Dandenong Road and Ringwood Lake, and later a church was moved from Blackburn and erected closer to Ringwood station. The present site was purchased in 1916 and a church was constructed in 1918, from the funds raised by local children who sold bricks for the church at sixpence each.*

Contemporary sources record that the original church, officially opened in June 1918, was a brick building on a Greek cruciform plan with accommodation for 400 people, and was designed by architect Percy Oakley in “the Gothic order of architecture” (*Box Hill Reporter* 28/06/1918:5). Its interior had plain brick walls, a panelled timber ceiling, windows of leaded Muranese glass (ie pressed with a floral-patterned texture), and pews and a pulpit in Australian timber. There were also two memorial stained glass windows, donated by parishioner Mrs A R Edgar, “one in memory of the sixteen soldiers from the church who have enlisted, and the other for her own children”.

As the post-war residential boom of spread across Ringwood, church facilities duly required upgrading. A master plan gradually unfolded from the early 1950s, starting with the erection of a new parsonage on Greenwood Avenue (1951-53), followed by a Sunday School hall on Station Street (1954), a second residence on Greenwood Avenue for the caretaker (1956), a Fellowship Block adjacent to the Sunday School Hall (1957), and a Kindergarten (1958) at the rear of the church, fronting Greenwood Avenue. The kindergarten is confirmed to have been designed by architect F C Armstrong, who is likely to have had a hand in the earlier buildings as well. Armstrong was subsequently responsible for minor alterations to the Fellowship Block (1960) and the original church (1962) before being commissioned to design the new church.

Frederick Clarence “Clarrie” Armstrong, OAM, (1914-2008) studied at Melbourne University Architectural Atelier in the late 1930s and, at the time that he became registered as an architect in 1945, was working in the Collins Street office of Leighton Irwin & Company, a firm that specialised in hospital work. In 1950, Armstrong joined the newly-formed Hospitals & Charities Commission as a planning officer, a key position later re-branded as Senior Architect and then as Chief Architect. A staunch Methodist, he undertook a great deal of work for the Methodist Church in Victoria, including numerous suburban churches and church halls, ongoing work at the Methodist Ladies’ College and Methodist Babies’ Home, and (as co-designer with Bates, Smart & McCutcheon), the multi-storey Methodist Church Centre in Little Collins Street. Armstrong retired from the Hospitals & Charities Commission in 1977. A long-time local resident who lived in a house of his own design in Mitcham, Armstrong died in Ringwood Private Hospital in November 2008, aged 93 years.

Armstrong’s working drawings for the new Ringwood Methodist Church, dated December 1962, proposed a large brick building with an elongated wedge-shaped nave that abutted the existing Fellowship Block and Kindergarten. Along the Greenwood Avenue side, an elongated wing provided porches, foyer, choir area and vestries; to the rear of the nave was a second vestry with an organ chamber above. Construction, undertaken by builder, local resident and parishioner Evan Wigley (1907-1973), duly commenced. The foundation stone was laid on 18 May 1963; two foundation stones salvaged from the earlier church on the site were incorporated into the new building, along with the two memorial stained glass windows.

Following completion of the new church, architect F C Armstrong, remained actively involved in its physical development into the early 1970s, with his last recorded contribution being minor alterations to the toilet block at the rear of the site. Armstrong retired from architectural practice in 1977 (at which point, he was still a member of the church’s property board, as well as lay preacher) so when further renovations were mooted in the early 1980s (by which time, it had become a Uniting Church), these were entrusted to another architect, Keith Butler, a specialist in church renovations who had previously worked in the offices of James Earle and Alexander Harris (both well-regarded designers of Methodist churches in the 1950s and ‘60s). Butler’s drawings, dated April 1983, proposed a large glass-fronted foyer to the west side of the church, linking the building with the adjacent Fellowship Block and Sunday School Hall. As the new foyer also incorporated toilet facilities, the old toilet block to the rear was demolished as part of the renovations. Designated as “Scots Foyer”, the new works were rededicated in April 1984 by Charles Lavender, an elder of the congregation who was also then the Moderator of the Synod of Victoria.

Since the 1980s, few significant alterations have been made to the church and its associated buildings. In the 2010s, the kindergarten was extended with an addition along its Greenwood Avenue,

### Physical Description

A visually commanding structure on an elevated site opposite the railway station, the Ringwood Uniting Church is a large brick building dominated by a nave on a wedge-shaped plan with a tapering gabled roof clad in metal tray decking, with an elongated flat-roofed wing along the Greenwood Avenue (east) frontage, and a projecting vestry and organ chamber to the rear (south) side. The nave presents a symmetrical and canted facade to Station Street, with prow-like eaves and a prominent central full-height window bay that contains a pre-cast concrete Latin cross with leadlight panels forming a sunburst pattern around it.



The flat-roofed wing along Greenwood Avenue has an entrance porch at the corner, enlivened by stacked Castlemaine slate cladding (which incorporates the three foundation stones), with multi-paned horizontal strip windows and glazed entry doors. The porch opens to a terrace, with a ramp leading down to street level; this a wall of volcanic rock and a white-painted metal balustrade of zigzag form. The Greenwood Avenue elevation is otherwise understated, with a row of small rectangular windows, some containing leadlight glazing with various Christian symbols such as the dove and a human hand. At the far (south) end of this elevation, the projecting rear vestry is visible, clad externally with pebbled concrete panels. Dominating the corner of the church building is the tower, which is a tall and slender brick structure on a Greek cross plan, surmounted by a metal Celtic cross.

The former Sunday School Hall, to the west of the church, is a simple red brick structure with broad gabled roof and a vertical slit window to the Station Street frontage (a Latin cross motif, evident in early photographs, has since been removed). The open space between the church and the Sunday School Hall, which previously included the northern frontage of the Fellowship Block, is now dominated by the glass-walled and flat-roofed Scots Foyer that was added in 1983-84. The Fellowship Block, engulfed on three sides by later additions, can no longer be readily interpreted as part of the complex. The Kindergarten on Greenwood Avenue is a skillion-roofed brick building with a full-height window wall to the street frontage that is now substantially obscured by a front addition made in the 2010s

### Comparative Analysis

Currently, there are two post-WW2 churches on the City of Maroondah's heritage overlay schedule: the Anglican Church of St John the Divine at 5-98 Toorak Road, Croydon (Keith Reid, 1956) [HO125] and the Holy Trinity Anglican Church at 47-49 Patterson Street, Ringwood East (Van Trompf, 1964) [HO118]. The former is comparable in its cream brickwork, gabled roofline and particularly its large front window with a Latin cross. However, it is otherwise more conventional in form and finishes: its rectilinear nave, simple roofline and decorative header bricks contrast with the wedge-shaped nave, tapering prow-like gable and more overtly Featurist finishes (ie slate cladding and pebbled panels) at Ringwood. Although Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Ringwood East is more or less contemporaneous with Ringwood Methodist Church, it is a far more idiosyncratic design, with its asymmetrical planning, full-height windows and curved and battered walls with rough textured finishes. The 2003 heritage study identified several other post-WW2 churches as potential heritage places. Some of these places have been re-assessed as part of the present study; others had previously been eliminated from further consideration. The latter include the former Croydon Central Uniting Church at 185 Mount Dandenong Road (Alexander Harris, 1968) and St Paul's Anglican Church at 40 Warrandyte Road, Ringwood (Gerd & Renate Block, 1970), both of which have been considerably altered and consequently no longer considered appropriate candidates for listing.

As a local manifestation of early/mid-1960s ecclesiastical architecture, the Ringwood Methodist Church can also be compared with the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour in Bedford Road, Ringwood (Burrows & McKeown, 1961), the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints at 58-64 Hewish Road, Croydon (Maxwell Maine, 1962-64), the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church at 55-57 Wantirna Road, Ringwood (Hank Romy, 1965) and the Croydon Uniting (former Presbyterian) Church at 6 Tallent Street, Croydon (Keith & John Reid, 1966) and the Heathmont Uniting (former Methodist) Church at 89 Canterbury Road, Heathmont (Frank Secomb with Roy Colomb, 1966-67). Another local example of similar date, the Roman Catholic Church of St Edmund in Hewish Road, Croydon (Kevin Pethebridge, 1963) was demolished in the early 2000s and can thus no longer be considered a relevant comparator.

As examples of post-WW2 ecclesiastical modernism, these local churches have elements in common with the Ringwood Methodist Church. Most are of conventional form, with rectilinear naves and low gabled roofs. The ones in Bedford Road and Tallent Street are atypical for their flat roofs and box-like expression, while the Uniting Church on Canterbury Road is even more unusual for its centralized plan and low pyramidal roof, anticipating new trends in church architecture into the 1970s. These churches are mostly of face brick construction; there are a few in textured concrete brick, while the LDS church is painted white. Unlike the Ringwood Methodist Church, enlivened by slate cladding, pebbled panels and rock walls, most comparators have much starker exteriors with little or no decorative embellishment. The churches display variety in the articulation of towers, from the steel-framed structures at Bedford Road and Canterbury Road, to the steep A-framed element at Tallent Street and the two-tone T-shaped brick tower at Wantirna Road. By contrast, the LDS church in Hewish Road has a tower that is virtually identical to that of the Ringwood Methodist Church: a tall brick structure on a Greek cross plan, surmounted by a Latin cross.



## Statement of Significance

### *What is significant?*

The Ringwood Uniting Church at 30-32 Station Street, Ringwood is a large, intact and visually commanding Modernist church erected in 1962-63 for the Methodist Church, designed by architect F C Armstrong. The church is sited above a rock retaining wall opposite the Ringwood railway station. Its façade is dominated by a large salmon brick prow-shaped gable bisected by a tall leadlight window and a massive, full height concrete cross. The leadlight has a sunburst forming an abstract sunburst cross. Counterpointing the large mass of the nave there is a low flat-roofed entrance and chapel section partly faced in Castlemaine stone, with a cross-shaped brick column five storeys high, surmounted by a bronze Celtic cross.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the 1963 church. Specific elements of significance include the face brickwork and pebbled concrete panels, symmetrical nave facade with Latin cross and leadlight windows, flat-roofed corner foyer with Castlemaine slate cladding, cruciform tower with Celtic cross, and the elements salvaged from the original 1918 church (ie foundation stone and stained glass windows).

The Sunday School Hall, Fellowship Block, Kindergarten, 1980s foyer addition and two adjacent residences on Greenwood Avenue are not considered to be significant.

### *How is it significant?*

The Ringwood Uniting Church satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics
- Criterion G: Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

### *Why is it significant?*

The church is historically significant for its association with Ringwood's Methodist (later Uniting) church congregation. Erected in 1962-63 to replace an earlier church on the site built in 1918, the new church was the culmination of decade-long masterplan to upgrade facilities on the site in response to the growing congregation consequent to the post-war population boom in the Ringwood area. The new church significantly incorporated fabric from the earlier church, namely the foundation stones and memorial stained glass windows, which remain to provide tangible evidence of the congregation's pre-war origins. (*Criterion A*)

The church is architecturally significant as an intact and striking example of post-WW2 ecclesiastical modernism, with its unusual wedge-shaped nave, tapering prow-like roofline and canted façade to Station Street incorporating a large leadlight window with sunburst cross motif. Elements such as the Castlemaine slate cladding, pebbled panels and zigzag metal railings demonstrative the pervasive influence of the trend towards decorative embellishment in the early 1960s, often seen in houses of that period but less commonly in churches. Occupying an elevated site, the church remains as a prominent landmark overlooking Ringwood's railway station precinct. (*Criterion E*)

The church is socially significant as an urban landmark, traditional community focus, meeting place and repository of memories and spiritual sentiment. (*Criterion G*)

## References

Public Building File No 417. VPRS 7882/P1, PROV. [church buildings, 1918 and 1962-63]

Public Building File No 10,061. VPRS 7882/P1, PROV. [kindergarten]

Alf Clark, *Recollections of Ringwood Methodism* (1977).

Barbara Torokfalvy, "A key operator in hospital design", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 January 2009.  
[obituary for architect F C Armstrong, prepared by his daughter]

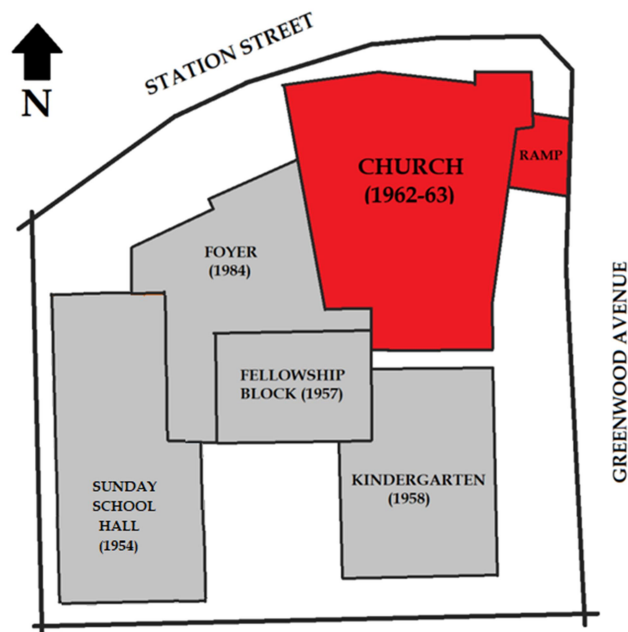
## Originally identified by

Richard Peterson with Peter Barrett, *Maroondah Heritage Study: Stage Two* (2003), Volume 1.

*Note: This citation adapted and expanded from draft citation prepared by Willys Keeble, August 2016*



*A selection of vintage images of the church (top left), Fellowship Block and Sunday School Hall (top right, viewed across site of new church, and bottom left) and kindergarten (bottom right) from the presentation album formerly in the possession of Mrs Vera Wigley, widow of builder Evan Wigley (Source: Ringwood & District Historical Society, via [www.victoriancollections.net.au](http://www.victoriancollections.net.au))*



*Indicative site plan, showing positions of the component buildings; the new church indicated in red and the remaining buildings, designated as non-contributory elements, in grey*





<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HOUSE	<b>Citation No</b>	HO174
<b>Other name/s</b>	Smith Residence (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	50 C12
<b>Address</b>	4 Swain Court HEATHMONT	<b>Date/s</b>	1969-70 1972, 1977 (additions)
<b>Designer/s</b>	Ian J Smith (1969-70, 72, 77) Gordon Ford (landscape)	<b>Builder/s</b>	J R McCulloch (1969-70, 72, 77)



*Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, June 2020*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential building (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Good (rear additions)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External paint controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior alteration controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls		

### Place History

The house at 4 Swain Court, Heathmont, was erected in 1969-70 for architect Ian J Smith, who designed it as his own family residence.

Born in the mid-1930s, Ian James Smith studied at the University of Melbourne, graduating with a Bachelor of Architecture in April 1958. He gained experience working for A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall (c1958-59), Ken Crozier (c1959-62) and then James Earle & Associates (c1962-65). In Earle's office, Smith worked on churches, houses and small commercial projects; in 1963, he also won second prize in a house competition sponsored by the Tasmanian Timber Merchants Association – the first of many such competitions in which Smith would achieve noted success. In 1965, after acting as partner-in-charge for a medical clinic in Nunawading, Smith left Earle's office to open his own private practice.

In September 1958, six months after graduation, Smith married Margaret Edith Brown, and the couple set up home in Surrey Hills (Age 08/09/1958:6). Hoping to build their own house, but with limited finances, the Smiths looked to the outer suburbs where land was more affordable. They bought a block in Coven Avenue, Heathmont, where Smith designed a small gable-roofed timber house with one bedroom, but scope for future growth. The couple resided there for a decade, which saw Smith establish and foster his own practice as an architect, spurred when a friend engaged him to design a house in Byways Drive, Ringwood East. This brought further commissions, including two more houses in that same street and three more in nearby Coolooli Court. His professional profile increased as he won prizes in several housing competitions sponsored by the RAlA Housing Service and the Gas & Fuel Corporation.

While the Smiths' house in Coven Avenue was gradually enlarged to accommodate their growing family of three children, by the decade's end, it was apparent that a larger house was needed. In 1969, they purchased land in a new subdivision known as the *The Culverlands*, created from a five-acre property on the west side of Armstrong Road, owned since 1951 by Leonard and Lina Swain. After Lina's death in 1967, her husband carved the property into sixteen allotments, most with frontage to a new double-ended cul-de-sac (named Swain Court) off the end of Culverlands Road. The Swain family's original dwelling on the site was retained on Lot 2 (10 Swain Court) and the remaining blocks offered for sale, advertised as "wooded home sites in quiet seclusion", with "lovely mountain views and bush outlooks, made roads, kerbs and channels". In May 1969, the Smiths acquired the title to Lot 5, on the north side of the west end of Swain Court. Drawings for a new house on the site are dated November, and a building permit was issued on 5 December.

Although in private practice for some years, Smith still had limited finances for the new house, and adopted a design approach for efficiency in planning, structure and materials. Specifically, as was later reported, he "seized the opportunity to put his ideas on system building into effect". To minimize the footprint on a site with a wide frontage but relatively narrow depth (and to retain existing trees), Smith proposed a compact rectilinear plan on a four-foot (1.2 metre) module, extruded into two storeys. The modular plan allowed him to adopt a standardised trabeated structural system, with 10-inch Oregon beams bolted to 5-inch Oregon posts, creating portal frames that eliminated the need for loadbearing internal walls. Instead, interior spaces would be defined by light partitions that could conceivably be removed or relocated as future needs dictated. To further save space, Smith opted for a spiral stair rather than a traditional fitted staircase. An adaptation of proprietary item, the spiral stair was delivered in several components that were ingeniously assembled on site, forming what Smith described as "more like a sculptural element than a staircase".

The architect's choice of materials was otherwise informed by the fact that, at the time, he was "totally besotted with the timber look". The internal partitions were of proprietary particle-board panels, veneered on both sides (as a special order from the manufacturer, which ordinary supplied the panels with veneer to only one side). Perimeter walls to the north and south were clad, inside and out, with vertical boards of western red cedar, finished with timber bleach. Windows to the north and south sides followed the widths set by the modular system, with plate glass affixed directly to the structural posts, but varied in height, including full-height sashes and sliding glass doors to the rear, facing the sunny north. The end walls, to the east and west, were of solid brick construction and virtually windowless, providing what Smith considered to be a contrasting mass element, as well as the necessary bracing for the structural system. Construction was carried out by Jim McCulloch, who had worked on other projects for Smith and, over a period of two decades, remained a regular collaborator. Smith points out that McCulloch, a joiner by trade, produced carpentry of a very high standard. Also involved on the project was noted landscape designer Gordon Ford, who advised on the hard landscaping. According to Smith, Ford's input included bluestone edging for the gravel driveway, bluestone slabs defining a front path, and large rocks beside the entry.

On completion, Smith's innovative "system built" house was profiled as a "House of the Week" in the *Age* (November 1971), and in a five-page feature article in the *Australian Home Beautiful* (July 1972). Having spent a decade in their first house in Coven Avenue, the Smiths spent the next decade in Swain Court. During that time, he made two additions to the rear: a split-level living room extension, with matching vertical timber cladding (1972), and a larger brick veneer wing (1977). In both cases, he utilised his original builder, Jim McCulloch. During the 1970s, Smith remained professionally active in his locality. After acting as honorary architect for a kindergarten in nearby Pleasant Drive (1970), he was engaged by the City of Croydon to design several others across the municipality. He also continued to enter competitions, winning first prize for his "Metabolic House" (1973). The family left the district in 1979 when, keen to be closer to the city, they sold the property in Swain Court and moved to Camberwell, where they bought an existing house. The new owners of their former Heathmont home added a garage, to the rear of the carport, in 1980.



## Physical Description

The house at 4 Swain Court, Heathmont, is a double-storey flat-roofed timber-framed house on a rectangular plan defined by a four-foot (1.2 metre) module. The module is expressed externally by the exposed structure of timber posts and beams, defining five bays along the north and south elevations. These bays are infilled with vertical boards of western red cedar (originally finished with Cabots timber bleach, since overpainted) and windows that follow the modular width of each bay but vary in height (narrow strip windows and larger picture windows to the street side, and full-height windows and glass sliding doors to the rear). The end walls of the house, to the east and west, are of solid brick construction, returning at the corners to form narrow piers at each end of the long facades. A flat-roofed double carport projects from the west side.

When seen from the street, the house has a dense landscaped setting that appears to retain some of the hard landscaping elements identified by Smith as the work of Gordon Ford (eg bluestone and scattered rocks). A timber letter box of elongated rectilinear form, and a metal lamppost with two box-like luminaires, both appear to be contemporaneous with the house.

## Comparative Analysis

A resident of Heathmont for two decades, Ian Smith undertook a number of architectural projects in his local area that provide a useful comparative framework. While the previous house that he designed for himself at 34 Coven Avenue, Heathmont (1959) might be an obvious comparator, the building itself (by the architect's own admission) was a far more modest and rudimentary design, with linear plan, low gabled roof and timber cladding. As seen from the street, it can only be considered a representative example of post-WW2 domestic architecture rather than an especially notable one. Smith has noted that many of his houses of the 1960s have elements in common with his own, such as modular planning, flat roofs with projecting beams, and alternating bays of windows and solid wall. This is certainly evident in three houses that Smith designed in Byways Drive, Ringwood East, at Nos 8 (1966), 10 (1967) and 2 (1970), and another nearby at 3 Coolooli Court (1973). But, by the same token, Smith has reported that the "system built" approach to his own house, where modular planning was echoed in a standardised structural system, represented a unique experiment in his body of work – a bold and innovative idea that, he concedes, is unlikely to have appealed to a private client, but was appropriate for an architect's own residence.

By contrast, the buildings that Smith designed in the mid-to-late 1970s represent a significant departure from his earlier work. The textbook modernist expression of modular planning, flat roofs and alternating solid/void bays was supplanted by a more relaxed organic style that was becoming increasingly popular at the time, characterised by irregular split-level planning and angular rooflines with intersecting skillions and clerestory windows. This is evident in houses that Smith designed at 45 Dicksons Street, Heathmont (c1974) and 7 Coolooli Court, Ringwood East (c1976), as well as in the numerous kindergartens that he did for the City of Croydon, typified by those at 4 Lee-Ann Crescent and 22 Frederick Street (both 1974).

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The former Smith House at 4 Swain Court, Heathmont, is a double-storey flat-roofed brick and timber-framed house with a modular rectangular plan reflected in the expressed structure of the façade, defining bays that are by windows and vertical timber cladding. Erected in 1969-70, it was designed by prize-winning architect Ian J Smith as his own residence.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house. Specific elements of significance include the block-like expression, flat roof with broad eaves and exposed beams, blank brick walls (to side elevations) and modular street façade with varied fenestration and spandrels of vertical timber panelling.

*How is it significant?*

The former Smith House satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

*Why is it significant?*

The former Smith House is significant for the following reasons:



Aesthetically, the house is significant as an unusual example of residential architecture of the late 1960s. While its box-like expression, flat roof and simple repetitive façade are all representative of the prevailing modernist idiom of the post-WW2 era, the house otherwise stands out for its strict modular plan (based on a four-foot grid) that is echoed in the structural expression, elevational treatment and fenestration (*Criterion E*).

### References

Certificate of Title, Volume 5336, Folio 152, created 6 May 1969.

Ian J Smith, "New residence, Lot 5, Swain Court, Heathmont, for M E and I J Smith", working drawings, dated November 1969. Copies held by City of Maroondah.

"Slim house to save the trees", *Age*, 29 November 1971, p 14.

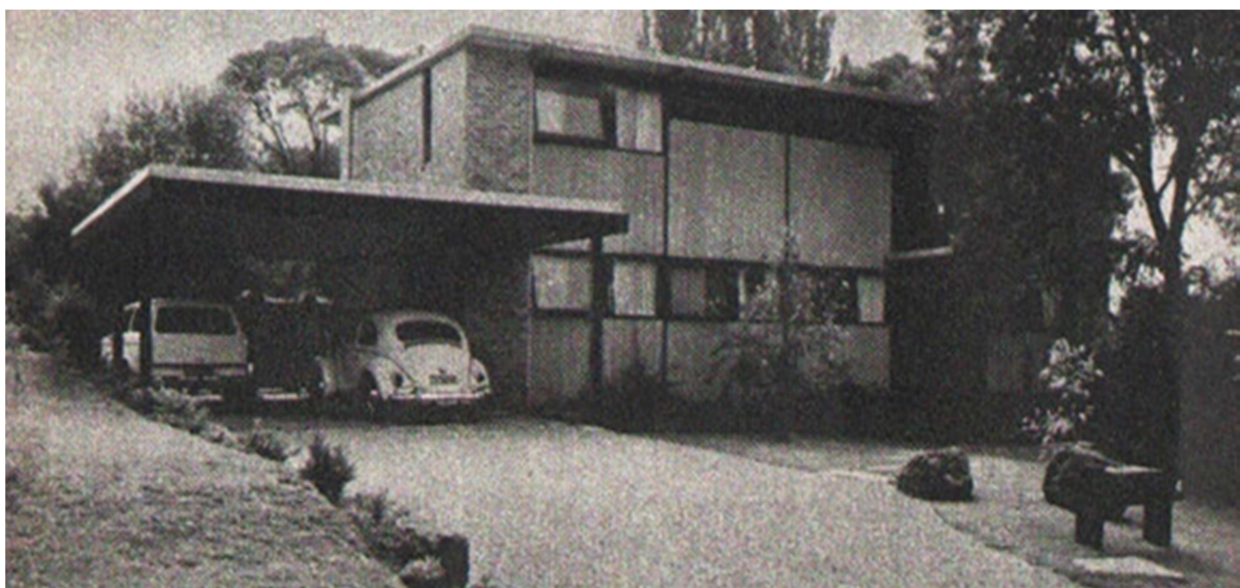
Don Dunlop, "A house that's system built", *Australian Home Beautiful*, July 1972, pp 8-13.

Ringwood Historical Society, Inc, *The 48 Courts of Heathmont* (2007), unpaginated.

Interview with Ian J Smith, 19 May 2020.

### Originally identified by

Built Heritage Pty Ltd.



Photograph of the house in the early 1970s; note volcanic rocks and bluestone pathway contributed by Gordon Ford  
Source: *Australian House & Garden*, July 1972, p 8.

<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HEATHMONT PRE-SCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN	<b>Citation No</b>	HO165
<b>Other name/s</b>	Heathmont Community Centre (former)	<b>Melway ref</b>	64 A1
<b>Address</b>	39-41 Viviani Crescent HEATHMONT	<b>Date/s</b>	1950-52 2013 (rear addition)
<b>Designer/s</b>	Frank Secomb (Honorary Architect) George Browning (murals)	<b>Builder/s</b>	Community members



*Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, April 2018*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Community facilities	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Hall (public)	<b>Intactness</b>	Good (sympathetic additions)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Place History

The building at 39-41 Viviani Crescent, Heathmont was erected as a pre-school and community hall for the Heathmont Advancement League. Designed in 1950-51 by architect and local resident Frank Secomb (in an honorary capacity), it was erected by community labour and officially opened in 1952.

The theme of progress associations, where groups of citizens banded together to agitate for improvement to local infrastructure and facilities, was often characterised by waves and troughs of enthusiasm. Heathmont was no exception. One such group, the Heathmont Progress League, was briefly active in the mid-1920s. The Heathmont Progress Association, which emerged about a decade later, proved more lasting and successful in its community agitations, only to have its efforts gazumped by the onset of WW2.



The immediate post-war era saw Heathmont enter a phase of unprecedented residential settlement as more farmland was subdivided for housing. Amongst the new residents were solicitor John Harper (1911-1992) and wife Joan (1919-2005), who acquired six acres in Heathmont in 1940 but did not build a house there until the end of the decade. The couple, who would have five children, became tireless champions for improvements in local facilities, especially schools and kindergartens. When the Heathmont Advancement League was formed in 1948, John Harper was foundation president. One of its first initiatives was provision of a venue for use as a “pre-school and utility hall”. A two-for-one grant was promptly secured from the State Government, enabling the purchase of a site on what was then known as Viviana [sic] Crescent.

A suitable Honorary Architect was found in Frank Secomb, who had only recently moved to Heathmont. Born in Droivun, Francis Newton Secomb (1918-) had studied at Melbourne Technical College and the Melbourne University Architectural Atelier, completing his education in 1941. By the time that he became registered as an architect in early 1950, he was employed with the father-and-son partnership of A S & R A Eggleston. This sprang from the pre-war practice of Alec Stanley Eggleston (1883-1955), who amended the name after son Robert Alec Eggleston (1911-2000) became junior partner in 1937. By the early 1950s, Eggleston *pere* was winding down his involvement; a year before his death, the practice was reconfigured by his son and two other long-serving staff members to become Eggleston, McDonald & Secomb. Frank Secomb not only remained with the firm for the rest of his career, but also continued to live in Heathmont.

Secomb’s preliminary drawings for the building at Heathmont, dated 30 September 1950, depicts a simple gabled timber hall on a long rectangular plan, providing a small lobby (flanked by storerooms) and the hall proper, with a lean-to wing for the kitchen, locker room and toilets. The site plan showed allowance was made for future expansion: a similarly-scaled wing to extend along the rear boundary. When full working drawings were prepared in April 1951, several improvements were made. The front entry was offset to provide a larger staff room, and the hall included a stone fireplace (with tapered chimney outside) and five bays of full-height multi-paned windows overlooking what would become the playground.

By June 1951, a building permit had been issued and permission granted by the Department of Health. Construction began, carried out by what Gerry Robinson described as “enthusiastic local volunteer labour”. Twelve months later, in June 1952, Secomb reported that, although construction was virtually finished, occupation of the building would not commence until painting, fencing and landscaping had been undertaken via several working bees over the next few months. The task of painting included murals at either end of the hall, depicting tropical and polar scenes. These were done by artist and local resident George Browning (1918-2000), who studied painting at Melbourne Technical College and the National Gallery School in the late 1930s and went on to serve as an official war artist during WW2. At the time that he did his murals at Heathmont, Browning was employed as a staff artist at the National Museum, where he prepared illustrations for postcards and publications, and backdrops for the museum’s celebrated dioramas.

Officially opened by Lady Angliss in 1952, the venue was an immediate success. It not only accommodated the pre-school but also church services for several newly-formed congregations, and a range of public events from dances and fashion parades to card nights and protest meetings. However, this multi-purpose use was threatened in the late 1950s when nearby residents lodged complaints about noise, nuisance and discarded rubbish that accompanied evening events. The matter came to a fore when one resident issued a Supreme Court writ to the Heathmont Advancement League, stating that the venue had been funded as a pre-school and that no other uses should be permitted. It consequently ceased to operate as a public hall and has since remained solely a pre-school. While the rear wing that Frank Secomb proposed in 1950 was never built to his design, the property has otherwise been altered and updated over the years, including a detached storage shed (1965), sewerage connection (1968) and replacement of the original fibro-cement sheet roof with metal sheeting (1985). A large but sympathetically-designed flat-roofed rear wing was added in 2013.

### Physical Description

The original portion of the Heathmont Pre-School & Kindergarten is a simple weatherboard hall on a long rectangular plan. It has a broad gabled roof clad in metal sheeting, with unlined eaves and a tapering stone chimney along the southwest (side) wall. The street façade is asymmetrical, with an off-centre doorway to the right side, accessed by a small timber-framed porch and steps. There is a small rectangular window to the street side, and another just around the corner on the northwest elevation. That side of the building, facing the playground, otherwise has five large bays of full-height multi-paned timber framed windows.



The 2013 rear addition, which is only partially visible from the street, is flat-roofed structure on a steeped plan. Clearly designed to echo the simple forms and finishes of the original building, it has pale-coloured corrugated metal cladding, large windows and green-painted timber boards to the subfloor area.

Although an internal inspection of the building was not undertaken for this assessment, recent photographs and other information sourced online confirms that the main hall space retains some of its original fittings, finishes and features, most notably the stone fireplace and at least one of the murals that were painted by George Browning in the early 1950s.

### **Comparative Analysis**

The early post-war era saw a number of progress associations crop up in parts of the study area that, like Heathmont, were starting to see a renewed boom of residential settlement. The Heathmont Advancement League, founded in 1948, was almost certainly the first of them. Other to follow included the Bayswater North Progress Association (1954), the South Croydon Progress Association (1959) and the South East Croydon Progress Association (1965). While the provision of community meeting places would have been high on the agenda for these local groups, few of them were able to secure premises as swiftly as was done in Heathmont, where a venue was designed, erected and already in use within just a few years of the group's formation. By contrast, almost ten years passed before the Croydon South Progress Association had a public hall erected in Cheong Park. Opened in 1968, this was a more substantial brick building than the modest timber hall at Heathmont, but was similarly been designed by a leading local architect (in this case, Croydon resident Kevin Pethebridge) acting in an honorary capacity. Other public halls emerged even later: a second hall in Croydon South, at Belmont Park (1976), followed by the Brush Creek Hall in Croydon North (1977), erected after the area's original pre-war meeting place, Dorset Hall, was destroyed by fire.

### **Statement of Significance**

*What is significant?*

The Heathmont Pre-School and Kindergarten, at 39-41 Viviani Crescent, Heathmont, is a simple gabled weatherboard hall with five bays of full-height windows along one side and a tapering stone chimney on the other. It was erected by the Heathmont Advancement League in the early 1950s as a combined pre-school and public hall, with input from architect Frank Secomb and artist George Browning, both local residents.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire building, excluding the rear addition. Specific elements of significance include the gabled roofline, weatherboard cladding and large multi-paned windows to the north side. Internal alteration controls are recommended to protect significant elements of the interior, notably the stone fireplace and the George Browning murals.

*How is it significant?*

The Heathmont Pre-School and Kindergarten satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Maroondah's history.

*Why is it significant?*

The Heathmont Pre-School and Kindergarten is significant for the following reasons:

The building provides evidence of the significant agitations and efforts of local progress associations during the early post-war era, when such organisations emerged in those parts of the City of Maroondah that were undergoing unprecedented residential settlement but lagging behind in the provision of community facilities. While many of these organisations existed from the 1940s to the 1970s, with varying degrees of success, the Heathmont Advancement League was not only the first such group to emerge after WW2, but also one of the most vocal and successful. Through the cumulative efforts of its members, including expert input from a local architect and artist acting in an honorary capacity, and others assisting with construction or working bees, the group achieved the remarkable feat of completing a public venue within only a few years of its establishment – not only the first purpose-built community hall to be erected in the study area after WW2, but also the only one for more than a decade thence. (*Criterion A*)

The building retains important associations with a group of enthusiastic and far-sighted local residents who collectively championed for the project and brought it to fruition. These include specific individuals such as John Harper (1911-1992), foundation president of the Heathmont Advancement League, for whom the pre-school building represented the first of many satisfactory outcomes for his community over many years of local agitation, activism and fundraising (with wife Joan), culminating in their donation of four acres of their land in Allens Road for a nature reserve in 1987. The building also has significant associations with local residents who contributed professional skills in an honorary capacity. Designed by architect Frank Secomb (1918-), it represents one of his earliest known projects, predating the establishment of the eminent city architectural firm (Eggleston, McDonald & Secomb) of which he was a key member for decades. The murals by George Browning (1911-1988) represent an unusual application of the talents of a professional artist who is best known for his war-related and museum dioramas. (*Criterion H*)

### References

Public Building File No 11,924, Unit 1397, VPRS 7882/P1, PROV.

Heathmont History Group, *Heathmont Sketchbook* (Blackburn: PenFolk Publishing 2017), §15, 33.

### Originally identified by

Heathmont History Group.

<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HOUSE	<b>Citation No</b>	HO175
<b>Other name/s</b>	<i>Calmore</i> ; Doctor's residence and clinic (former);	<b>Melway ref</b>	50 J3
<b>Address</b>	61 Wicklow Avenue CROYDON	<b>Date/s</b>	1923
<b>Designer/s</b>	Unknown	<b>Builder/s</b>	Unknown



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, June 2020

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential building (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Excellent
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External paint controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior alteration controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls		

### Place History

The house at 61 Wicklow Avenue, Croydon, was erected in 1923 as a residence for Dr Keith Hallam and his wife Heather, incorporating consulting rooms for Dr Hallam's medical practice.

Born in Hobart, Keith Holly Hallam (1896-1980) attended Queens College and then the University of Tasmania, where he graduated with a BA in 1916. After briefly working as a teacher, he relocated to Victoria and completed medical studies at the University of Melbourne, gaining his MB/BS in 1921. Hallam then worked as a Resident Medical Officer, initially at the Alfred Hospital, then transferring to Queens Memorial Infectious Diseases Hospital in Fairfield, and thence to the Women's Hospital in Carlton.



Dr Hallam had settled in Croydon by January 1923, when he began his medical practice from premises in Coolstore Road (McGivern:245). The next month, he married Miss Heather Harriet Cameron (1900-1926), and, six months later, the couple acquired land on the coveted *Wicklow Hills Estate*. Extending between present-day Wicklow Avenue and the Maroondah Highway, the *Wicklow Hills Estate* was created from an 80-acre property that had been owned since 1889 by Richard Bonyng Kelly, whose family ran it as an orchard and later as a stud farm. Just prior to Kelly's death in 1919, the property was divided into two parts: the existing homestead was retained on a 16 acre holding (accessed off Stirling Road) and the remaining 64 acres subdivided for housing. This created 84 allotments, with frontages to existing Wicklow Avenue and Maroondah Highway, to a new north-south thoroughfare that linked them (Alto Avenue) and three other short streets (Glenora Avenue, Kenmare Avenue and Ellesmere Avenue). Promoted as "Victoria's finest residential resort", the first release of the new *Wicklow Hills Estate* was offered for sale in 1918, with a subsequent auction taking place in 1920.

It was in September 1923 that the land title to Lot 1, on the west corner of Wicklow Avenue and Ellesmere Avenue, was transferred to Mrs Heather Harriet Hallam. Evidently, a new building on the site was already under construction by that time, as the *Shire of Lillydale Rate Book* for 1923-24 (dated 24 November 1923) records Mrs Hallam as the owner of a house on Lot 1 of the *Wicklow Hills Estate*, rated with a Net Annual Value of £65. Timely completion of the new dwelling appears to have been hastened by the fact that the Hallams were expecting their first child: their daughter, Patricia, arrived on 27 December. According to electoral rolls, the Hallams' new house was named *Calмора*. The couple was still in residence in February 1926, when their second child, son Keith, was born. Eight months later, however, Harriet Hallam died suddenly, aged only 26 years.

Understandably keen to start a new life, Dr Hallam opted to sell the Wicklow Avenue property and move elsewhere. Dr William Burns, who came to the area in 1926 to serve as Hallam's *locum tenens*, expressed interest in purchasing the practice. Ultimately, Hallam chose to keep it within the family: his late wife's brother, Dr Ian Cameron (1897-1948) moved into the house with his own wife, Maggie, and took over the practice as well. Hallam duly left the district, remarrying in 1929 and, after furthering his qualifications and experience in England, became an eminent radiologist in Melbourne. Title records show that ownership of Hallam's property in Wicklow Avenue remained vested in his late wife's estate until 1936, with another eight years passing before it was formally transferred to Mrs Maggie Lilian Cameron. The family continued to occupy the house (perpetuating its original name, *Calмора*) until Dr Cameron's death in 1948. His widow subsequently erected a smaller house for herself on the adjacent site, at No 59.

The next owner of the original house and clinic was Tasmanian-born Dr Gordon Albery (1899-1980), who had worked as a flying doctor in Cloncurry, Queensland, before relocating to Melbourne and purchasing the practice in Croydon (*Brisbane Times*, 10/02/1952:34). In 1956, he was joined there by Dr Ian Henry Cameron (1929-2005), a recent graduate who happened to be son of the clinic's former owner and nephew of its original one. The business thrived in the post-WW2 era and, in 1959, it was decided to relocate to a new purpose-built medical centre on the opposite corner of Wicklow and Ellesmere Avenues. The former premises at No 61 were then acquired by the Commonwealth of Australia for use as offices for the Post-Master General's Department. This use appears to have continued for several decades, and it was not until the mid-1990s that the property was re-adapted as a single private residence.

Dr Albery and Dr Cameron, the last two doctors to practice from the premises at No 61, both continued to do so from its purpose-built replacement at No 65 (latterly known as the Wicklow Avenue Medical Centre) for many years, with Dr Cameron remaining there for almost half a century until his death in 2005.

### Physical Description

The house at 61 Wicklow Avenue, Croydon, is a large single-storey weatherboard house in the inter-war bungalow style, with a low hipped roof clad in corrugated galvanised steel sheeting, and penetrated by red brick chimneys. The unusually elongated façade to Wicklow Avenue is balanced without being precisely symmetrical, with two central groups of five windows flanked by gabled bays with half-timbered infill. The bay to the left side projects forward to define an entrance porch, supported at the outer end on paired pillars and a red brick plinth, with a simple weatherboard balustrade and matching brick steps. The bay to the right has a row of casement sash windows near the corner, and a smaller boxed window with bracketed sill and two casement sashes flanking a weatherboard infill panel. Windows otherwise have double-hung sashes, with glazing bars to the upper sash.

The side elevation, to Ellesmere Avenue, presents almost as a separate building, with a double-fronted asymmetrical façade incorporating another half-timbered gabled bay (this time with bracketed eaves) and a second entrance with a small porch with low gabled roof on turned timber posts. The incorporation of separate entrances to each street frontage provides evidence of the building's original twofold function as a private residence with an integrated medical clinic.

The property has a plain brick fence along both of its street frontages, with a corner gateway incorporating a black-painted mild steel gate. The fence and gate are not contemporaneous with the house and appear to date from the early post-WW2 era (ie, during the ownership of Dr Alberty).

### Comparative Analysis

As an early example of a residence incorporating medical consulting rooms, the building has few local comparators. One of the first resident doctors in the study area was Dr Arthur Langley, who commenced practice in 1913 from a large Edwardian-style brick residence that he erected at 10-12 Warrandyte Road, Ringwood. Remaining in use as a medical centre well into the post-WW2 era, the building is included on the City of Maroondah's heritage overlay schedule (HO72). Counterparts in Croydon emerged in the early 1920s. Dr Keith Hallam reportedly opened his original clinic in Coolstore Road (exact address unknown) around 1923, soon followed by Dr William Burns, who began practice from his house in Mount View Street. Neither of these buildings, however, still stands.

By 1930, directories listed two resident doctors in Ringwood and another three in Croydon. In the former suburb, Dr Langley still practiced from his home on Warrandyte Road, while a Dr W L Colquhoun had established himself on Bedford Road. The latter briefly left the district, but returned in the late 1930s to take up residence at *Aringa* in Canterbury Road, Heathmont. Croydon's original medic, Dr Burns, still practiced from Mount View Street in 1930; his practice was supplemented by those of Dr Ian Cameron, who had taken over Dr Hallam's clinic in Wicklow Avenue, and Dr John Hanly in Lacey Street. In 1941, Dr Burns moved across the road to a large two-storey brick house that he built fronting Mount Dandenong Road, incorporating consulting rooms with separate public entrance from the side street. This building still stands, and has been recommended for a heritage overlay as part of the current review (see separate citation).

Other local buildings associated with early provision of health care services include the self-styled "private hospitals" that emerged in the early twentieth century and invariably operated from adapted residences rather than purpose-built premises. Amongst the earliest recorded examples were the Croydon Park Private Hospital (1904) off Maroondah Highway (later Hyton Crescent) and the Ringwood Private Hospital (1913) in Adelaide Street. While both facilities thrived into the post-WW2 era, their respective premises have since been demolished. Croydon's earliest counterpart appears to have been the Croydon Private Hospital (1924), which occupied purpose-built timber premises at 16 Ellesmere Avenue. It was operated by a Sister Mary Mouldsdales (late of Korumburra), who became very popular in the local community (*Healesville & Croydon Guardian* 15/10/1927:3). After she left moved to Oakleigh in 1927, the hospital closed and the building was adapted as a private residence. Croydon evidently remained without a private hospital until the early 1930s, when Sister Margaret Donohoe opened a facility in a rendered brick building on Coolstore Road. This was demolished in 1963 for commercial expansion along that road (McGivern:246).

### Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The former house/medical clinic at 61 Wicklow Avenue, Croydon, is a single-storey weatherboard building with low hipped roof and an elongated façade with half-timbered gabled ends and a projecting porch to one side. It was erected in 1923 as the residence and consulting rooms of Dr Keith Hallam, one of Croydon's first resident physicians, and remained occupied as such (later, by Hallam's brother-in-law and nephew) for almost four decades, when the practice relocated to purpose-built premises on the opposite corner.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house. Specific elements of significance include the hipped roofline with red brick chimneys and half-timber gablets, the front porch with brick piers and paired pillars, and the groups of multi-paned double-hung sash windows.

*How is it significant?*

The former house/medical clinic satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

*Why is it significant?*

The former house/medical clinic is significant for the following reasons:

The building is historically significant for its associations with the early provision of medical care in Croydon. It was erected in 1923 as a combined residence and consulting rooms for Dr Keith Hallam, who commenced practice in the area earlier than year from premises in Coolstore Road. With the latter building long gone, and another early house/clinic in Mount View Street (occupied by Dr W J Burns from c1925) also demolished, the building at 61 Wicklow Avenue stands out as the oldest surviving doctor's premises in Croydon, and the first one known to have been purpose-built as a combined residence and clinic. Latterly occupied by others (notably, Hallam's brother in law, Dr Ian Cameron, and later Cameron's like-named son), the building provides a historical link with the purpose-built medical clinic on the opposite corner of Wicklow Avenue, which succeeded it in the late 1950s and still remains in operation today. (*Criterion A*)

The building is aesthetically significant as an unusual example of a single-storey weatherboard residence in the inter-war bungalow style. Prominently sited on a corner block, the building has uncommonly elongated façade to Wicklow Avenue, with characteristic details such as the half-timber gables, bracketed eaves and projecting off-centre porch, combined with more unusual elements such as the two rows of five windows, and separate entrances to each street elevation, that ably demonstrate that the building was designed as more than a single private residence. (*Criterion E*)

## References

Certificate of Title, Volume 4786, Folio 100, created 13 September 1923.

*Shire of Lillydale Rate Books*. VPRS 17145/P1, Public Record Office Victoria.

Muriel McGivern, *A History of Croydon: A Second Volume* (1967), p 245.

## Originally identified by

Richard Peterson with Peter Barrett, *Maroondah Heritage Study: Stage Two* (2003), Volume 2.



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	HOUSE	<b>Citation No</b>	HO178
<b>Other name/s</b>	Gill Residence; Rosedale; Three Gates; The Farmhouse	<b>Melway ref</b>	36 H10
<b>Address</b>	89-91 Yarra Road CROYDON HILLS	<b>Date/s</b>	1911
<b>Designer/s</b>	Unknown	<b>Builder/s</b>	Unknown



*Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, June 2020*

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential building (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	House	<b>Intactness</b>	Excellent
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as individual heritage place <input type="checkbox"/> External paint controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior alteration controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls		

### Place History

The house at 89-91 Yarra Road, Croydon Hills, was erected in 1911 as a farmhouse for prominent orchardist W S Gill, on a substantial site originally developed in the late nineteenth century by the Smith family, who have been acknowledged by Muriel McGivern as the pioneers of fruit-growing in the Croydon area.

The orchard site, forming part of Section 21A, Parish of Warrandyte, was granted in 1881 to William Henry Smith, but later passed to his brother, Edward Smith (1855-1898). It was after Edward's early death ("full of activity and plans for the future in relation to sowing and planting and fruit production", according to an obituary) that management of the orchard was taken over by William Stephings Gill (1874-1942) on behalf of Edward's widow, Sarah Smith. A young man, barely 25 years of age, Gill had previously been "associated with the practical side of the fruit industry at Doncaster" (*Weekly Times* 09/05/1931:43).

In Edward Smith's probate papers (68/880), his Yarra Road estate was described as "116 acres of freehold... with a four room weatherboard house and outbuildings thereon" (Probate 68/880). As later reported in the *Weekly Times*, he had purchased the property in 1899 "for £3,000 on easy terms, with not much more capital than sufficed for the first instalment". This, however, does not tally with title records, which show that Sarah Smith (who remarried in 1901 to become Mrs Albert Aumann) retained ownership until Gill took over in April 1911 (COT 2516/096). Soon after acquiring the property, Gill built a new house, described as "one of the most comfortable brick residences in the district", with "a well-arranged large garden". The property, encapsulating the orchard as well as the house, was known as *Rosedale* (after Gill's wife Rhoda – the Greek word for Rose). William and Rhoda Gill (who had three sons and later adopted a daughter) are definitively recorded in residence in the 1912 electoral roll, which first listed their address as Yarra Road, Croydon.

While the orchard thrived under Gill's ownership, problems emerged. As recorded in the *Weekly Times*, Gill assumed that increased acreage would mean increased profits. Cultivating almost 100 acres of apples, pears, peaches and cherries brought a high yield but also a decline in efficiency due to labour costs. Thus, "after careful consideration, Mr Gill decided to concentrate on a smaller area". Title records show that he sold off three-quarters of his property over thirteen years. Fellow orchardist Lewis Spencer purchased land to the north (38 acres in 1915, then another 14 acres in 1918), while 38 acres to the west was acquired by Gill's son, Reginald, in 1928. With a reduced curtilage of 26 acres, Gill senior was vindicated when "the returns from the reduced area have been equally as profitable as were those from the large place".

By 1931, Gill's *Rosedale* orchard comprised eight acres of apples trees, six acres of pear trees and three acres each of peach and lemon trees (cherry cultivation having been discontinued due to higher labour costs). The orchard duly secured an enviable reputation for the quality and volume of its output and, in the mid-1930s, was noted to be "among the best in the district" (*Weekly Times*, 09/03/1935:48). Gill continued to operate the orchard until his death in 1942, aged 68 years. As Muriel McGivern pointed out, such was his family's long association with the property that the rising topography along that part of Yarra Road took the nickname of "Gill's Hill".

After Gill's death, eldest son Roy declined to take over the property and ownership passed to civil servant Claude Jackson, who died in 1947 (although he widow stayed on for a few more years). Title records show that the Jacksons renamed it *Three Gates*. In August 1951, it was offered for sale for £5,250, described as 23 acres with "particularly sound fruit trees, apples, pears, peaches and nectarines... This orchard is well known and recognised as one of the best in the district" (*Age* 07/08/1951:8). The next owners were Hugh Morrison, a Wycheproof grazier, and his two sisters, Janet and Mary. They retained ownership (and the name *Three Gates*) for two decades, during which its extent was further reduced by subdivision, include sale of land to neighbour Reginald Gill. After Hugh's death in 1969, ownership was vested in his sisters and son until 1972, when the property (just over three acres) was bought by industrial chemist Bruce Edwards and wife Elsy, late of Camberwell. The couple, who renamed it *The Farmhouse*, lived there for over a decade, during which time they "nurtured the old property and developed it into a modern though unspoilt semi-rural spread" (*Age* 10/08/1985:43). When offered for sale in 1985, the three-acre property still had productive fruit trees and remnant outbuildings (including two barns and a former picker's cottage), plus an ornamental lake and garden setting largely developed by Edwards, noted as "an accomplished gardener and garden designer".

In more recent years, the property has been further subdivided for residential development, creating a new T-shaped cul-de-sac known as Federation Glen, providing access fourteen standard-sized allotments, with the original *Rosedale* house retained on a double-sized block on the south-west corner of Yarra Road.

### Physical Description

The house at 89-91 Yarra Road, Croydon Hills, is a single-storey double-fronted Federation-style red brick villa with a roof of unglazed Marseilles pattern terracotta tiles and matching ridge capping and finials. The irregular roofline comprises a steep gambrel with projecting gables, smaller corner gablet and hipped return verandah. Gable ends contain timber shingles or roughcast render, with ornamental half-timbering (notably a sunburst), and there are tall red brick chimneys with stepped capping and terracotta pots. Elevations to the south and east (Yarra Road) are asymmetrical; each with a projecting gabled bay linked by the verandah. The bays have large windows with tall timber-framed casement sashes and highlights, bluestone sills and skillion awnings with timber brackets and pierced timber friezes with alternating oval and pike motifs. The verandah has a matching frieze, turned posts with shaped brackets and a splayed corner echoing a splayed window bay, similarly detailed. The front door, at the junction of the verandah and front projecting bay, has a panelled timber door with fanlight and flanking sidelights.

Photographs from when the property was sold in 2006 indicate a large rear outbuilding, not visible from the street. A single-storey gable-roofed weatherboard structure with panelled doors and skillion verandah on timber posts, it appears to be of some age and may be the former fruit picker's cottage.

## Comparative Analysis

Fruit-growing has been noted as a significant theme in the history of the City of Maroondah, that, from the late nineteenth century until the 1960s, strongly defined certain parts of the study area, especially in the fringes to the north (Warranwood, Croydon North and Croydon Hills) and south (Heathmont). Today, relatively little physical evidence remains to demonstrate this theme, although a few pockets of fruit trees still remain, including former orchard sites associated with the McAlpin family off 73-75 Wonga Road, Ringwood North, and the Maggs family off Strathfield Parade, Croydon [HO123].

In the northern third of the study area, residential expansion from the late 1960s saw many historic orchards subdivided, and old farmhouses often demolished. Writing in 1967, Muriel McGivern noted a few examples along Yarra Road, including Samuel Styles' former home at the north-west corner of Plymouth Roads (razed three years before for Luther College) and a "historic little cottage" at the south-west corner of Knees Road (formerly Exeter Road), long occupied by the Knee family, still standing at the time but since vanished. Two other houses, both of later date, remain to demonstrate that family's long links with fruit-growing: a brick bungalow at No 164 (built by William Knee in 1925) and a post-WW2 cream brick villa at No 160 (built by Oliver Knee). Aside from these and *Three Gates*, the only other orchard farmhouse to survive on Yarra Road seems to be No 52-54, associated with Alexander Finlay Thomson, who acquired the site in 1909. His 18-acre orchard was subdivided for housing in the 1980s, leaving the house on its current double block. Although retaining this generous curtilage, with remnant fruit trees evident, the house itself has been much altered. The original gable-roofed timber cottage (probably c1909) has a large hip-roofed front addition (probably early post-WW2), and the external walls have been reclad in fake brick cladding.

While the *Maroondah Heritage Study* (2003) suggested that a pre-war dwelling at 6 Cameron Road, Ringwood North was "probably part of an earlier orchard or farm", research confirms that it was actually erected for a commercial traveller Thomas Dearden, on a large block fronting San Remo Road that was part of a high-end subdivision known as the *Hadley Park Estate*. Other dwellings confirmed to be orchard farmhouses include *Eluera*, the former Mills family property at 59 Bemboka Road, Warranwood. Set well back from the street, the hip-roofed house retained a substantial curtilage until 2018, when the site was carved up to create 19 blocks around a new cul-de-sac, Aspen Court (with the original house retained on Lot 5). A later example in Warranwood is a brick house at 11-13 Braden Brae Drive, erected by orchardist Frederick Smith in the 1940s. Originally sited in the centre of a 17-acre orchard fronting Bryson's Road, the house was retained when the land was subdivided in the 1980s, creating several new streets including Braden Brae Drive. Other orchard farmhouses from the second quarter of the twentieth century include the former Chandler property at 420 Liverpool Road, Kilsyth South (c1920s?), with an uncommonly substantial curtilage and remnant fruit trees, a brick bungalow at 4 Lucinda Close, Heathmont (1933), associated with a lemon grove and still retaining a tree in its garden, and *Ranikhet*, an attic-storeyed timber house at 31 Orchard Road, Heathmont (1945).

Considered in isolation as a manifestation of Edwardian residential architecture, *Three Gates* is comparable to houses at 130 Croydon Road, Croydon (1910), 427-429 Dorset Road, Croydon (1916), 18 Warrandyte Road, Ringwood (1918) and 49 Warrandyte Road, Ringwood (c1920), all with similar asymmetrical double-fronted facades, gabled bays and return verandahs; most also have roughcast gables, turned posts, shaped brackets and friezes, window canopies and/or splayed corner bays. All four, however, are of timber, and only one has a tiled roof. Contemporaneous counterparts of brick are much rarer in the City of Maroondah. The most pertinent comparator would be the former *Glamorgan* (now St Paul's Parish Centre) at 40 Warrandyte Road, Ringwood (c1918), in a similar Federation idiom. The former doctor's residence at 10-12 Warrandyte Road (1915) is slightly earlier in date, but was designed in a more hybrid proto-bungalow mode.

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

*Three Gates* at 89-91 Yarra Road, Croydon Hills, is a single-storey Edwardian red brick villa with an irregular terracotta-tiled roofline and double-fronted façade with gabled bays and return verandah with turned posts and pierced timber frieze. Erected in 1911 by prominent orchardist W S Gill, it replaced an earlier timber house on an orchard established in the 1880s by the Smith family, pioneers of fruit-growing in Croydon.



The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house, excluding rear additions. Specific elements of significance include the irregular roofline of hips, gables and half-timbered gablets, the brick chimneys with corbelled caps and terracotta pots, the return verandah with ornate timber posts and fretwork, the timber sash windows, and the bracketed slate-clad window hood.

*How is it significant?*

The house satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history;
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

*Why is it significant?*

The house is significant for the following reasons:

The house is historically significant for associations with the fruit-growing industry, an important theme in the development of the City of Maroondah from the late nineteenth century until the 1960s. During that period, the northern fringes of the study area, encapsulating present-day Croydon Hills and Warranwood, were most strongly defined by orchards. With these vast sites subdivided for housing in the later twentieth century, few former orchard farmhouses remain today. *Three Gates* is especially notable in that it was built on a site of one of the district's oldest orchards, established in the 1880s by the Smith family, who pioneered fruit-growing in Croydon. Intrinsically rare as one of few surviving orchard farmhouses, it is also one of the oldest, one of the most intact, one of the most grandiose and one of few that still retains its original street frontage (as opposed to those retained on side-streets within later subdivisions). (*Criterion A, Criterion B*)

The building is aesthetically significant as a notable (and notably intact) example of Edwardian residential architecture. Although many Edwardian houses survive in what is now the City of Maroondah, these are invariably of timber construction. *Three Gates* is considerably rarer as an example in brick, and even more so for the sheer exuberance of its architectural form and decorative detail, typical of the Federation style. With a picturesque roofline of intersecting hips and gables, unglazed terracotta tiling with matching ridging and finials, tall chimneys and asymmetrical façade with half-timbered gables and return verandah with turned posts and shaped brackets and frieze, the house is an exceptional example of a style that, while ubiquitous in the inner eastern suburbs, is rarely seen in the City of Maroondah. (*Criterion B; Criterion E*)

## References

"Croydon grower favours smaller orchards", *Weekly Times*, 9 May 1931, p 43.

Muriel McGivern, *A History of Croydon: A Second Volume* (1967), pp 174ff.

"Croydon: A beautiful piece of history", *Herald*, 9 August 1985. [Clipping provided by current owners]

"Croydon: A piece of history", *Age*, 10 August 1985, p 43. [Clipping provided by current owners]

Letter, Chris Oakes (great-grandson of William Gill) to Mr and Mrs Thompson (former owners), 23 January 1990. [Document provided by current owners].

## Originally identified by

Richard Peterson with Peter Barrett, *Maroondah Heritage Study: Stage Two* (2003), Volume 2.



*Photograph of the house as it appeared in the early 1930s, while still occupied by the Gill family  
Source: Weekly Times, 28 March 1931, p 26*





## **D: CITATIONS FOR PRECINCTS**



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	WAR SERVICE HOMES PRECINCT	<b>Citation No</b>	HO186
<b>Other name/s</b>	<i>Soldiers' Houses</i> (local nickname)	<b>Melway ref</b>	50 A10
<b>Address</b>	1/110, 116, 120-124 Bedford Road HEATHMONT	<b>Date/s</b>	1920-24
<b>Designer/s</b>	War Service Homes Commission	<b>Builder/s</b>	Unknown



<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential buildings (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Residential precinct	<b>Intactness</b>	Good (some changes)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as a heritage overlay precinct		
	<input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Precinct History

The five houses at 1/110, 116 and 120-124 Bedford Road represent the surviving components of a small estate of ten timber dwellings that was developed by the War Service Homes Commission in the early 1920s to provide homes for returned WW1 servicemen.

Established by the Commonwealth government with the passing of the *War Service Homes Act 1918*, the War Service Homes Commission was set up to provide home loans for returned servicemen who had seen active service outside Australia during WW1. Initially administered by the Commonwealth Bank, the commission not only assisted in arranging loans for the purchase or construction of approved dwellings, but also provided plans and specifications for the dwellings themselves.



Following the passing of the legislation in December 1918 and the appointment of a Commissioner early the following year, the War Service Homes Commission began seeking applications from eligible ex-servicemen from April 1919. The first War Service Home, erected in Eskdale Road, Caulfield, was unveiled in July. By then, tenders had been called for the construction of further individual dwellings, while the Commission had begun to acquire vacant land to be developed as larger groups or estates of dwellings. By the end of that year, an in-house architect had been appointed in Ernest Bradshaw, and one group of ten War Service Homes was already under construction at Surrey Hills. Many more would follow.

Establishment of a group of War Service Homes in the Ringwood area dates back to June 1920, when land on the south side of Bedford Road was acquired by the Deputy Commissioner, Captain J J Tait, who headed the Land Purchase Department. This was not without controversy; it was later revealed that Tait purchased the land from his own father-in-law, Frank Rawlinson, “without following the usual practice of obtaining reports as to the valuation and suitability of such land” (*Argus*, 22/07/1921:11). While concerns were expressed that the site might not be suitable for the purpose (with a committee chairman remarking that “it seems extraordinary place to erect soldiers’ homes, a mile from the railway station with open land intervening”), Captain Tait countered that he had taken into consideration the fact that electric light and water reticulation was shortly to be extended along that part of Bedford Road. The project went ahead.

In November 1920, tenders were called for erection of ten timber houses at Ringwood (*Age*, 10/11/1920:7). One appears to have been completed and already occupied by 1921, when electoral rolls recorded Rowland Mackley, pensioner, at *Hazeldean*, at 126 Bedford Road, Heathmont. By 1922, four more houses in a row had had been completed at present-day Nos 112, 114, 116 and 118, occupied respectively by Rupert Lackman, William Brier, William Errington and David Maggs. In June of that year, it was reported that “applicants living in the Ringwood houses had expressed satisfaction with their homes” (*Age*, 30/06/1922:11). By 1924, these five existing residents had been joined by Reuben Brotherson at No 108, Harold Prime at what is now No 1/110 and Archibald Priest at No 122. The last of the ten houses to become occupied appears to have been No 124, which was home to Cyril Summerton by 1925.

During this initial phase of development, the War Service Homes estate was otherwise formalised. In April 1923, title to the ten individual properties was transferred to the “War Service Homes Commission of the Department of Repatriation of the Commonwealth of Australia” and then, in November 1924, the ten-lot subdivision was gazetted by the Department of Lands. This overlapped with the establishment of the new Borough of Ringwood, declared in October 1924. In the borough’s inaugural rate book, reflecting the situation as of April 1925, a marginal annotation specifically identified these ten houses in Bedford Road as War Service Homes (and, in another column, as “Soldiers’ Houses”). Nine of the houses, occupying rectangular blocks with frontages of fifty feet to Bedford Road, had a stated Net Annual Value of £35. The tenth house, occupying a wedge-shaped block at No 108 with double-width frontage, was listed with the nominally increased Net Annual Value of £39.

A cursory review of the estate’s original ten residents provides a snapshot of what would have been typical neighbourhood of War Service Homes. During WW1, Archibald Priest and Roland Mackley had been privates, serving respectively with the 8th Battalion and the Army Employment Company, and William Brier had been a driver with the 2nd Field Company of the Royal Australian Engineers. Rupert Lackman and Reuben Brotherson had been corporals, attached to the 48th Battalion and the 14th Field Ambulance, and William Errington was a sergeant in the Australian Army Pay Corps. The men were roughly the same age (most born in the early 1890s; Brotherson was a little younger and Priest was slightly older) and all were married. As it turned out, few of the original ten ex-servicemen became long-term residents of Bedford Road. The first to leave was Harold Prime, who moved elsewhere in Ringwood in the late 1920s. During the 1930s, Messrs Brier, Brotherson, Maggs and Priest all moved on. The three men to remain in their War Service Homes into the post-WW2 era were John Errington (No 112), Rupert Lackman (No 116) and Rowland Mackley (No 126). By then, each owned his house outright, having paid back the original home loan (Mackley acquired the title to his property in 1941, Errington in 1949 and Lackman in 1952). While Errington later moved to Warrandyte Road, Lackman and Mackley remained in residence in Bedford Road until their deaths in the early 1960s. Mackley’s widow was still living at No 126 in the early 1970s.

Since then, properties along Bedford Road have been re-numbered and the street addresses of the former War Service Homes were changed. Four of the original ten timber houses (at present-day Nos 108, 112, 114 and 118) have also been demolished in fairly recent decades, and new dwellings built. The property at No 126 was similarly slated for redevelopment in 2022.

## Physical Description

The six surviving dwellings from the War Service Homes development occupy allotments in what was a ten-lot subdivision created by the War Homes Commission along the south side of Bedford Road. Extending between Tagell Road and Bedford Court, these ten lots were divided by the intersection of Fremont Street into a row of six (Nos 108-118) and a smaller row of three (Nos 120-124). As noted in the history, four of the original War Service Homes, at Nos 108, 112, 114 and 118, have since been demolished. Another, at No 126, was slated for demolition in 2022.

Considered collectively, the five houses are similar not only in terms of their common origin and vintage, but also in their scale, setback, finishes, detailing and broad expression. All are single-storey double-fronted dwellings of weatherboard construction, with broad gabled roofs clad in red terracotta tiles and timber-framed windows with double-hung sashes. Otherwise, the houses represent a number of standard plans that would have been available from the War Service Homes Commission at the time. The four dwellings at Nos 1/110, 120, 122 and 124 are noticeably near-identical in basic design, with only slight variations as well as some further differences consequent to later alterations. The house at No 116 is different again, representing another standard design.

Each of the four houses at No 1/110, 120, 122 and 124 is dominated by a transverse pitched roof presenting a broad gable end to the street, with narrow timber-lined eaves and two-bay louvred vent. Gable ends to Nos 122 and 124 are clad with weatherboard, while those to Nos 1/110 and 120 are shingled. The street facades of these four houses are asymmetrical. The houses at Nos 120 and 124 have canted bay windows with hipped rooflets (one of which retains its original shingled finish) while the house at No 120 has a rectangular bay window with skillion rooflet of ripple iron sheeting. One house has a central front door (No 1/110), and two others (Nos 122, 124) have entrances set into a recessed corner porch to the left side. The houses at No 1/110 and 120 both appear to have also had similar corner porches that have since been infilled.

The house at No 116, which represents a different standard design, has a longitudinal gabled roofs. It has an asymmetrical street façade with a gabled bay to one side with shingled infill, a lattice vent to the apex, and an off-centre front door with a tall rectangular window alongside.

## Comparative Analysis

Developed from 1920, the group of War Service Homes in Bedford Road, Heathmont, appears to have been the first such development in what is now the City of Maroondah. However, the extent of the Commission's subsequent expansion into that area in the 1920s remains unclear. A cursory review of published tender notices for War Service Homes proposed at that time across the metropolitan area reveals extensive activity in suburbs to the north (eg Brunswick, Preston, Thornbury), west (eg Maribyrnong, Braybrook) south (eg Sandringham, Caulfield, Cheltenham) and east (eg Hawthorn, Kew, Ivanhoe, Glen Iris, Balwyn, Box Hill), but apparently nothing more in the Ringwood area. An isolated example of a War Service Home has been identified in Croydon: a timber house in Alto Avenue for which tenders were called in March 1921 (*Age*, 19/3/1921). While the surviving houses in Bedford Road are not likely to be unique in the municipality, they are otherwise exceptional as an early, substantial and prominently-sited manifestation of the activity of the War Service Homes Commission during its initial boom of the early 1920s.

While eligible ex-servicemen could apply for housing loans through the War Service Homes Commission at any time, there would not be a boom comparable to the early 1920s until, obviously, after WW2. The late 1940s saw the Commission became phenomenally active once more, not only facilitating the erection and/or purchase of individual houses but also acquiring land for larger groups and residential estates. The study area was on the Commission's radar as early as November 1947, when it was announced that tenders had been called for a hundred War Service Homes to be built across the metropolitan area ("in groups of five or more") including both Ringwood and Ringwood East (*Argus* 27/11/1947:19). A review of published tender notices over the next few years reveals further groups proposed in the Ringwood area, but exact addresses are never cited, making it hard to verify locations. One that has been conclusively identified is a group of twelve War Service Homes along Bardia Street and Suda Avenue (now Larissa Avenue), off Maroondah Highway. Dating from 1949, the twelve timber dwellings represented five different standard designs. They have since mostly disappeared; only three examples remain standing at Nos 7, 9 and 11 Bardia Street.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is significant?*

The five houses at 1/110, 116 and 120-124 Bedford Road, Heathmont, represent the surviving components of a larger estate of ten dwellings that was established here in the early 1920s by the War Service Homes Commission to provide housing for returned WW1 servicemen. The houses, of timber construction with terracotta tiled gable roofs, represent several standard designs and thus differ in expression and detailing, with various permutations of canted or rectilinear bay windows, shingled cladding and corner porches.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of all five houses. Specific elements of significance include the broad gabled rooflines, weatherboard and shingle cladding, louvred or trellised gable vents, bay windows and timber-framed windows, often with multi-paned sashes.

### *How is it significant?*

The precinct of five houses satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

### *Why is it significant?*

The former War Services Homes in Bedford Road are significant for associations with the early activities of the War Service Homes Commission, which was established by the Commonwealth after the passing of legislation in 1918 to provide housing loans for ex-servicemen who had served overseas during WW1. In its early days, the Commission not only provided financing (administered by the Commonwealth Bank) but also oversaw the construction of houses to standard designs by its in-house architects. The War Service Homes scheme was an immediate success, with many hundreds of dwellings built by the early 1920s, not only as individual examples but also as larger groups and estates. The group of ten dwellings at Bedford Road, Heathmont (of which five now survive) was developed from 1920 and thus represents a substantial and notably early example of the Commission's activity in what is now the City of Maroondah. (*Criterion A*)

The former War Services Homes are significant as a cohesive group of timber dwellings from the early 1920s reflecting prevailing bungalow idiom of that period. Developed contemporaneously as a single group, the houses demonstrate a pleasing consistency in scale, setback, finishes and detailing. At the same time, they also exhibit individuality due to the use of three different standard house designs. While the dwelling at No 116, with a longitudinal gabled roof, represents a one-off survivor of its particular design, the other four dwellings at Nos 1/110 and 120-124 are clearly based on the same design (with broad transverse gabled roofs, louvred vents and asymmetrical facades) with subtle variations deliberately introduced to avoid creating a bland streetscape of identical dwellings. (*Criterion E*)

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Certificate of Title, Volume 4751, Folio 040, created 20 April 1923.

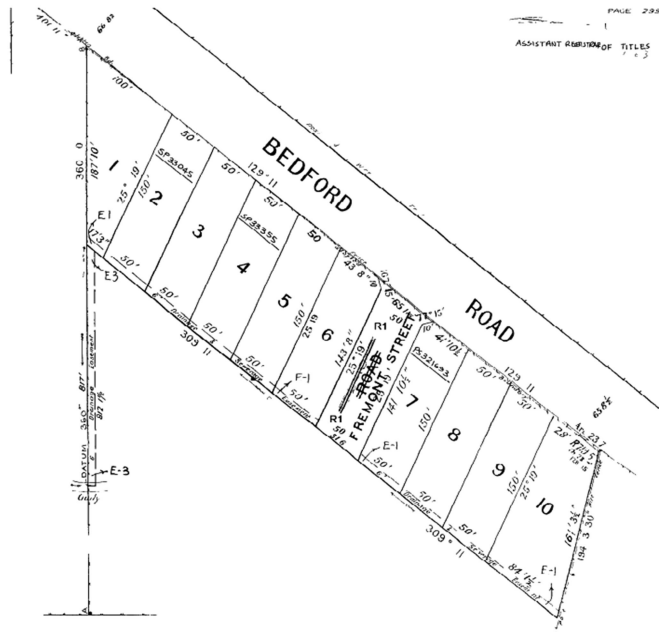
Lodged Plan No 10,405, dated 15 November 1924.

*Borough of Ringwood Rate Books, 1924-25, 1925-26 and 1926-27. Units 1-3, VPRS 12126/P1, PROV.*

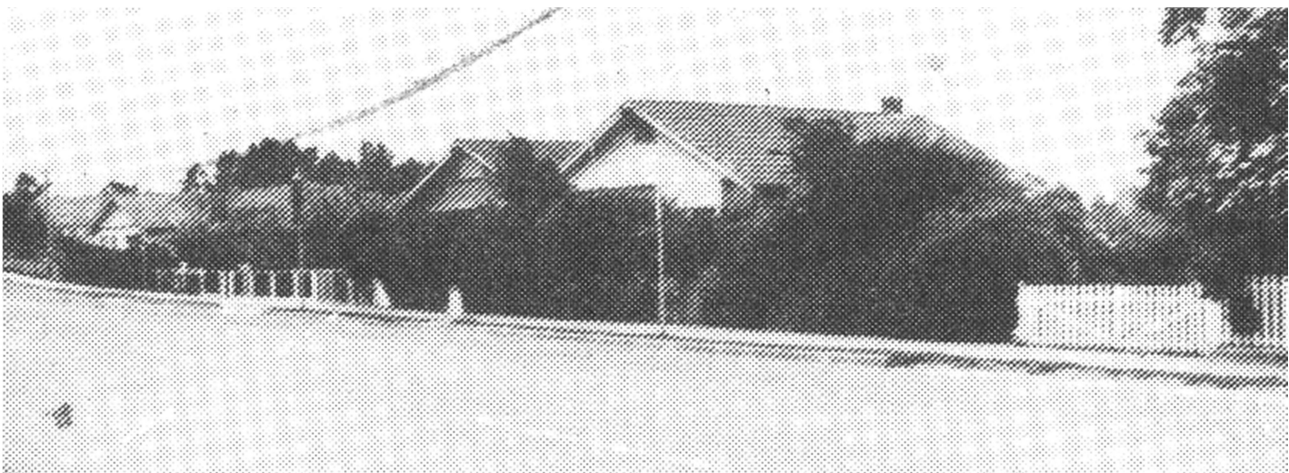
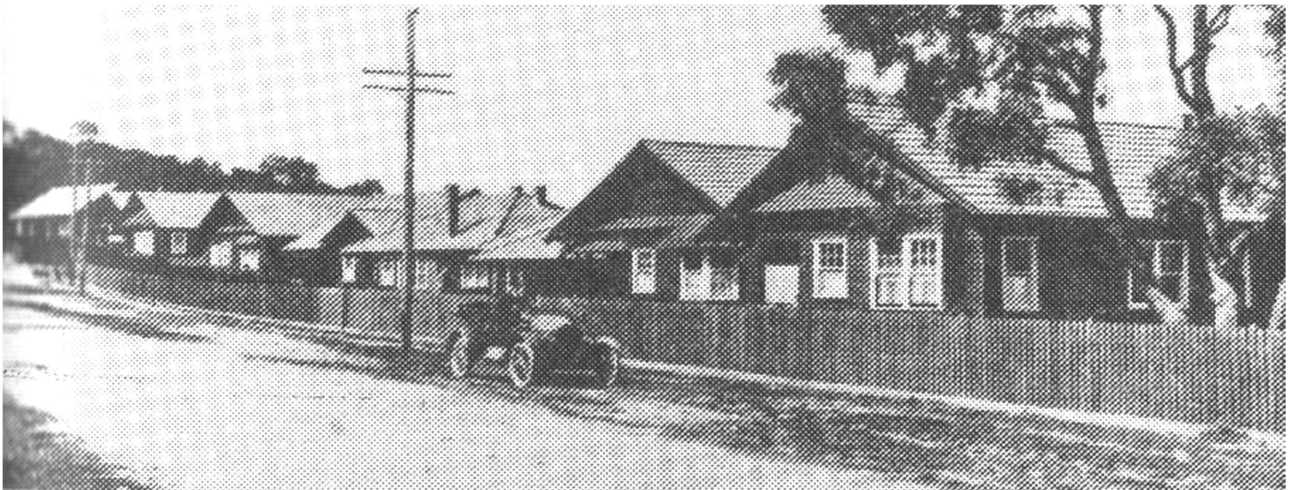
## Originally identified by

Jubilee Park Residents' Group.





Lodged Plan No 10405, showing the original ten-lot subdivision as gazetted in November 1924  
(source: [www.landata.com.au](http://www.landata.com.au))



The estate of War Services Homes as it appeared soon after completion in 1924 (top) and in 1973 (below)  
(source: Hugh Anderson, *Ringwood: Place of Many Eagles*, p 207)





*House at No 1/110 Bedford Road*



*House at No 116 Bedford Road*



*House at No 120 Bedford Road*

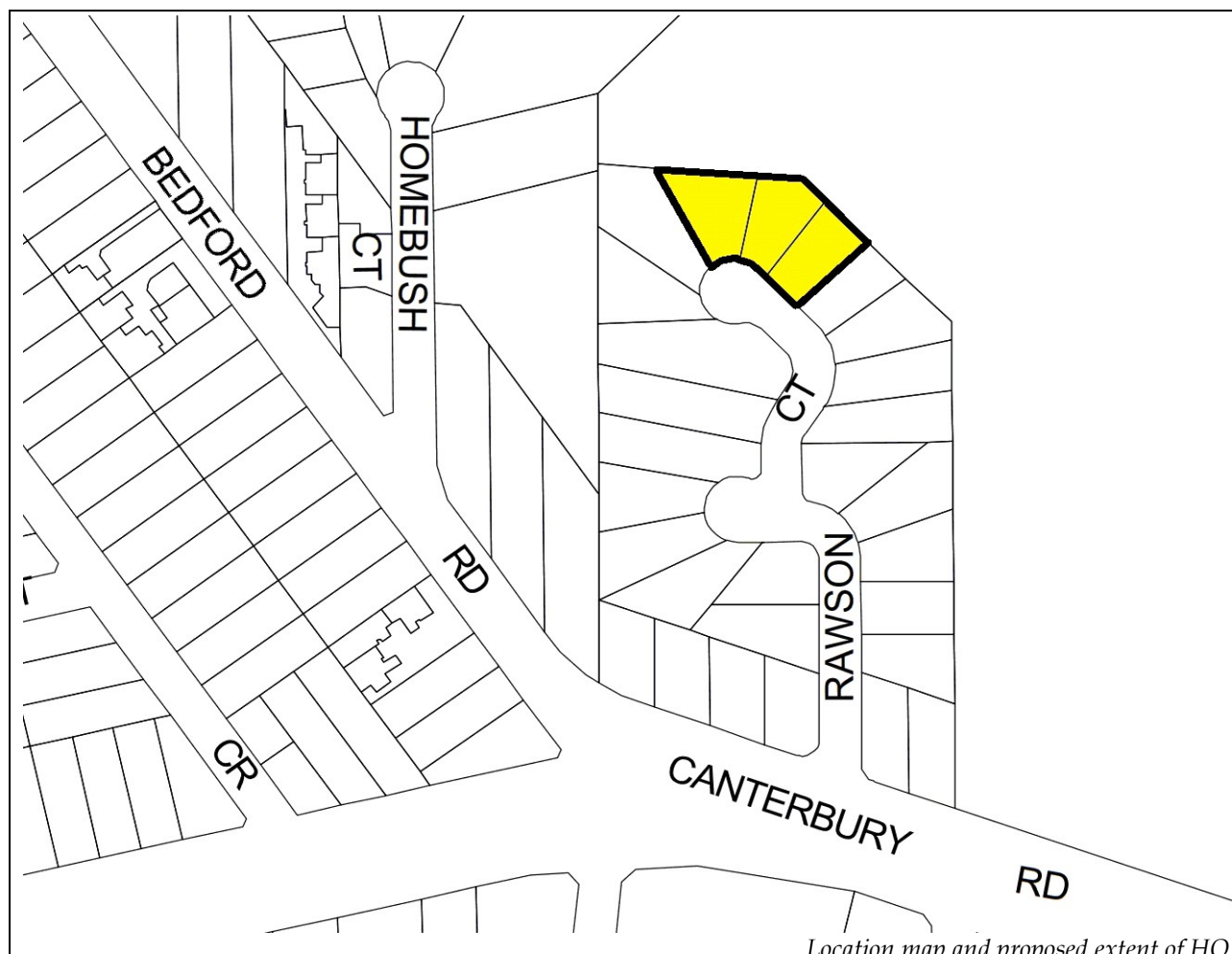


*House at No 122 Bedford Road*



*House at No 124 Bedford Road*

<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	SUNBOWER DISPLAY VILLAGE PRECINCT	<b>Citation No</b>	HO187
<b>Other name/s</b>		<b>Melway ref</b>	50 C11
<b>Address</b>	20-24 Rawson Court RINGWOOD EAST	<b>Date/s</b>	1967
<b>Designer/s</b>	The Office of Don Hendry Fulton	<b>Builder/s</b>	Fulton Constructions Pty Ltd



Location map and proposed extent of HO

<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential buildings (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Residential precinct	<b>Intactness</b>	Excellent
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as a heritage overlay precinct		
	<input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Precinct History

The three houses at 20-24 Rawson Court, Ringwood East, were built in 1967 as a display village for project housing company Fulton Constructions Pty Ltd, to showcase three standard designs from its new *Sunbower* range, designed by the Office of Don Hendry Fulton, architects and town planners.

The modern phenomenon of project housing, where companies erected houses for clients based on standard designs from their own range, emerged in Victoria in the mid-1950s when Contemporary Homes Pty Ltd began to market the so-called *Peninsula* house, a modular and partly prefabricated timber dwelling based on a design commissioned from architect Robin Boyd. The venture was an immediate success and, although Boyd later severed his connection with that firm, it opened the floodgates for many similar businesses.



Fulton Constructions Pty Ltd was established in June 1959 by William Kefford Fulton (1926-2011), a former draftsman who had latterly branched into building work. Operating from Fulton's residence in East Kew, the company initially focused on general residential projects, erecting timber houses in suburbs such as Keilor and Essendon. By 1963, the business had relocated to premises in Johnston Street, Abbotsford, and had already begun to embrace the booming project housing market by offering a standard house design known as the *Fulton Five-Star Home*, with display units built at Altona, Doncaster and Oak Park.

By the mid-1960s, Fulton Constructions had a new staff member in Trevor Fasham, who went on to greater fame as co-founder of a project housing company of his own, Fasham Johnson, that achieved great success in the 1970s and '80s. It may have been Fasham's input that encouraged Fulton Constructions to move away from generic designs (eg the triple-fronted and hip-roofed *Five Star Home*) towards more contemporary architect-designed alternatives. In 1965, the firm engaged architects Neville Quarry and John Thomson to design a new standard dwelling for its range. Designated as the *Centre Core* house, their contribution was a smart flat-roofed house on a centralized square house that represented a notable departure from the more conservative *Fulton Five-Star Home*. A display unit of the *Centre Core*, built on Springvale Road, Glen Waverley, generated considerable publicity and no doubt spurred Fulton Constructions to engage the services of other leading architects, such as Don Fulton, to expand its range of standard designs.

Don Fulton can no longer recall how his firm came to be involved with Fulton Constructions, although he points out that their common surname was merely a coincidence. In any case, the project was an atypical one for his office, which rarely undertook residential commissions. A prodigiously gifted architect, Donald Hendry Fulton (1925-2018) came top of his year at Melbourne University (Class of 1951) and promptly landed a job as Roy Grounds' chief assistant. Landing a scholarship for overseas study, he completed a master's thesis at the University of California (Berkeley) on aspects of mass housing. Returning to Melbourne in 1954, he opened his own office and was soon invited, on the strength of his post-graduate study, to work with venerable Czech-born architect Ernest Milston (1892-1968) on the master-planning of the Mary Kathleen mining township near Mount Isa. The project's success brought a follow-up commission for a larger township at Weipa; although Milston left the partnership during its initial stages, Weipa would sustain Fulton's sole practice for many years. During the 1960s, his office otherwise completed a diverse range of projects including television studios for GTV9, an administration building at the BP oil refinery in Crib Point (which won the Victorian Architecture Medal for 1966) and the St Kilda Marina.

While Fulton's expertise in mass housing had been so deftly applied at Weipa and similar master-planning projects, his office was rarely approached to design single private dwellings. Commissioned by Fulton Constructions to expand the company's range of standard house designs, the architects prepared schemes for three new dwellings under the banner of the *Sunbower* series. Conceived for contemporary family living, these were identical in floor area (17 squares), with each including three bedrooms, living/dining areas and a separate family room. The three houses were otherwise expressed quite distinctly: the *U-Line* was a flat-roofed house on a U-shaped courtyard plan (hence the name), while the *In-Line* had a broad gabled roof and stepped rectilinear plan and the *Square-Line* had a gambrel roof over a centralized square plan.

Fulton Construction wasted no time in establishing a display village to showcase the three houses in its new *Sunbower* series. During 1966, the company had purchased three adjacent blocks of land in Rawson Court, off Canterbury Road in Ringwood East. A new cul-de-sac, Rawson Court had been created in two stages when land near the corner of Bedford Road was subdivided. The first stage, commenced in 1963, saw the laying out of a curving court with eleven allotments around it; three years later, the remaining two acres to the north was carved up, extending Rawson Court and creating a further twelve allotments. More than half of the blocks in the estate, to the north, northeast and east sides, had rear frontages to open space that would later become Wombalano Park. Fulton Constructions acquired three of these blocks (Lots 6, 7 and 8), near the top end of the cul-de-sac, as the site for its new *Sunbower* display village.

The three houses had been completed by early October 1967, when they were advertised in the *Age* as "seventeen squares of enlightened design in three very different houses". Collectively lauded as being "far removed from the characterless array of suburbia", the houses were said to satisfy "your highest standards in good design and quality workmanship" and to evoke "a distinctly Australian architectural character". With inspection by appointment only rather than the usual public openings, prospective purchasers were invited to "respond to the introvert charm of the *Sunbower* IN-LINE, be soothed by the modern restraint of the *Sunbower* U-LINE and be excited by the masterly mood of the *Sunbower* □-LINE" [sic].

On 19 October 1967, the display village was officially opened by the Minister for Housing, Edward Meagher, prompting a degree of newspaper coverage the following day. A review in the *Herald* opened with the remark that “a range of three display houses in Rawson Court, Heathmont, shows what can be achieved through good teamwork by architect and builder”, while the *Age* described Rawson Court as a “delightful little cul-de-sac” and noted that “at the bottom, framed in tall gum trees, are three houses, each individually styled but consistent overall in thorough approach to planning, design and building workmanship”. Both articles praised the houses for their simple but effective designs, family-oriented zoning, well-planned kitchens and welcome inclusion of an *en suite* bathroom to the master bedroom. While the *Herald* columnist chose the *In-Line* house as his favourite (noting its high ceilings and “window -wall deep set between brick piers”), the *Age* report focused on the *U-Line*, which was designated as “Display House of the Week”.

While the *Sunbower* houses in Rawson Court were initially available for inspection only by appointment, they were opened to the public over the course of one weekend in early April 1968. This evidently marked their swansong, as the event was promoted as “your last chance to see the architect-designed 17-squares of luxury that are Fulton *Sunbower* display homes”. The houses also appeared in that month’s issue of the *Australian House & Garden* as part of a feature on recent project housing, described as “executive homes in simple but modern styling [and] characterised by broad and sheltering rooflines, well-related arrangements of room and good constructional finish”. During that year, the houses were also listed in the *Homebuilder’s Handbook*, a directory of recent architect-designed houses across Melbourne.

Notwithstanding the publicity generated by the *Sunbower* series, it is unclear how successful it was for the company. Even the architect himself can no longer recall if any of the plans were sold to private clients and built elsewhere. As early as February 1969, the company sold off the *In-Line* house as a private residence. Fulton Constructions still remained active on the project housing market for some years. In 1968, it released a new design, the *Centre Core Mark II*, based on the earlier one by Neville Quarry and John Thompson. The next year, the firm was re-badged as Landall-Fulton Constructions; self-styled as “one of Melbourne’s top home builders”, it went on to open a small display village at Doncaster that introduced four new designs, promoted as mid-price “package deal” homes. The company subsequently maintained a considerably lower profile before it went into receivership in the later 1970s and was finally de-registered in 1986.

### Physical Description

The former display village at 20-24 Rawson Court, Ringwood East, comprise three single-storey brick veneer dwellings on contiguous allotments at the northern tip of the cul-de-sac. While comparable in size (reportedly 17 squares in floor area), scale and materials, the three houses are otherwise quite distinct in plan form and architectural expression. By the same token, the houses display a consistency in detailing that creates a degree of cohesion between them. They also have a unified streetscape presence as a result of their consistent setbacks, informally landscaped front gardens and driveways (gravelled at Nos 20 and 24; brick paved at No 22) and complete absence of front fences.

The *In-Line* house at 20 Rawson Court has an elongated and stepped rectilinear plan. It has a low pitched roof that is clad in metal decking and has broad eaves, wide fascias and exposed double beams to the street, and a projecting skillion-roofed clerestory window on the north slope. The house presents a broad gable frontage to the street, with an integrated carport to one side supported on timber posts. The front wall is otherwise divided into four bays by a row of projecting brick piers, with each bay containing timber-framed windows that extend from the floor level to the eaves lines.

The *U-Line* house at 22 Rawson Court has a U-shaped courtyard plan that comprises two wings connected by a link. Its low roofline incorporates skillion roofs to the front and rear wings and a low gable to the link; as with the adjacent *In-Line* house, the roof is clad in metal decking and has broad eaves, wide fascias and exposed double beams to the street frontage. The front elevation is similarly asymmetrical, with a carport integrated to the left side (on timber posts), and a front wall with three bays of full-height windows that alternate with brick spandrels. In contrast to the *In-Line* house, which has face brickwork, the exterior of the *U-Line* house has a bagged and painted finish (originally white, but now a pale olive green).

The *Square-Line* house at 24 Rawson Court has a centralized square plan with a pyramid-like gambrel roof with cement tiles and raked fascias. The symmetrical street façade has a central recessed entry porch with a pair of glazed doors and sidelights, flanked by two bay windows defined by projecting piers and continuing timber-framed sashes. The rendered finish to the brickwork is original, currently painted pale grey.

## Comparative Analysis

Following the introduction of project housing in Vitoria in the mid-1950s, many companies jumped on the bandwagon and, within a decade, the market was effectively flooded. The standard designs offered by the various companies tended to vary not only in price but also in the quality of design, construction and fitout. Many were seen to lack architectural sophistication and, from the mid-1960s, several companies sought to redress this imbalance by offering higher-end designs commissioned from leading architects. Founded in 1965, Merchant Builders was an early market leading in this regard, offering a range of standard designs from such award-winning architects as Graeme Gunn, Daryl Jackson and Charles Duncan. Other firms to introduce more luxurious project houses during this period included Leighton Homes, who commissioned designs from noted architect Peter Hooks, and Concept Constructions Pty Ltd, who built a display village in Blackburn South with three stylish houses by Guilford Bell, Bill Baker and John & Phyllis Murphy.

Given that project housing has been identified as a significant theme in the post-WW2 development of the City of Maroondah, it is not surprising that display villages, or individual display houses proliferated therein, particularly in developing areas such as Ringwood North, Ringwood East, Heathmont and Croydon North. As a manifestation of this theme, the example in Rawson Court is broadly comparable to the cul-de-sac display village that A V Jennings developed in Peachwood Place, Croydon Hills (1982) and another group of houses along nearby Narr-Maen Drive (1983-84) that was promoted as the RESI/HIA Display Village and included standard designs by several different project housing companies. As a more specific example of higher-end project housing, the *Sunbower* development is most comparable to the late (1980s) group of display houses that Merchant Builders erected at 38-44 Montana Parade, Croydon, which included examples of such standard designs as the Terry Dorrrough's *Pavilion* house and Graeme Gunn's *Studio* house.

The study area is otherwise peppered with former display houses associated with the peak era of project housing from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s. Typical examples contemporaneous with the *Sunbower* series include a pair of houses at 14-16 Canterbury Road, Heathmont (Hillcrest Constructions, 1973) and single specimens at 115 Maroondah Highway, Croydon (Max Brown & Son, 1967), 18 Goldsmith Avenue, Ringwood North (DMF Constructions, 1968), 1 Carmen Court, Ringwood (A V Jennings, 1970), 17 St Georges Crescent, Croydon (Ambassador Homes, 1971) and 284 Canterbury Road, Heathmont (Intrend Pty Ltd, 1972). These, however, typically vary in the quality of design; none of them demonstrates the degree of architectural sophistication evinced by the *Sunbower* series, developed by noted and award-winning architect Don Fulton. This is underscored when the Rawson Court houses are compared with a contemporaneous project house in the same street, a fairly conventional cream brick house at No 7 (S D & E Vagg, 1969).

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The three houses at 20-24 Rawson Court, Ringwood East, were built in 1967 as a display village for project housing firm Fulton Constructions Pty Ltd, to showcase three standard designs from its new high-end *Sunbower* series. Designed by the Office of Don Hendry Fulton, architects and town planners, the houses were comparable in scale, size, setback, materials and detailing, but otherwise distinct in their individual architectural expression: the *In-Line* (No 20) with broad gabled roof and linear plan, the *U-Line* (No 22) with flat-roof and courtyard plan, and the *Square-Line* (No 24) with gambrel roof and centralized square plan.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the three houses. Specific elements of significance include:

- No 20: broad gabled roofline with integrated carport, face brickwork, and regular fenestration defined by full-height windows between fin-like brick piers;
- No 22: flat roofline with integrated carport, stark planar walls and full-height window bays;
- No 24: gambrel roofline and symmetrical façade with central recessed porch and flanking window bays with projecting piers

*How is it significant?*

The former *Sunbower* display village satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:



- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

*Why is it significant?*

The former *Sunbower* display village is significant for the following reasons:

The three houses are significant for association with a new direction that project housing took from the mid-1960s, when changing tastes and consumer expectations saw companies introduce standard designs aimed at the higher end of the market. Intending to rehabilitate the uneven reputation that project housing had acquired by that time, these were typically commissioned from leading architects of the day rather than developed by a company's in-house designers or draftsmen. These "new generation" project houses were not only characterised by more sophisticated architectural expression but also by superior planning, more luxurious fitouts and finishes, and the integration of elements rarely seen in off-the-shelf houses at that time, such as family rooms and *en suite* bathrooms. While Fulton Constructions appears to be one of several companies that did not achieve lasting success with their higher-end project houses, the display village remains as evidence of this important phase in the development of project housing, a significant theme in the post-war settlement of the City of Maroondah. (*Criterion A*)

The three houses are significant as a group of dwellings that, while contemporaneous and designed by the same architect, exhibit a diversity of design that encapsulates several different trends in modernist residential architecture of the 1960s. The *In-Line* house at 20 Rawson Court, with its spreading gabled roofline and prominent brick piers, shows the pervasive influence of Frank Lloyd Wright (whom Don Fulton met in 1954) that is otherwise evinced in the houses of Geoffrey Woodfall and Charles Duncan. The *U-Line* house at No 22, with its courtyard plan, low roofline and stark planar walls, is more akin to the minimalist modernism of such local architects as McGlashan & Everist. Lastly, the *Square Line* house at No 24, with its centralized plan, modified pyramid roof and symmetrical façade, pays homage to the timeless classically-influenced style that is mostly associated with Guilford Bell and Wayne Gillespie. (*Criterion E*)

## References

Lodged Plans No 56856, dated 6 February 1963, and No 73347, dated 8 July 1966.

"Fulton Sunbower Homes", *Age*, 13 October 1967, p 19.

"Teamwork leads to new range", *Herald*, 20 October 1967, p 23.

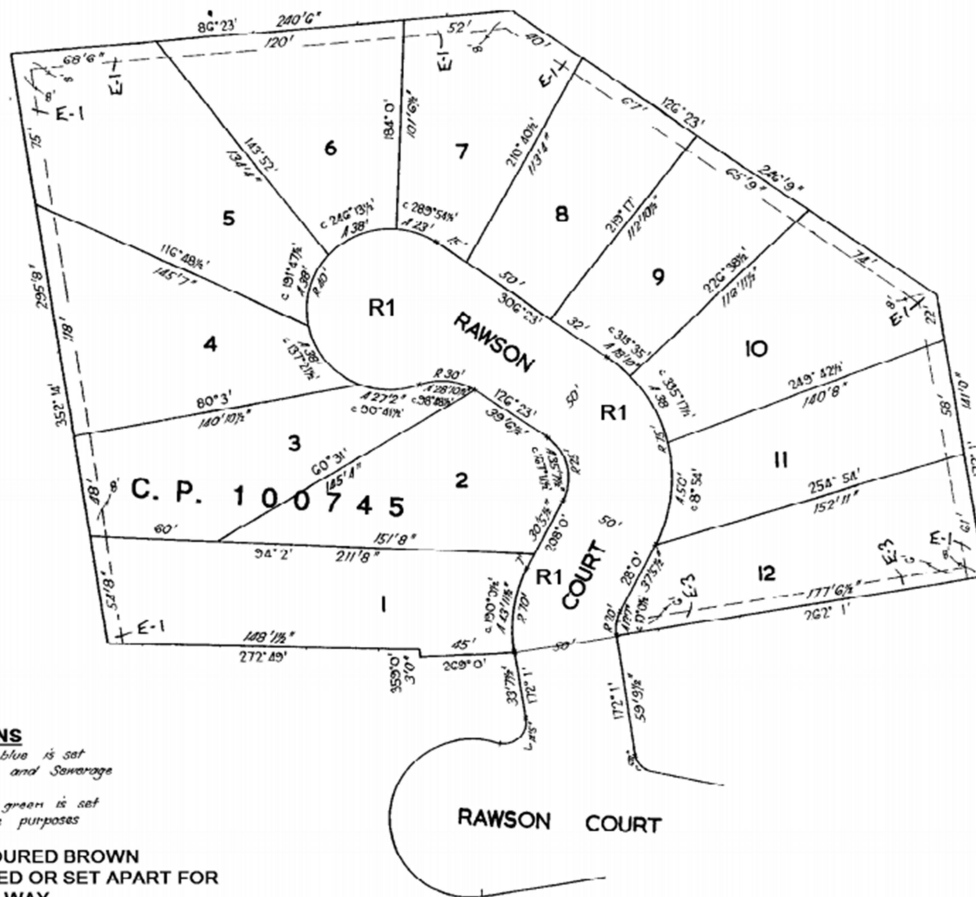
"It's family living", *Age*, 20 October 1967, p 15.

"Sheltering roofs and outdoor courts", *Australian House & Garden*, April 1968, p 63.

Interview with the late Don Fulton, 14 June 2018.

## Originally identified by

Built Heritage Pty Ltd



#### APPROPRIATIONS

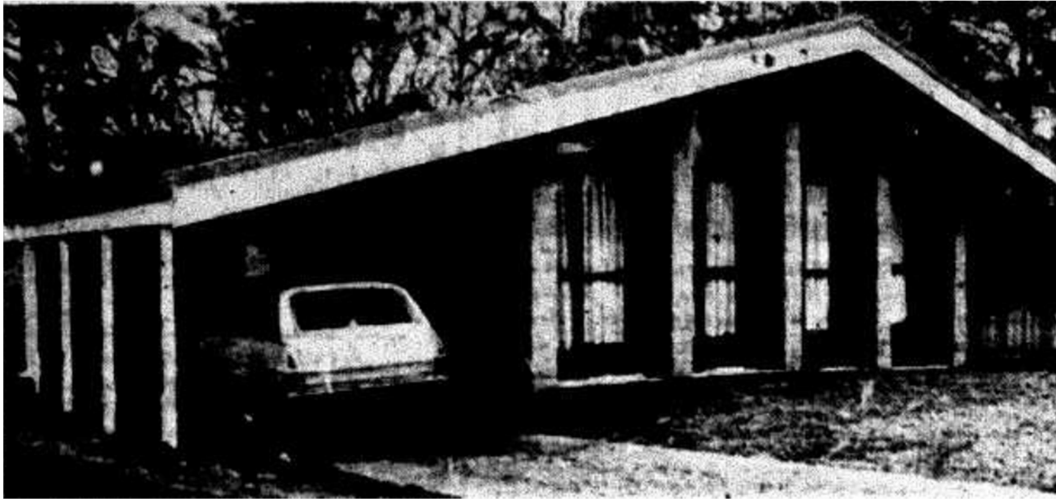
The land coloured blue is set apart for Drainage and Sewerage purposes  
The land coloured green is set apart for Sewerage purposes

THE LAND COLOURED BROWN IS APPROPRIATED OR SET APART FOR EASEMENTS OF WAY

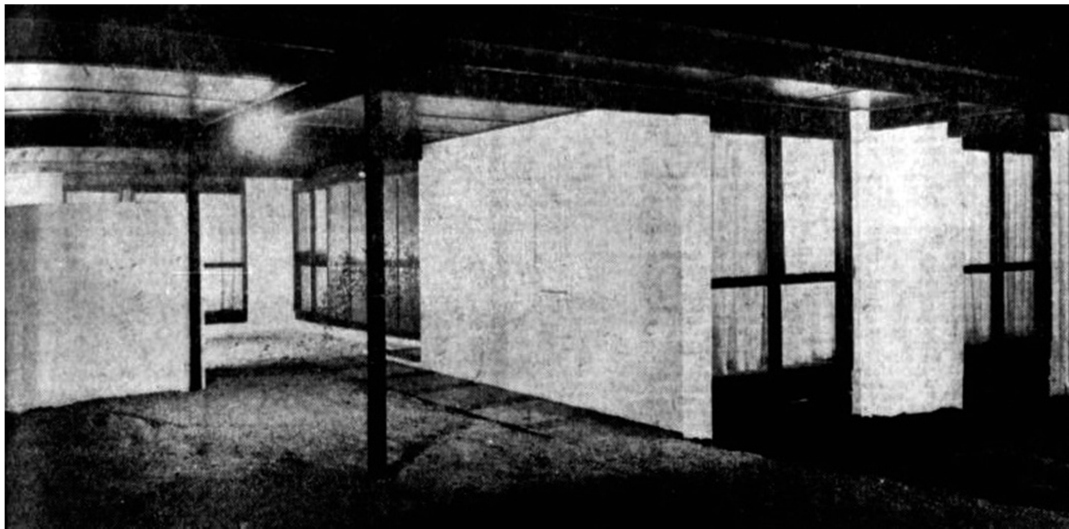
The subdivision plan that extended Rawson Court in 1966; note Lots 6, 7 and 8 that were acquired by Fulton Constructions during that year as the site for its proposed Sunbower display village.  
(source: [www.landata.com.au](http://www.landata.com.au))



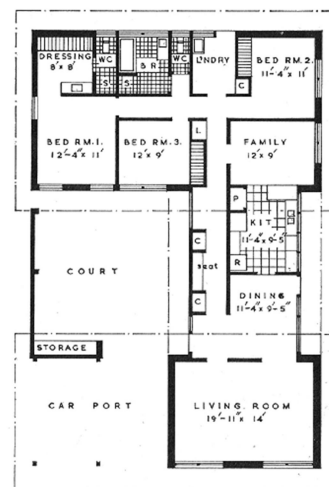
The three houses at the Sunbower display village as they appeared soon after completion in 1967.  
(source: Age, 13 October 1967, p 19)



Sunbower IN-LINE house at 20 Rawson Court, as it appeared soon after completion in 1967.  
(source: Herald, 20 October 1967, p 23)



Sunbower U-LINE house at 22 Rawson Court, as it appeared soon after completion in 1967.  
(source: Age, 20 October 1967, p 15)



Another early view of the Sunbower U-LINE house, alongside its distinctive courtyard plan.  
(source: *Australian House & Garden*, April 1968, p 63)





*In-Line house at No 20 Rawson Court*



*In-Line house at No 20 Rawson Court*



*U-Line house at No 22 Rawson Court*



*Square-Line house at No 24 Rawson Court*



*Streetscape view, showing the U-Line house at No 22 (left) and the In-Line house at No 20*



## E: SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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### E2 Reports

- Richard Peterson with Peter Barrett. *Maroondah Heritage Study: Stage Two* (2003). Three volumes.
- Heritage Alliance. *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria: Stage One* (2008). Two volumes.
- Context. *Jubilee Park Heritage and Neighbourhood Character Study* (2017). One volume.





## **F: APPENDIX**

### **F1 Wicklow Hills Estate Precinct**

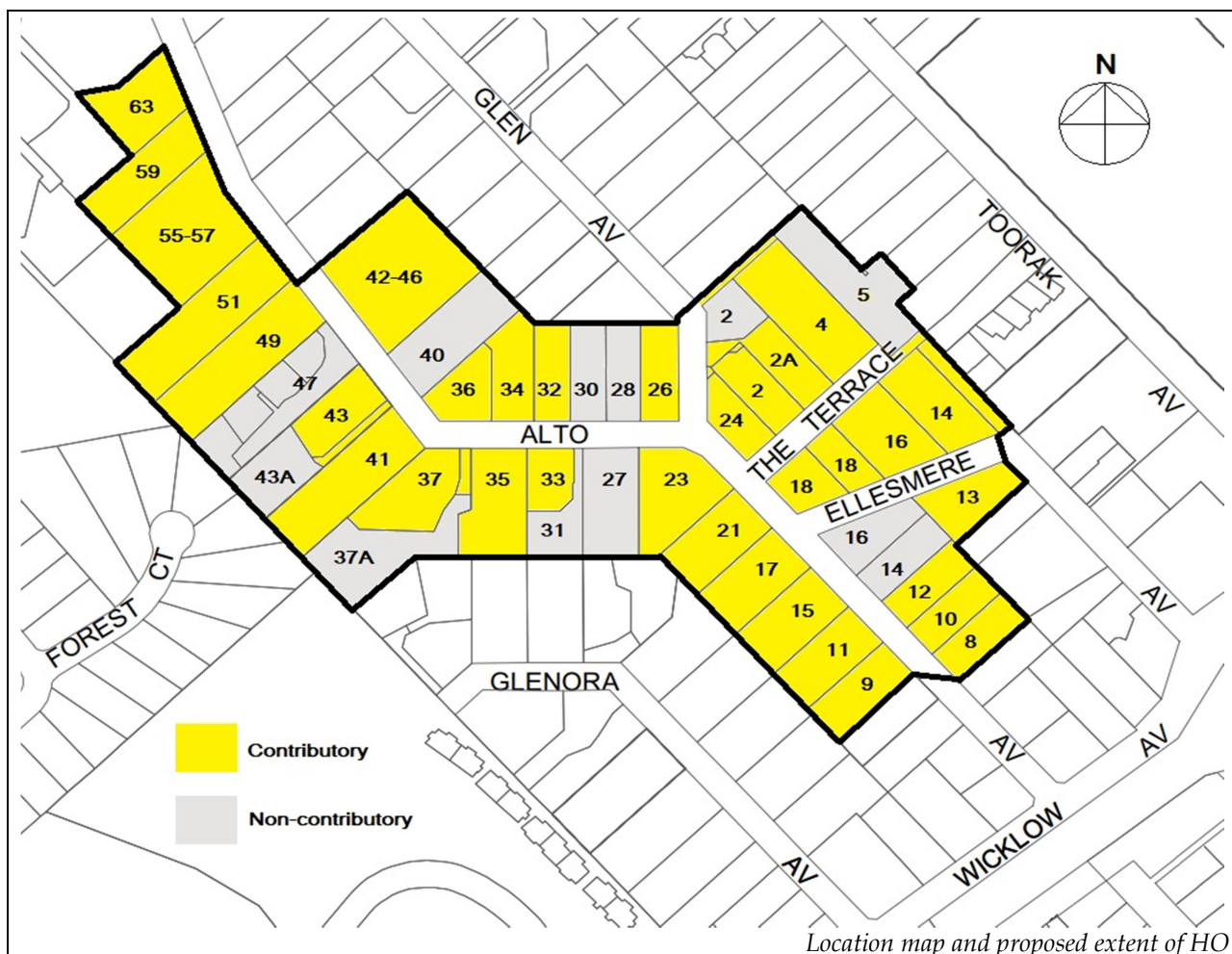
*Although heritage protection of the Wicklow Hills Estate was part of the pre authorisation amendment proposal, this precinct has been excluded from the authorised Amendment as part of the conditional Authorisation from the Minister for Planning. The rationale for the exclusion at this stage relates to the dual application of a Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO) and Heritage Overlay within some properties in the precinct.*

*Due to the area's unique character Council will progress to further strategic work to identify the most suitable planning tool to protect the neighbourhood character and heritage fabric for the Wicklow Hills Estate.*

*Maroondah City Council will address the protection of the heritage and neighbourhood character of the Wicklow Hills Estate under a separate amendment process.*



<b>IDENTIFIER</b>	WICKLOW HILLS ESTATE PRECINCT	<b>Citation No</b>	HO147
<b>Other name/s</b>		<b>Melway ref</b>	50 H3
<b>Address</b>	Alto, Ellesmere and Glen Avenues, and The Terrace CROYDON	<b>Date/s</b>	1920-1940 (mostly)
<b>Designer/s</b>	Various	<b>Builder/s</b>	Various



<b>Heritage Group</b>	Residential buildings (private)	<b>Condition</b>	Varies (mostly excellent)
<b>Heritage Category</b>	Residential precinct	<b>Intactness</b>	Varies (mostly excellent)
<b>Significance</b>	Local		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Include on heritage overlay schedule as a heritage overlay precinct <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint Controls <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration Controls <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tree Controls		

### Precinct History

The houses defined by the boundaries of the *Wicklow Hills Estate Precinct* represented the most cohesive remaining portion of this eponymous and prestigious Croydon residential estate, which was subdivided in four phases in 1919, 1922, 1923 and 1928, and developed steadily during the inter-war period.

The sloping expanse of land extending between Wicklow Avenue and the Maroondah Highway, bisected by present-day Alto Avenue, originally formed part of Crown Allotment 43C. In 1889, the land was acquired by Irish-born Richard Bonyngue Kelly (1834-1919), who promptly erected a homestead there and developed the remainder of the vast property as an orchard and later as a stud farm. Although he was born in Ballycumber, County Offaly, in central Ireland, Kelly named his Croydon property *Wicklow Hills*, referencing a town on the Irish eastern coast, more than 150 km away.



In December 1918, less than six months before Kelly's death, his vast Croydon property was split into two titles: a 16-acre site including the original *Wicklow Hills* homestead (evidently with access via Stirling Road, to the north-east), and the remaining 64 acres extending between what present-day Wicklow Avenue and the Maroondah Highway. Ownership of both holdings was vested amongst Kelly's three adult children: sons (Richard) Franklyn Kelly and Charles Bonyne Kelly, and daughter Florence Walker.

Subdivision of the larger holding had already begun by that time, with a newspaper advert noting "Victoria's finest residential resort... unlocked at last, the famous Wicklow Hills Estate. Right on station, magnificent building sites, commanding views, lovely scenery vista rejuvenating soul and body. No finer estate ever offered." (*Age*, 1/5/1918:11). While it was subsequently reported that "blocks were selling rapidly [and] buildings going up" (*Argus*, 1/6/1918), it was not until February 1920 that the remaining "76 magnificent building sites" were offered for sale by public auction (*Age*, 24/1/1920:3). These allotments not only fronted the new thoroughfare of Alto Avenue, but also a number of small streets intersection streets that included Ellesmere Avenue, Glenora Avenue, The Terrace and Kenmare Avenue. The title certificate shows that three of these streets took their names from the residences of the three Kelly children: Franklyn's house *Glenora* (located on the southern edge of the estate, fronting Wicklow Avenue), along with Charles' house in Kew (*Ellesmere*), and Florence's house in Alexandra (*Kenmare*). Alto Avenue was so named in reference to its high altitude, reportedly more than 200 metres above sea level.

Land title records indicate that the new *Wicklow Hills Estate* witnessed brisk sales, with almost a third of the available allotments purchased over the next three years. During 1920, titles to eight lots were transferred to new owners, followed by nine more in 1921 and another five in 1922. Fittingly, amongst the first to build on the estate was Christina Farmer, a granddaughter of Richard Bonyne Kelly who had previously lived with her parents and husband Stanley in nearby *Glenora* on Wicklow Avenue. The Farmers' new home at 9 Alto Avenue, named *Moonya*, was completed prior to the birth of their son in May 1921 (*Argus*, 25/1/1921:1). Other early houses in Alto Avenue included those for labourer Frederick Taylor at No 21 (c.1920), insurance clerk Sydney Smith at No 37 (c.1922) and orchardist George Gill at No 12 (c.1922). The last of these was nearing completion in March 1922, when a newspaper reported Gill's involvement in a wagon accident while transporting building materials (*Age*, 18/3/1922:14). Another early resident was accountant Esmond Tuckett Daniell, who purchased contiguous Lots 13, 14 and 15 along the south corner of Alto Avenue and Ellesmere Avenue, and had erected a house there (now 13 Ellesmere Avenue) by 1922.

During 1922, the estate was expanded by the subdivision of part of the sixteen acres still occupied by the *Wicklow Hills* homestead. This began with the Ellesmere Avenue frontage, which was carved up into three lots (LP 9077, 14/11/1922), followed by a further twenty lots with frontages to the north side of Alto Avenue and a new dead-street street, Glen Avenue, running parallel behind (LP 9162, 16/01/1923). Advertised as the *Wicklow Hills Estate Extension*, this land was offered for sale in early 1923 (*Argus*, 9/2/1923:2). One of the first houses thereon was a timber dwelling at 26 Alto Avenue for Stanley and Christina Farmer, evidently upgrading from *Moonya* at No 9, their home since 1921. The new house was built to a standard design offered by the State Savings Bank of Victoria, designated as Plan 1766 (*Argus*, 6/11/1923:22).

The Shire of Lillydale Rate Book for 1924-25, dated 22 November 1924, shows that, while many lots on the two estates had been purchased by then, fewer than a dozen houses had yet been built. These included Dr Hallam's combined residence and medical clinic at 61 Wicklow Road, another house in Glenora Avenue, and at least six more along Alto Avenue. The latter included the respective residences of merchant Charles Oaten at No 11 (*Kurrambee*), Miss Annie Kellett at No 23 (*Baringa*), manager Eric Jefferies at No 49 (*Moliagulk*) and draper William Hattam at No 67 (*Koongarra*). In early 1923, leading city architects Schreiber & Jorgenson called tenders for a 'wood and tiled residence' in Alto Avenue, although it has not been possible to confirm which house this was (*Argus*, 20/1/1923:5). Later that year, construction commenced on a conspicuous addition to the estate: the new Croydon Private Hospital, a purpose-built but domestically-scaled building at what is now 16 Ellesmere Avenue (*Age*, 11/8/1923:17). This, however, proved a short-lived venture; after the hospital ceased operation in 1927, the building was converted for private residential use.

Development of the estates continued steadily for the remainder of the 1920s. New houses along Alto Avenue included a large timber bungalow at No 59 (c.1925) for investor Patrick Lyon, a rendered brick residence on a double block at No 42-46 (c.1927) for barrister Samuel Backhouse, and more modest weatherboard bungalows at No 17 and 34 (both c.1928), respectively for public servant William Radden and draftsman Edgar Piele. Radden, a government architect by profession, presumably designed his own house, and it is equally likely to have been erected by his son Eric, then a prolific local builder.

During 1928, the third and final stage of the *Wicklow Hills Estate* was subdivided, creating ten more allotments with frontages to Glen Avenue and a new cul-de-sac, The Terrace. In December of that year, the original *Wicklow Hills* homestead, retained on one of the block in the new subdivision, was destroyed by fire, severing the last link with the Kelly family's occupation of the property over nearly forty years. With the Depression causing a slump in private homebuilding, these newly-subdivided allotments along The Terrace would not be purchased and developed until the early 1930s. The four original residents of the cul-de-sac comprised civil servant Richard Reeves at No 4 (c.1930), clerk Clive Day at No 2A (now 2A Glen Avenue) (c.1931), clerk James Hutchinson at No 2 (c.1935) and retired banker Henry Ellis at No 5 (c.1936).

Elsewhere in the neighbourhood, the resumption of building activity in the early 1930s was demonstrated by more houses on Alto Avenue, notably two timber bungalows at Nos 31 and 55 (both c.1931), respectively for retired banker Robert Gregson and accountant Albert Tremewen. The former dwelling, distinguished by its dark-stained vertical board cladding, was known as *Brown Willy*. Larger and even more striking was *Cromer Lodge*, the new home of Arthur Ridge at No 63, completed in mid-1936 (*Ferntree Gully News*, 18/6/1936:4). Designed by local architect Arthur Pretty, the picturesque two-storey house would be twice-published in the *Australian Home Beautiful* (8/1938:20, 3/1942:20). The later 1930s saw the erection of a new house at 24 Alto Avenue (c.1937) and the subdivision of the large block on the north corner of Alto and Ellesmere Avenues into two smaller blocks, with a second house erected. Another timber bungalow at 15 Alto Avenue (c.1940), built for clerk James Hemphill and known then (and still now) as *Brewood*, was one of the last new houses on the estate before building activity was curtailed by the Second World War.

Thus, by the early 1940s, the Wicklow Hills estate had already developed to a substantial extent. Alto Avenue remained the principal focus, with inter-war houses along the north side at Nos 4, 8, 10, 12, 18, 24, 26, 34, 36 and 42, and along the south side at Nos 3, 5, 9, 11, 15, 17, 21, 23, 33, 37, 43, 49, 57, 59, 63 and 59. Houses had also been built along the elevated frontages of both The Terrace (Nos 2, 2A, 4 and 5) and Ellesmere Avenue (Nos 14, 16 and 18), as well as a few further down Ellesmere Avenue (Nos 7, and 13), and others in nearby Glen Avenue and Glenora Avenue. There were still numerous vacant lots dotted along Alto Avenue (Nos 6, 14-16, 27, 28-34, 35, 41, 47 and 51) as well as a lengthy tract of land beyond No 42. At that time, Kenmare Avenue, at the crest of the estate, remained entirely undeveloped.

During its initial inter-war phase of development, Wicklow Hills fostered a reputation as Croydon's most prestigious residential enclave. Original and early residents included a doctor, a barrister, an architect, an insurance clerk, two retired bankers, three accountants and several public servants, many of whom were prominent in the community.<sup>2</sup> Solicitor Rivers Dickenson and wife Dobina, who purchased the house at 59 Alto Avenue in 1929, were described by local historian Muriel McGivern as "well-known local benefactors" (*History of Croydon: Second Volume*:183). McGivern further noted the presence of much-loved music teacher Mrs Verbena Meggs, who gave lessons from her home studio at 36 Alto Avenue. By the early 1940s, another music teacher, Mrs Elspeth Little, had begun a similar venture at nearby No 43 (*Ferntree Gully News*, 7/2/1947:4). Miss Annie Kellett, who was president of the Croydon Auxiliary for the Royal Victorian Institute of the Blind in the 1930s, often held charity events at her home, *Baringa*, 23 Alto Avenue, such as garden parties and bridge afternoons (*Argus*, 10/12/1930:10, 23/12/1937:12; *Table Talk*, 1/1/1931:41). Such charitable connections loomed large after 1940, when the house at 69 Alto Avenue was acquired by the Roman Catholic Church as a convalescent home for what was then described as "indigent and overworked mothers" (*Advocate*, 15/8/1940:10). The property, 'commanding a delightful panoramic view of the Dandenongs.. surrounded by a beautiful garden', regularly hosted garden parties, fetes and other events.

The immediate post-WW2 period saw local building activity resume gradually, demonstrated by a modest timber dwelling at 28 Alto Avenue (c.1947). Around 1950, more progressive modernist design arrived in the neighbourhood when architect/engineer Frank Dixon designed a two-storey timber house for himself at No 51, which deftly exploited its elevated site with large windows and a second-floor sun terrace. Around 1955, pre-war resident Arthur Ridge vacated his house, *Cromer Lodge* at 63 Alto Avenue, and built a sprawling new timber residence on elevated land to the rear (now 5 Kenmare Avenue), which he also named *Cromer Lodge* (*Age*, 04/06/1966:39). The later 1950s saw a few other new houses appear in this part of Alto Avenue. While a skillion-roofed timber house at No 32 (c.1958) followed Dixon's modernist ideas, others tended to be more conservative in style and form, typified by conventional gable- or hipped-roof houses in brick at Nos 17 and 27 (both c.1957) and others in weatherboard at Nos 14 (c.1957) and 30 (c.1959).

<sup>2</sup> Muriel McGivern's *A History of Croydon: A Second Volume* (1967) includes index entries for many inter-war residents of Wicklow Hills, including members of the Daniell, Dickens, Gregson, Jefferies, Kellett, Lloyd and Reilly families.

In the 1960s, progressive modernism returned to the precinct with a flat-roofed brick house at No 41 (1964) designed by well-known architect and Croydon resident Hank Romyn. Scenic artist John Kenyon, who lived at No 37 from the late '50s, subsequently subdivided his property to allow his son, also a scenic artist named John, to build a new house. Kenyon junior turned to a friend that he knew through theatrical circles, who was studying architecture at the University of Melbourne. In this way, a young Peter Corrigan (later of award-winning firm Edmond & Corrigan) obtained his first architectural commission, for a house of unusual design that referenced the local context of pre-war bungalows in its form and materials.

While the precinct gradually filled out in the post-WW2 era, newer houses have only been built on hitherto undeveloped sites (including smaller blocks subdivided from larger ones), so none of the pre-war houses have been demolished. The completion of a group of four two-storey townhouses at 47 Alto Avenue (1980) represented the entirely last new development within the boundaries of the precinct for many years, until new houses were built at 31, 37A and 43 Alto Avenue (in all cases, to the rear of pre-war dwellings).

### Physical Description

The precinct is dominated by the major thoroughfare of Alto Avenue, which begins at Wicklow Avenue, rising gently as it extends in a straight line past the junctions of Ellesmere Avenue, The Terrace and Glen Avenue on the right side, becoming steeper as it dog-legs to the left, the rising even more sharply towards Kenmare Avenue on the left, where the blocks along that side of the street are elevated high above the road. The layout of the precinct includes some atypical elements, such as the right-of-way to the rear of properties fronting the Terrace, and another that forms a pedestrian walkway linking the end of The Terrace with Ellesmere Avenue. The Terrace itself is a distinctively unsealed and semi-trafficable dead-end street.

The interwar houses that largely characterise both side of Alto Avenue echo this changing topography, with the more modest examples at the Wicklow Avenue end gradually giving rise to larger and grander examples, culminating in some especially substantial residences on elevated blocks at the Kenmare Avenue end and on the uphill sides of Ellesmere Avenue and The Terrace. The original houses in the precinct are united by the comparable eras, dating from the early 1920s to the late 1930s, with most examples spanning the relatively narrow period from 1925 to 1931. Most are single storey, although a few are larger, with attic storeys (23, 37 and 42-46 Alto) or even a semi-basement (eg 34, 49 and 55-57 Alto; 14 Ellesmere) where the fall of the land allowed it. A few of the original single-storey houses in the precinct (eg 10 Alto) have modest second-storey additions, of sympathetic form and scale.

Irrespective of scale, the houses tend to be similar in form, expression, materials and finishes, which are all typical of residential architecture of the interwar period. Most are of timber construction, invariably with weatherboard cladding (eg 11, 12, 14, 18, 21, 24, 26, 34, 36 and 37 Alto; 16 and 18 Ellesmere; 2 and 4 The Terrace). A notable exception, at 33 Alto Avenue, has vertical timber board cladding with a dark stained finish. There are only two pre-war brick houses: one at 23 Alto Avenue, in red brick with roughcast banding, and a larger rendered villa at No 42-46. Most houses, whether of brick or timber, have chimneys in red brick, although some are rendered (eg 21, 34 and 55-57 Alto Avenue). Some brick chimneys are plain, while others are embellished with brick capping (eg 33 Alto), soldier courses (eg 12, 34 and 36 Alto), corbelling (eg 17 Alto) and/or terracotta chimney pots (eg 23 and 42 Alto; 2a and 4 The Terrace). The later (c.1940) house at 15 Alto Avenue has an unusual orange brick chimney with a vertical feature strip of stack-bond brickwork; the chimney breast still bears the original name of the house, *Brewood*.

Roofs vary in form from broad gables with subsidiary hips (eg 18 and 23 Alto; 18 Ellesmere) or hips with subsidiary gables (eg 12, 33 and 36 Alto; 16 Ellesmere) to straightforward gables (11, 14, 26, 34 and 37 Alto) and more sophisticated mansard roofs (42-46 Alto). Many houses retain original red terracotta roof tiling, typical of the era, some with moulded finials (eg 26 Alto; 18 Ellesmere), while a few others appear to have been re-roofed with cement tiles (eg 18 and 36 Alto). Some houses have corrugated metal sheet roofing (eg 8, 9, 15, 24 and 59 Alto), and there are two with atypical slate roofs: a pre-war house at 49 Alto Avenue (with terracotta ridge capping) and the post-WW2 architect-designed house at 35 Alto Avenue. Gable ends are variously clad in plain weatherboard (eg 15, 21, 23 and 26 Alto; 2 and 4 The Terrace, 2A Glen), shingles (eg 10, 12, 34, 37 and 55-57 Alto; 13 and 16 Ellesmere), strapped cement sheeting (eg 9, 10, 18 and 36 Alto; 18 Ellesmere), vertical boards (eg 11 and 24 Alto) or roughcast render (eg 8, 36 and 43 Alto). Some gable ends are further embellished by timber corbels (eg 10, 21, 26, 34, 37, 42 and 55-57 Alto; 2 The Terrace), bracketed eaves (eg 23, 26 and 34 Alto; 2 The Terrace) and apex vents with louvres (eg 21, 24 and 42 Alto), slats (eg 8, 9 and 26 Alto) or lattice grilles (eg 13 Ellesmere; 4 The Terrace and 2A Glen).



Typical of the prevailing inter-war bungalow idiom, most houses in the precinct have an asymmetrical street frontage. Windows are typically boxed, grouped in two or three, with timber-framed double-hung sashes, often multi-paned (eg 12, 23, 24, 33, 36 and 59 Alto; 13 Ellesmere; 4 The Terrace) and sometimes with lozenge glazing (eg 18, 34 and 55-57 Alto) or leadlight (37 Alto). Several houses have bay windows (eg 9 and 55-57 Alto; 14 and 16 Ellesmere; 2A Glen), and there are others with shutters (59 Alto), window boxes (63 Alto) or window hoods (eg 9 and 36 Alto). Some houses on more elevated hillside sites have large picture windows (eg 49 and 63 Alto; 2 The Terrace) to exploit the views; another has a prominent sunroom (37 Alto).

Virtually all houses have a front porch or verandah of some kind, varying from simple projecting porches (eg 33 and 34 Alto; 4 The Terrace) to more expansive verandahs across the façade (eg 18, 26 and 55-57 Alto; 14 Ellesmere), as well as some L-shaped return verandahs (12, 24 and 36 Alto; 16 Ellesmere). Many porches and verandahs are enlivened by timber detailing such as paired posts, fretwork (eg 17, 34 Alto), shaped brackets (eg 9, 12, 18, 34, 49, 55-57 Alto; 14 and 16 Ellesmere) and balustrades of vertical planks or slats (eg 12, 18, 24, 26, 33, 36 and 59 Alto; 14 and 16 Ellesmere; 2 and 4 The Terrace), weatherboard (eg 21 Alto), or shingles (55-57 Alto). The weatherboard house at 26 Alto Avenue has stop-chamfered timber posts supported on red brick piers, while the atypical brick house at 23 Alto Avenue stands out for its almost monumental porch with paired rendered pillars, brick-edged round archway and bowed balustrade wall.

Most of the houses are enhanced by their well-established garden settings, some of which include expansive front lawns with formalised plantings, shaped hedges and mature deciduous trees. Notable groups of mature trees include two substantial specimens along the north boundary of 2 Glen Avenue, a row along the north boundary of 11 Alto Avenue, several in the garden south of 23 Alto Avenue and another fine row on the downward side of The Terrace. Some of these mature trees, and those that survive in the front gardens of the properties along the uphill side of Ellesmere Avenue, are likely to be remnants of the grounds of the original *Wicklow Hills* homestead that formerly occupied this part of the estate.

Several houses have crazy paved pathways (eg 12, 17 and 21 Alto) or rough stone steps and retaining walls (eg 55-57, 59 and 63 Alto; 14 Ellesmere) that evoke the pre-war period. None of the properties appears to retain original front fences, with the notable exception of the stone wall and mild-steel gates of 63 Alto Avenue, and the timber and woven wire fence at 43 Alto Avenue, with a rusty tubular metal hand-gate of cyclone wire and mild steel scrolling. Many other properties, however, have front fences of more recent origin that are sympathetic to the earlier era, such as timber pickets (eg 23, 36 and 59 Alto; 2 and 4 The Terrace), cyclone wire (eg 15 and 34 Alto) or woven wire (eg 8, 21 and 24 Alto), some with matching reproduction gates (eg 8, 15 and 21 Alto). Several properties in Alto Avenue have partial hedges along the street boundary (eg Nos 17, 18, 23, 26), with a particularly large and prominent example at No 42-46.

The precinct contains relatively few houses from the early post-WW2 period (ie, c.1945 to 1970). While most are merely representative examples of their era rather than especially notable ones, four examples in Alto Avenue are deemed to contribute to the precinct, demonstrating the type of more considered homebuilding that occurred in this prestigious area in the 1950s and '60s. This comprises the architect's own elevated two-storey timber house at No 51 (Frank Dixon, c.1951), a smaller skillion-roofed modernist timber villa at No 32 (c.1957), a flat-roofed concrete brick house at No 41 (Hank Romyne, 1964) and the former Kenyon House at No 35 (Peter Corrigan, 1967), with its unusual composition of bagged brick walls and a jagged slate-clad roofline that deliberately referenced the estate's inter-war character.

### Significant Places

The following properties are deemed to be *contributory* elements in precinct:

- Alto Avenue: Nos 9, 11, 15, 17-19, 21, 23, 33, 35, 37, 41, 43, 49, 51, 55-57, 59, 63; 8, 10, 12, 18-20, 24, 26, 32, 34, 36, 42-46
- Ellesmere Avenue: Nos 13, 14, 16, 18
- The Terrace: Nos 2, 4
- Glen Avenue: No 2A – *this property fronts The Terrace, between No 2 and No 4*

The following properties are deemed to be *non-contributory* elements within the precinct:

- Alto Avenue: Nos 14, 16, 28, 30, 40; 27, 31, 37A, 43A, 47
- The Terrace: No 5
- Glen Avenue: No 2

## Comparative Analysis

Although the *Wicklow Hills Estate* was subdivided as early as 1919, with three further stages released in 1922, 1923 and 1928, certain part of the estate developed more quickly than others. Historically, the core of the estate has always been the spine of Alto Avenue sloping up from Wicklow Avenue to the topographic acme of Kenmare Avenue. The blocks of land along the northern portion of Alto Avenue, sloping down the other side of the crest to the Maroondah Highway, were always less desirable when advertised for sale during the estate's inter-war heyday. An aerial photograph from early 1951 indicates that much of that land was still vacant at that time. Consequently, that area now tends to be strongly defined by post-WW2 development, although a smattering of earlier housing remains evident (eg 74, 79 and 98 Alto Avenue; another pre-war house, at No 83, was demolished in 2016). The same is true of Glen Avenue, where inter-war houses are largely limited to the south end of the street (eg the notably intact dwelling at No 10, and more substantially altered ones at Nos 3-5, 8 and 12), giving way to post-WW2 development further north. Glenora Avenue, Kenmare Avenue, the lower stretch of Ellesmere Avenue and the contiguous part of Wicklow Avenue also remain mostly characterised by post-WW2 development, with only a few scattered survivors from the estate's inter-war heyday (eg 53, 55 and 61 Wicklow; 20 Glenora, 7 Ellesmere).

During its original land sales of the early 1920s, the *Wicklow Hills Estate* was promoted as one of Croydon's most prestigious residential estate, with many of the more elevated allotments allowing for expansive views across the township and beyond. As such, the houses that were erected there (and especially those designed to take advantage of the high elevation) have few direct comparators elsewhere in the area. Toorak Avenue, which runs parallel to Alto Avenue and thus shares similar topographical qualities, was clearly intended (as the street name implies) to be a comparably prestigious residential enclave. However, it appears to have undergone limited development in parallel. The *Sands & McDougall Directory* for 1949 (the first edition to include individual street-by-street entries for Croydon) recorded only five residents in Toorak Avenue, all on the south side of the street. The 1951 aerial photograph provides further detail, showing six individual dwellings along that side of Toorak Avenue, at what are now Nos 12, 15, 17, 21, 23 and 25. Virtually all of these sites were redeveloped in the later post-WW2 era, including several now occupied by large blocks of flats (Nos 12, 15 and 19). A hip-roofed red brick house at No 25, built c.1948 (see *Herald*, 19/01/1951:4) is probably now the oldest surviving house on Toorak Avenue. The northern end of Toorak Avenue, and the contiguous part of Stirling Road, extending to Maroondah Highway and Kent Avenue, was not subdivided until the later 1940s. A few of the early surviving houses in this area are stylistically reminiscent of inter-war dwellings (eg 39-41 and 42 Toorak; 18 Stirling), but they all date from the post-WW2 era.

By contrast, a contemporaneous residential estate on the opposite (south) side of the railway line, on land that slopes gently down from Gallipoli Parade to Mount Dandenong Road is more intact as a cohesive development of surviving inter-war houses. However, these tend to be more generic timber bungalows that, without the expansive views to exploit, lack the elevated form, porches, verandahs, attic storeys and picture windows that characterise the dwellings on Wicklow Hills.

As an example of a prestigious residential estate that developed on elevated land with the potential for houses to exploit panoramic views, the *Wicklow Hills Estate* has a number of notable post-WW2 counterparts, including Loughnan's Hill in Ringwood, Richardson Road in Croydon North, and the Montana Parade/Vasey Circuit area in Croydon South.

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The houses within the *Wicklow Hills Estate Precinct*, Croydon (concentrated on Alto Avenue, The Terrace and the north end of Ellesmere Avenue), represent the most cohesive remaining streetscapes of a prestigious inter-war residential estate stretching from Wicklow Avenue to Maroondah Highway. Developed when a former farming estate was subdivided in four stages (in 1919, 1922, 1923 and 1928), the estate filled out rapidly during the 1920s and '30s. The dwellings, united by common vintage, vary in grandeur from the more modest houses down the slope of Alto Avenue to larger and grander one further up the hill, with the most prepossessing ones on the larger elevated blocks at the crest of Alto Avenue, Ellesmere Avenue and The Terrace. Although varying in style and articulation, the houses display consistency in materials (weatherboard, brick, shingle, terracotta tiles) and overall articulation in the prevailing bungalow style of the period, with irregular rooflines, gable ends, porches, verandahs and multi-paned windows.

### *How is it significant?*

The *Wicklow Hills Estate Precinct* satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Maroondah planning scheme:

- Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Maroondah's cultural history.
- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

### *Why is it significant?*

The *Wicklow Hills Estate Precinct* has significant associations with a land subdivision was promoted during the inter-war era as Croydon's most prestigious residential area. Laid out in the 1920s, the estate occupied elevated land that had been tightly held by the Kelly family since 1889. When finally subdivided (in four stages in 1919, 1922, 1923 and 1928) and offered for public sale, the blocks closest to the railway station sold and were developed quickly, while those with elevated positions at the crest of the hills (towards Kenmare Avenue, Glen Avenue and The Terrace) attracted those with the resources to build grander and more prepossessing residences to exploit the panoramic views. For many years, Wicklow Hills was the address of many of Croydon's most eminent residents including leading retailers, doctors, barristers, accountants and architects. (*Criterion A*)

The *Wicklow Hills Estate Precinct* is significant as a cohesive group of inter-war dwellings reflecting the prevailing bungalow idiom of that period. Reflecting the desirability and prestige of the different parts of the estate, the houses thereon vary in scale and sophistication from more modest timber houses along the lower slope of Alto Avenue, to larger and more prepossessing brick houses further up the slope, through to even grander and more sprawling elevated houses characterised by expansive front verandahs. Irrespective of scale, the houses remain consistently expressed in materials, forms and detailing, including irregular hipped and gabled roofs mostly clad in terracotta tiles, groups of windows with timber-framed double-hung multi-paned or leaded sashes, and projecting porches and verandahs enlivened a range of decorative timberwork including lattices, shaped brackets, fretwork and shingles. The houses in the precinct are enhanced by their setting, which included well-established front gardens, front hedges and mature deciduous trees that create a notable landscaping component along the respective streetscapes. (*Criterion E*)

The inter-war houses in the precinct are complemented by four above-average architect-designed dwellings in Alto Avenue, dating the 1950s and '60s. Collectively, these houses provide evidence of the quality of design sought by discriminating post-WW2 homebuilders in what had become, by that time, Croydon's most prestigious residential enclave. Architect/engineer Frank Dixon's own house at No 51 is notable for the way in which, like its pre-war counterparts, it was conceived to exploit the views from its elevated site, while the house that Peter Corrigan designed at No 35 responded to its context in an entirely different way, utilising rough bagged brickwork and a jagged slate-clad roofline to evoke a pre-war character. (*Criterion E*)

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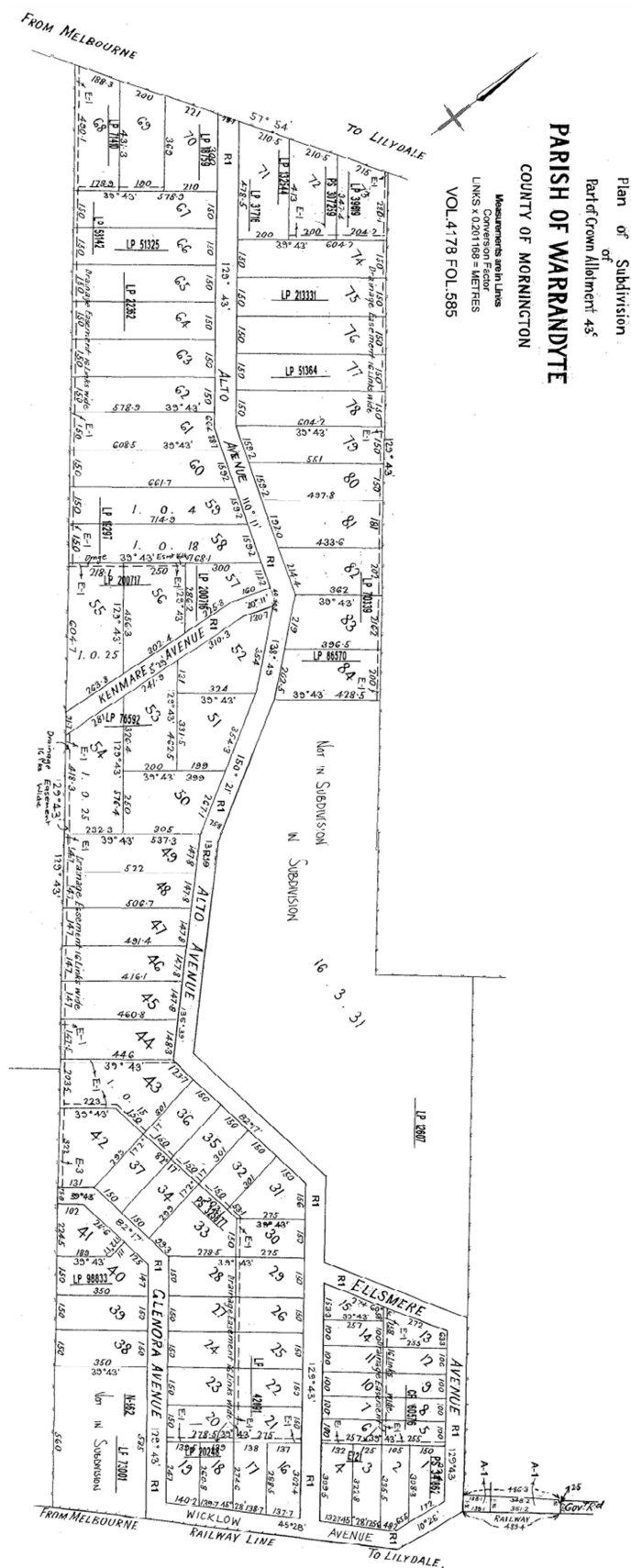
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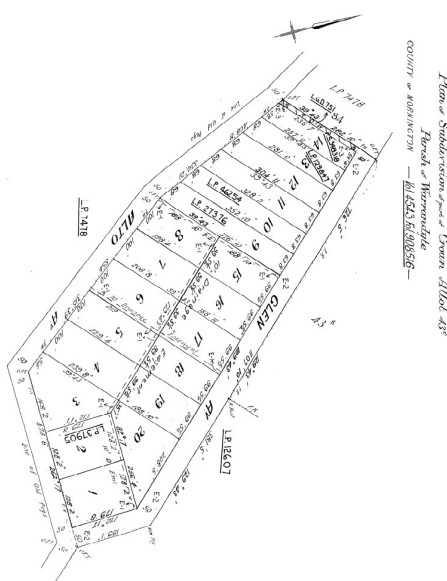




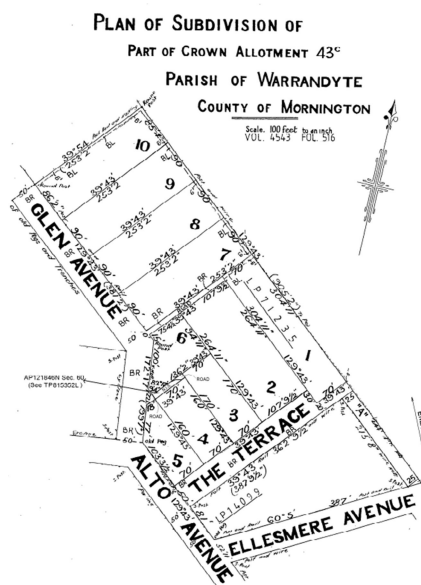
LP 7478, lodged 11 February 1919



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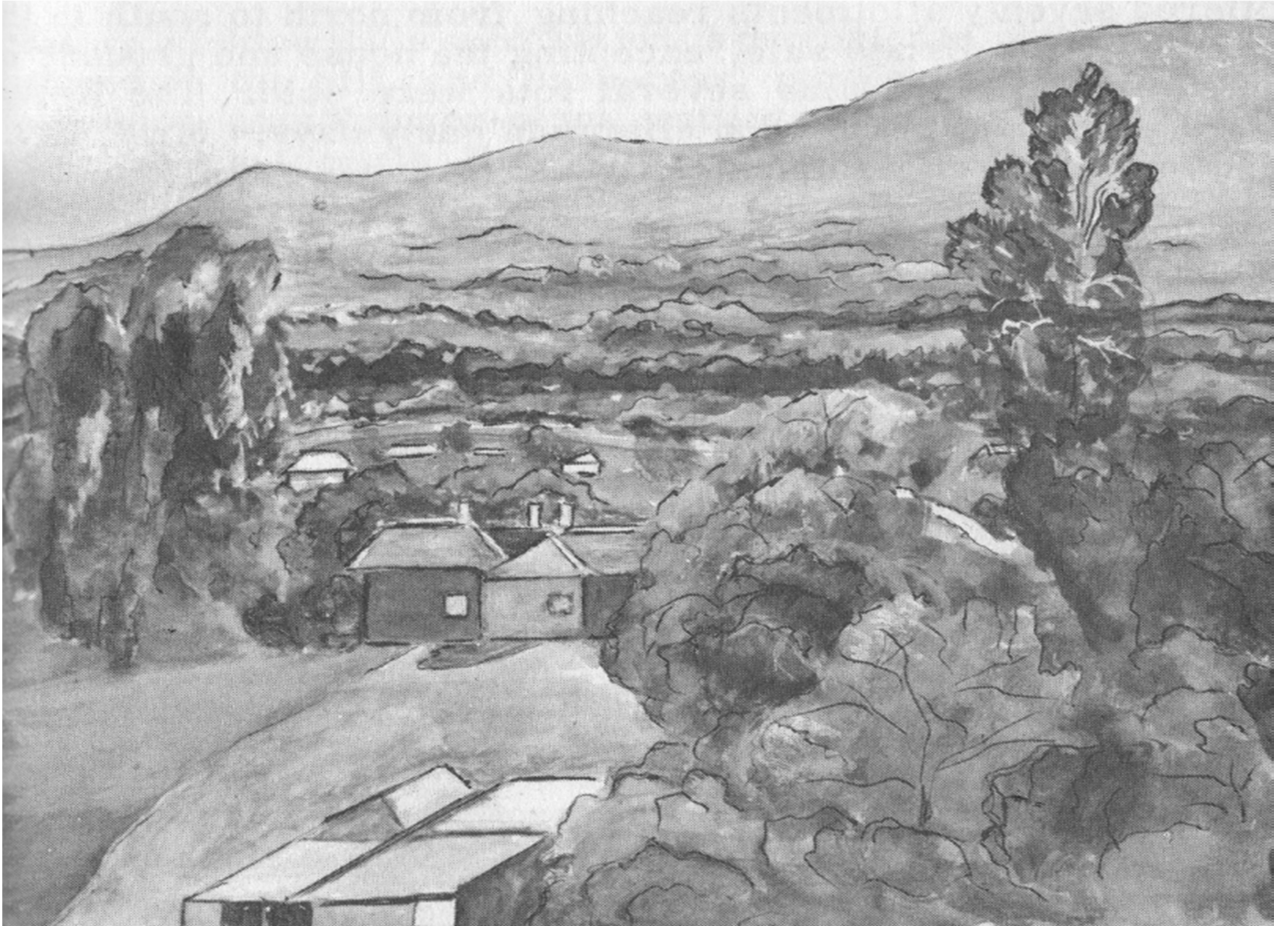


LP 9162, lodged 16 January 1923



LP 12607, lodged 10 July 1928

Lodged Plans showing sequence of subdivision of Wicklow Hills Estate from 1919 to 1928  
(source: [www.landata.vic.gov.au](http://www.landata.vic.gov.au))



*Artist's impression of the original Wicklow Hills property, showing the Kelly family's homestead  
(source: Muriel McGivern, A History of Croydon: A Second Volume)*



*View down Alto Avenue, circa 1930s. The hip-roofed house to the right side of the telephone pole is No 12  
(source: Rose Postcard; author's collection)*





*Contemporary view of Arthur Ridge's Cromer Lodge at 63Alto Avenue, designed by local architect Arthur Pretty  
(source: Australian Home Beautiful, March 1942)*



*Aerial photograph of the Wicklow Hills Estate in early 1951, showing extent of residential settlement by that time  
(source: Central Plan Office, [www.landata.gov.au](http://www.landata.gov.au))*





*Timber bungalow at 9 Alto Avenue (c.1921)*



*Timber bungalow at 12 Alto Avenue (1922)*



*Timber bungalow at 21 Alto Avenue (c.1920)*



*Timber bungalow at 26 Alto Avenue (1923-24)*



*Brick and roughcast villa at 23 Alto Avenue (1923)*



*Vertical-boarded bungalow at 33 Alto Avenue (1931)*



*Attic-storey timber bungalow at 37 Alto Avenue (c.1922)*



*Rendered brick residence at 42-46 Alto Avenue (c.1928)*





*Slate-roofed timber house at 49 Alto Avenue (c.1924)*



*Two-storey timber house at 63 Alto Avenue (1936)*



*Former private hospital at 16 Ellesmere Avenue (1923)*



*Timber bungalow at 4 The Terrace (c.1930)*



*Looking east along unsealed and semi-trafficable The Terrace, showing inter-war dwellings at 24 Alto Avenue (left), 2 The Terrace, 2A Glen Avenue, and overhanging branches from row of mature deciduous trees along south side.*



