

## Recommendation of the Executive Director and assessment of cultural heritage significance under Part 3 of the *Heritage Act 2017*



**Name** Former Robin Boyd House  
**Location** 666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell, City of Boroondara  
**Date Registered** 2 October 1991  
**VHR Number** VHR H0879  
**VHR Category** Registered Place  
**Hermes Number** 191



Former Robin Boyd House (c. 1950s)

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE HERITAGE COUNCIL:**

That the Former Robin Boyd House NOT be removed from the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR).

**STEVEN AVERY**

**Executive Director**

**Recommendation Date:** Monday 13 July 2020

**Advertising Period:** Friday 17 July – Monday 14 September 2020

This recommendation report has been issued by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria under s.37 of the *Heritage Act 2017*.

Current Name: Former Robin Boyd House  
VHR number: VHR H0879  
Hermes number: 191

## REASONS FOR REGISTRATION IN 1991

The State level historic and architectural cultural heritage significance of the Former Robin Boyd House was recognised in 1991 by its inclusion in the Register of Historic Buildings (VHR H0879).

### Statement of significance (1991):

The former Robin Boyd house at 666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell (previously known as 158 Riversdale Road) was built in 1946-47. It has historical and architectural significance for the following reasons:

- The house is the earliest known extant residence designed by the renowned Australian architect Robin Boyd.
- It is unique in being a house that Boyd designed for his personal use and occupied and extended over a period of twelve years.
- This strong association with Boyd is particularly significant because Boyd was an important architect and a prominent social critic and commentator. He played a major role in the development of architecture and architectural thinking in Victoria for four decades.
- The house through its alteration is important in that it demonstrates the architectural development of Robin Boyd from the early period of his career in the 1940s when he expounded his Theories on "Victorian Regionalism", to the emerging "internationalism" of the 1950s.
- The building is a seminal work which can be regarded as the prototype of the post war Modern Victorian house. It extended the leading architecture of its time and strongly influenced an emerging group of architects.
- The house is of architectural significance in that it demonstrates innovative design with regard to response to site, informality in planning, flowing spatial arrangements, innovative use of materials and incorporation of built-in features. These are all aspects of domestic design which have now become common.

## AMENDMENT APPLICATION MADE IN 2019 TO REMOVE THE PLACE FROM THE VHR

On 19 June 2019 the Executive Director accepted an application to remove the Former Robin Boyd House (VHR H0879) from the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). Summaries of the reasons for requesting the removal of the place from the VHR and responses are below. The full reasons are provided at Attachment 1.

## RESPONSES TO REASONS SUBMITTED BY THE APPLICANT FOR REMOVING THE PLACE FROM THE VHR

### Applicant submission 1

The applicant notes that the statement of significance for the Former Robin Boyd House describes the house as "the earliest known extant residence designed by the renowned Australian architect Robin Boyd." The applicant submits that "there was an earlier house built in September 1943 for Corporal Jones as noted in the 'The Boyd's Family Biography' by Brenda Niall.' Therefore the 'House for Corporal Jones' had historical and architectural significance as it was Boyd's earliest example of an open plan design without embellishment with the focus on reducing costs and saving space."

### Response

The house design for Corporal Jones is documented in *SALT*, the educational journal of the Australian Army and Air Force. In 1943, Robin Boyd was a Sergeant in the Australian Imperial Force and this article was one of many he wrote for *SALT*. This particular article was written in the context of a design for the hypothetical and typical soldier; "our tent-mate Corporal J H Jones." It was a design for a house which was suitable for construction on a budget by returned servicemen under the War Services Housing Scheme. It is not known

whether any houses were built to this plan. If another earlier house designed by Boyd was found, it would not diminish the cultural heritage significance of the Former Robin Boyd House. The place is not included in the VHR because it is the earliest building in Victoria designed by Robin Boyd. There are other reasons for its inclusion in the VHR, as noted in the statement of significance.

### **Applicant submission 2**

The applicant also notes that the statement of significance states that the “[*The Former Robin Boyd House*] is unique in being a house that Boyd designed for his personal use and occupied and extended over a period of twelve years.” The applicant submits that the “house at ‘666 Riverdale Rd Camberwell’ is not unique as the ‘Walsh Street’ house that Boyd designed in 1957 was also designed for his own family and is universally described by the Robin Boyd Foundation as his most well known work. [*The Walsh Street House*] has been extensively published both nationally and internationally as an exemplar of modernist Australian architecture and a house that continues to influence architectural thinking. It is now the home of the Robin Boyd Foundation which was specifically purchased by the Foundation to preserve its uniqueness. If the house at ‘666 Riverdale Rd Camberwell’ is so unique, then why was it not celebrated and recognized to the extent as the house at Walsh Street? In contrast there was no clear guidance provided on a conservation plan for ‘666 Riversdale Rd Camberwell’, that raises the question of how much its uniqueness was truly valued and was sought to be preserved.”

### **Response**

It is acknowledged that Robin Boyd House II, 290 Walsh Street, South Yarra (VHR H2105) was the second home designed and constructed by Robin Boyd for his family to live in. In this context, the Former Robin Boyd House at 666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell is not unique. This does not diminish the cultural heritage significance of the place. Both buildings are significant for their association with Robin Boyd and their use as homes he designed for his family. They are also significant as exemplary examples of modernist residential architecture in Victoria.

As the headquarters of the Robin Boyd Foundation, Robin Boyd House II, has a higher public profile than the Former Robin Boyd House. The Robin Boyd Foundation actively promotes the place as a venue for events and lectures, and through open days. Public visitation is encouraged. By contrast, the Former Robin Boyd House is privately owned, is not promoted to the public, or accessible to the public. Until it was acquired by the Robin Boyd Foundation, Robin Boyd House II was privately owned and had less of a public profile. The cultural heritage significance of a place is not reliant on how well known it is. A large number of places in the VHR are privately owned, not accessible to the public or publicly celebrated. The significance and importance of the Former Robin Boyd House as one of the earliest known buildings designed by Robin Boyd is well known and understood. A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) was completed for the Former Robin Boyd House in 2001. The purpose of a CMP is to explain the significance of a place and provide policy for its maintenance and management. The CMP for the Former Robin Boyd House provides clear guidance for the conservation of the place.

### **Summary**

It is the view of the Executive Director that the reasons provided by the applicant do not justify the removal of the Former Robin Boyd House from the VHR.

## EXISTING EXTENT OF REGISTRATION

The existing extent of registration is:

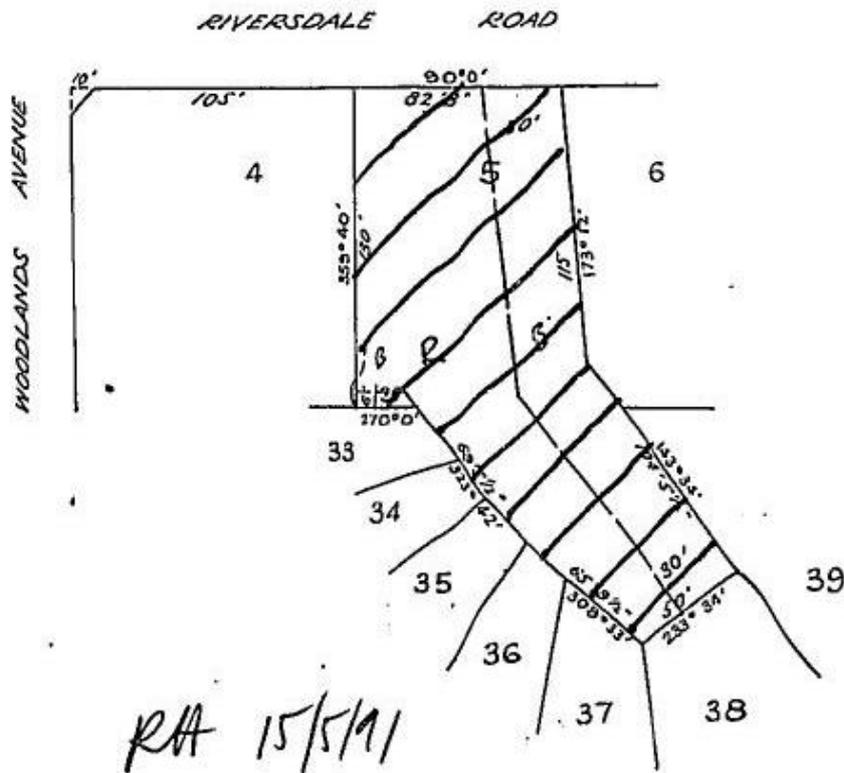
### AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 879.

Former Robin Boyd House, 664-666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell.

(To the extent of all the buildings known as the former Robin Boyd house, 664-66 Riversdale Road, Camberwell and all land entered in the Register Book Certificate of Title Volume 6968 Folio 567 shown hatched on the plan endorsed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council.)

[Victoria Government Gazette No. G38 2 October 1991 p.2734]

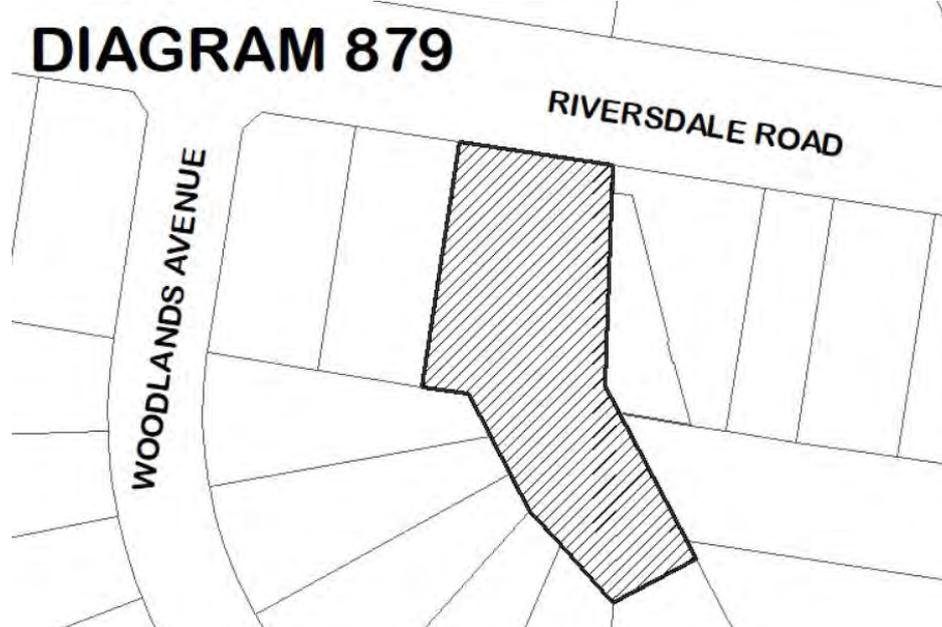


## RECOMMENDED EXTENT OF REGISTRATION

No change is recommended for the extent of registration for the Former Robin Boyd House. It is recommended that the diagram and description are updated to conform to current practices.

## UPDATED EXTENT OF REGISTRATION

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 879 encompassing all of Lot 5 on Lodged Plan 14779.



The extent of registration of the Former Robin Boyd House in the Victorian Heritage Register affects the whole place shown on Diagram 879 including the residence (interiors and exteriors), and the land which comprises the cadastral block on which it is located.

## AERIAL PHOTO SHOWING RECOMMENDED EXTENT



Current Name: Former Robin Boyd House  
VHR number: VHR H0879  
Hermes number: 191

## ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Former Robin Boyd House was included in the VHR in 1991. Since that time, the *Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines* have been introduced (endorsed by the Heritage Council in 2012 and updated in 2019). For this reason, and due to the amount of time which has passed since the place was included in the VHR, it is considered necessary to review the reasons the place is included in the VHR.

## BACKGROUND

### WHAT IS AT THE PLACE?

The Former Robin Boyd House is located on an irregularly shaped block of land at 666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell. The land slopes away to the south from Riversdale Road, and the eastern side slopes down to a former creek gully. The land is overgrown with large trees and grass with little evidence of landscaping. The house is located along the western boundary and steps down to the south following the slope of the land. The low-pitched gable roofs are at multiple levels and the original Solomit thermo-acoustic panels are evident in some areas. External walls are painted brick interspersed with large expanses of windows, including a canted window with fixed and operable sashes across the dining and bedrooms area.<sup>1</sup> The main entrance opens into a living room, divided from a former bedroom by a storage unit. A glazed walkway connects this area to the remainder of the house which is accessed by a set of stairs descending into an open plan living, dining and kitchen area with a bathroom and bedrooms beyond. The kitchen joinery, cupboards, wardrobes and Oregon wall panelling are intact but have been dark stained or painted. Some of the cork floor tiles appear to survive in the living room. A two storey addition is located at the southern end of the building.

### WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE PLACE?

The Former Robin Boyd House was constructed in 1947 to the design of Robin Boyd as a home for himself, his wife and his daughter. In 1952 Boyd designed additions to each end, comprising a living area and guest bedroom to the north and additional bedrooms for his two sons to the south. It was designed during Boyd's formative years as an architect, writer and critic. The house has a narrow plan, which was a response to the slope of the site, setback requirements on the western side required by the local council, and the location of a creek along the eastern boundary. The external walls are of brick and timber which were originally painted putty green and white. The floors are timber in the bedrooms with a concrete slab to the living and service rooms. Internally, brick walls were originally painted yellow-green and timber walls were painted with a thin coat of white paint. The ceiling and roof were constructed of compressed Solomit strawboards, exposed below and covered on top with bituminous felt and gravel membrane.<sup>2</sup> The original ceiling to the northern 1952 extension was made of interwoven plywood sheeting. This room also contained a standalone central removable fireplace with a removable flue which is no longer in place. The house was built by John F Murphy of Murphy and Green who also built the second home Boyd designed for his family, Robin Boyd House II at 290 Walsh Street, South Yarra (VHR H2105). The Boyds sold the Riversdale Road property in 1959 to move into the Walsh Street house. It was sold for a third time in 1973 to the parents of the current owners, who constructed a two storey extension to the southern end of the building in 1975. In the 1990s, the roof to the northern extension was demolished and the freestanding fireplace and cupboard/room divider containing a bar was removed. The roof and cupboard/divider were subsequently replaced. The property was vacated in the early 1990s and has not been occupied since.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Phillip Goad in *From Art To The Everyday: Robin Boyd And The 'Windowwall'* the intention of this window was to direct the view into the adjacent creek gully.

<sup>2</sup> Robin Boyd, (1950) "House near Melbourne" in *Architectural Review*

## WHO ARE THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS/REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTY(IES) FOR THIS PLACE?

The Former Robin Boyd House is located on the traditional land of the people of the Kulin Nation. Traditional owners have not been formally recognised for this area. A Registered Aboriginal Party under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* has not been appointed.

## STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

### WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT?

The Former Robin Boyd House including the residential building (exteriors and interiors), all fixtures and fittings attached to the building at the time of registration, and all the land. The two storey 1975 extension at the southern end of the residential building is not of significance.

### HOW IS IT SIGNIFICANT?

#### Criterion A

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

#### Criterion D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

#### Criterion F

Important 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 groups of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

### WHY IS IT SIGNIFICANT?

The Former Robin Boyd House is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The Former Robin Boyd House is historically significant for its clear association with post-war residential development in Victoria and post-war modernist architecture. As the earliest known constructed work of renowned architect, writer and critic, Robin Boyd, it allows the clear association with post-war modernist residences to be understood better than most other places in Victoria with substantially the same association. [Criterion A]

The Former Robin Boyd House is architecturally significant as a notable example of a post-war modernist residence. It is a fine and highly intact example which demonstrates innovative and experimental design through its open plan living spaces with multi-functional rooms and undefined room boundaries, and its design in response to the site. As the earliest known constructed residence by architect Robin Boyd it was influential as the physical manifestation of Boyd's design philosophies. It is one of the earliest known modernist houses constructed in Victoria and encapsulates a key evolutionary stage in the development of the class, and of architecture in Victoria. [Criterion D]

The Former Robin Boyd House is technically significant and demonstrates a high degree of creative achievement for the period in which it was constructed. As one of the earliest known examples of modernist architecture in Victoria – constructed just two years after the end of World War II – the Former Robin Boyd House is recognised as breakthrough in term of its design. It incorporated aspects of design such as open

plan living, multi-functional rooms, integrated joinery and response to the site which were considered revolutionary at the time, but are now seen as commonplace. [Criterion F]

The Former Robin Boyd House is significant for its special association with Robin Boyd's life, work and achievements. It is the first home designed and occupied by him and his family and is where he lived while his career evolved from one as a relatively unknown architect to one of Australia's most well-known and acclaimed architects. [Criterion H]

## RECOMMENDATION REASONS

### CRITERION A:

**Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.**

#### STEP 1: TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION A

The place/object has a clear ASSOCIATION with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life in Victoria's cultural history.
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**Plus**

The association of the place/object to the event, phase, etc <i>IS EVIDENT</i> in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources or oral history
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**Plus**

The <i>EVENT, PHASE, etc</i> is of <i>HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE</i> , having made a strong or influential contribution to Victoria
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#### **Executive Director's Response**

- The Former Robin Boyd House was designed in 1947 by Robin Boyd as a family home for himself, his wife and their daughter. The building was extended in 1952 to accommodate two sons.
- It has a clear association with the phase of post-war modernist architecture in Victoria, and with the architecture of Robin Boyd one of Australia's most prominent architects, writers and critics.
- The association is evident in the physical fabric of the place through:
  - Its experimental open plan design with multi-functional rooms and undefined boundaries.
  - The way in which the building is designed in response to the site through its elongated plan along the western boundary to avoid the creek gully to the east and accommodate required setbacks to the west, and the way it steps down the site which slopes away to the south.
  - Intact built in elements such as the kitchen cupboards and wardrobes/dividing walls.
- The association is also evident in documentary resources including photographs, plans and journal articles.
- The phase of post war residential architecture is of historical importance to Victoria. It made a strong and influential contribution to Victoria's built environment. As one of Australia's most prominent and influential architects and architectural writers, Robin Boyd was one of the strongest public advocates for this phase of architecture in Victoria.

**STEP 2: STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE TEST FOR CRITERION A**

The place/object allows the clear association with the event, phase etc. of historical importance to be *UNDERSTOOD BETTER THAN MOST OTHER PLACES OR OBJECTS IN VICTORIA WITH SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME ASSOCIATION.*

**Executive Director's Response**

As the earliest known architectural work of one of Australia's most influential and well-known architects, the Former Robin Boyd House allows the clear association with post war residential architecture to be understood better than most other places in Victoria with substantially the same association.

- It was designed by Boyd in the seminal years of his career and is the physical manifestation of his early philosophies and theories around a new approach to architecture. It has been described as Boyd's "home-laboratory".<sup>3</sup>
- It is an early example of open plan living with multi-functional rooms, and an architecture which responds to its site.
- It tested many of Boyd's theories and can be regarded as the prototype of the post war house in Victoria. Some of the features of Robin Boyd House II (VHR H2105) are evident in a more modest way in this house including multi-functional rooms across various levels with indistinct boundaries.
- It extended the architecture of its time and strongly influenced an emerging group of architects.

Criterion A is likely to be satisfied at the State level.

**CRITERION B**

**Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.**

**STEP 1: A TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION B**

The place/object has a *clear ASSOCIATION* with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life of importance in Victoria's cultural history.

**Plus**

The association of the place/object to the event, phase, etc *IS EVIDENT* in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources or oral history.

**Plus**

The place/object is *RARE OR UNCOMMON*, being one of a small number of places/objects remaining that demonstrates the important event, phase etc.

OR

The place/object is *RARE OR UNCOMMON*, containing unusual features of note that were not widely replicated

OR

The existence of the *class* of place/object that demonstrates the important event, phase etc is *ENDANGERED* to the point of rarity due to threats and pressures on such places/objects.

<sup>3</sup> Goad, Phillip (n.d.) *From Art To The Everyday: Robin Boyd And The 'Windowwall'*

**Executive Director's Response**

- The Former Robin Boyd House has a clear association with the phase of post-war modernist architecture in Victoria, and with the architecture of Robin Boyd one of Australia's most prominent architects, writers and critics.
- The association is evident in the physical fabric of the place and in documentary resources.
- As a home designed by Robin Boyd for his family, the place is rare as one of only two examples. However, this is a category that is limited by definition and there are other examples of buildings designed by Boyd in the VHR.
- There were thousands of homes designed and constructed during this period and many remain today. The Former Robin Boyd House is not rare or uncommon and is not in a class which is endangered.
- It is an early example of modernist architecture in Victoria and exhibits many characteristics which were experimental at the time, but this is more appropriately examined under Criterion D.

Criterion B is not likely to be satisfied.

**CRITERION C**

**Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.**

**STEP 1: A TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION C**

The:

- visible physical fabric; &/or
- documentary evidence; &/or
  - oral history,

relating to the place/object indicates a likelihood that the place/object contains *PHYSICAL EVIDENCE* of *historical interest* that is *NOT CURRENTLY VISIBLE OR UNDERSTOOD*.

**Plus**

From what we know of the place/object, the physical evidence is likely to be of an *INTEGRITY* and/or *CONDITION* that it *COULD YIELD INFORMATION* through detailed investigation.

**Executive Director's Response**

It is unlikely that the Former Robin Boyd House contains physical evidence of historical interest that is not currently visible or understood. The form, function and historical interest is clearly evident in the fabric of the place and it is well documented. There is unlikely to be any archaeological evidence associated with the cultural heritage significance of the place.

Criterion C is not likely to be satisfied.

**CRITERION D**

**Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.**

**STEP 1: A TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION D**

The place/object is one of a *CLASS* of places/objects that has a *clear ASSOCIATION* with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, important person(s), custom or way of life in Victoria's history.

**Plus**

The *EVENT, PHASE, etc* is of *HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE*, having made a strong or influential contribution to Victoria.

**Plus**

The principal characteristics of the class are *EVIDENT* in the physical fabric of the place/object.

Current Name: Former Robin Boyd House

VHR number: VHR H0879

Hermes number: 191

**Executive Director's Response**

- The Former Robin Boyd House is in the class of post-war modernist residences. This class has a clear association with the development of residential architecture in Victoria in the post-war period. This phase is of historical importance, having made a strong or influential contribution to Victoria.
- The principal characteristics of the class are evident in the physical fabric of the place.

Criterion D is likely to be satisfied.

**Step 2: State Level Significance Test Criterion D**

The place/object is a *NOTABLE EXAMPLE* of the class in Victoria (refer to Reference Tool D).

**Executive Director's Response**

Under the definitions provided in Reference Tool D, the Former Robin Boyd House is a notable example of its class because it is a fine, highly intact, influential and pivotal example.

- A fine example:
  - It displays a large range of characteristics that is typical of the class including:
    - Innovative and experimental design with open plan design, multi-functional rooms and undefined room boundaries.
    - Informal planning.
    - The design in response to the site which is demonstrated through its elongated plan along the western boundary to avoid the creek gully to the east and the way it steps down the site which slopes away to the south.
    - Low pitched roof planes at varying levels.
    - Built in features and joinery such as the kitchen cupboards and cupboards/dividing walls.
    - Intact joinery
    - Integration of indoor and outdoor spaces and large expanses of glazing.
- Highly intact
  - Alterations have taken place but the principal characteristics described above survive and are still readable.
- Influential
  - Boyd influenced a generation of architects through his architecture and his writing. As his earliest known constructed work, this building is the physical manifestation of his design experiments and philosophies.
  - The physical characteristics of the design were copied and further developed in subsequent places in the class.
- Pivotal
  - The post-war modernist movement, and the architecture, writings and teachings of Robin Boyd in particular influenced a generation of architects in Victoria and beyond.
  - The Former Robin Boyd House is one of the earliest modernist houses constructed in Victoria and encapsulates a key evolutionary stage in the development of the class.

Criterion D is likely to be satisfied at the State level.

## CRITERION E

### Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

#### STEP 1: A TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION E

The *PHYSICAL FABRIC* of the place/object clearly exhibits particular aesthetic characteristics.

#### **Executive Director's Response**

The physical fabric of the place clearly exhibits particular aesthetic characteristics through its form, spatial planning and detailing. The architectural aesthetic characteristics of the Former Robin Boyd House are appreciated by individuals and groups with an interest in architecture and modernist architecture in particular, academics and members of the architecture and design professions.

Criterion E is likely to be satisfied.

#### STEP 2: STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE TEST FOR CRITERION E

The aesthetic characteristics are *APPRECIATED OR VALUED* by the wider community or an appropriately-related discipline as evidenced, for example, by:

- *critical recognition* of the aesthetic characteristics of the place/object within a relevant art, design, architectural or related discipline as an outstanding example within Victoria; or
- wide public *acknowledgement of exceptional merit* in Victoria in medium such as songs, poetry, literature, painting, sculpture, publications, print media etc.

#### **Executive Director's Response:**

- The aesthetic characteristics are appreciated and valued by appropriately-related disciplines as evidenced by their critical recognition within design and architectural disciplines. This is evidenced by numerous contemporary articles about the place, as well as its inclusion in more recent publications. Some of these are included in the reference section of this report.
- Compared to Boyd's later architecture, and modernist houses by other architects at a similar time, the Former Robin Boyd House is a comparatively modest example of this style of architecture. It was highly experimental at the time, but did not win awards.
- The early and experimental design characteristics of the Former Robin Boyd House are best considered through Criterion D.

Criterion E is not likely to be satisfied at the State level.

## CRITERION F

### Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

#### STEP 1: A TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION F

The place/object contains *PHYSICAL EVIDENCE* that clearly demonstrates creative or technical *ACHIEVEMENT* for the time in which it was created.

#### **Plus**

The physical evidence demonstrates a *HIGH DEGREE OF INTEGRITY*.

#### **Executive Director's Response**

The Former Robin Boyd House does not demonstrate technical achievement for the time in which it was created but does clearly demonstrate creative achievement. This is evident through:

- The design response to locating the house on a block of land with multiple constraints.

- The use of comparatively new building materials such as Solomit and the use of existing building materials in inventive ways.
- The spatial layout and joinery elements internally.

The physical evidence demonstrates a high degree of integrity.

Criterion F is likely to be satisfied.

#### STEP 2: A BASIC TEST FOR DETERMINING STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE FOR CRITERION F

The nature &/or scale of the achievement is *OF A HIGH DEGREE* or 'beyond the ordinary' for *the period in which it was undertaken* as evidenced by:

- *critical acclaim* of the place/object within the relevant creative or technological discipline as an outstanding example in Victoria; or
- *wide acknowledgement of exceptional merit* in Victoria in medium such as publications and print media; or
- recognition of the place/object as a *breakthrough* in terms of design, fabrication or construction techniques; or
- recognition of the place/object as a successful solution to a technical problem that *extended the limits* of existing technology; or
- recognition of the place/object as an outstanding example of the *creative adaptation* of available materials and technology of the period.

#### **Executive Director's Response**

The Former Robin Boyd House demonstrates a high degree of creative achievement for the period in which it was constructed. The post-war period was a time of great experimentation and innovation in architecture. As one of the earliest known examples of modernist architecture in Victoria – constructed just two years after the end of World War II – the Former Robin Boyd House is recognised as breakthrough in term of its design. It incorporates design features such as open plan living, multi-functional rooms, integrated joinery and response to the site which were considered revolutionary at the time, but are now seen as commonplace.

Criterion F is likely to be satisfied at the State level.

#### CRITERION G

**Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.**

#### STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION G

Evidence exists of a community or cultural group.

*(A community or cultural group is a group of people who share a common interest, including an experience, purpose, belief system, culture, ethnicity or values.)*

**Plus**

Evidence exists of a strong attachment between the COMMUNITY OR CULTURAL GROUP and the place/object in the present-day context.

**Plus**

Evidence exists of a time depth to that attachment.

#### **Executive Director's Response**

The Former Robin Boyd House is acknowledged by groups with a shared interest in modernist architecture and the work of Robin Boyd. There is no strong attachment between the place and any group as evidenced by regular or long-term use or engagement with the place.

Criterion G is not likely to be satisfied.

## CRITERION H

**Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.**

### STEP 1: A TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION H

The place/object has a *DIRECT ASSOCIATION* with a person or group of persons who have made a strong or influential *CONTRIBUTION* to the course of Victoria's history.

**Plus**

The *ASSOCIATION* of the place/object to the person(s) *IS EVIDENT* in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources and/or oral history.

**Plus**

The *ASSOCIATION*:

- directly relates to *ACHIEVEMENTS* of the person(s) at, or relating to, the place/object; or
- relates to an *enduring* and/or *close INTERACTION* between the person(s) and the place/object.

#### **Executive Director's Response**

The Former Robin Boyd House has a direct association with Robin Boyd, who has made a strong and influential contribution to the course of Victoria's history through his architecture and writing. The association is evident in the physical fabric of the place and in documentary resources. This association directly relates to the achievements of Robin Boyd.

Criterion H is likely to be satisfied.

### STEP 2: STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE TEST FOR CRITERION H

The place/object allows the clear association with the person or group of persons to be *READILY APPRECIATED BETTER THAN MOST OTHER PLACES OR OBJECTS IN VICTORIA*.

#### **Executive Director's Response**

Robin Boyd designed over 100 homes in Victoria and interstate. As the first Director of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RVIA) Small Homes Service, Boyd contributed to a significant change to Victoria's built environment in the post-war period. While all places designed by Boyd could be said to have an association with him, the special association with his life, work and achievements is most readily appreciated at places he designed for himself and his family to live in. Along with Robin Boyd House II (VHR H2105), the Former Robin Boyd House exemplifies his achievements and is a particularly early and experimental example of his work. It is the first home designed and occupied by him and his family and is where he lived while his career evolved from one of a relatively unknown architect to one of Australia's most well-known and acclaimed architects.

Criterion H is likely to be satisfied at the State level.

## INTRODUCTION TO PERMIT EXEMPTIONS

### Preamble

The purpose of this information is to assist owners and other interested parties when considering or making decisions regarding works to a registered place. It is recommended that any proposed works be discussed with an officer of Heritage Victoria prior to making a permit application. Discussing proposed works will assist in answering questions the owner may have and aid any decisions regarding works to the place.

**The extent of registration of the Former Robin Boyd House in the Victorian Heritage Register affects the whole place shown on Diagram 879 including the land, building (exteriors and interiors), trees, landscape elements and other features.** Under the *Heritage Act 2017* a person must not remove or demolish, damage or despoil, develop or alter or excavate, relocate or disturb the position of any part of a registered place or object without approval. It is acknowledged, however, that alterations and other works may be required to keep places and objects in good repair and adapt them for use into the future.

If a person wishes to undertake works or activities in relation to a registered place or registered object, they must apply to the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria for a permit. The purpose of a permit is to enable appropriate change to a place and to effectively manage adverse impacts on the cultural heritage significance of a place as a consequence of change. If an owner is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that Heritage Victoria be contacted.

Permits are required for anything which alters the place or object, unless a **permit exemption** is granted. Permit exemptions usually cover routine maintenance and upkeep issues faced by owners as well as minor works or works to the elements of the place or object that are not significant. They may include appropriate works that are specified in a conservation management plan.

Permit exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.38 of the Heritage Act) or after registration (under s.92 of the Heritage Act). It should be noted that the addition of new buildings to the registered place, as well as alterations to the interior and exterior of existing buildings requires a permit, unless a specific permit exemption is granted.

### Disrepair of registered place or registered object

Under s.152 of the Act, the owner of a registered place or registered object must not allow that place or object to fall into disrepair.

### Failure to maintain registered place or registered object

Under s.153 of the Act, the owner of a registered place or registered object must not fail to maintain that place or object to the extent that its conservation is threatened.

### Conservation management plans

A Conservation Management Plan was prepared for the place by RBA Architects and Conservation Consultants in 2001. It is recommended that it is reviewed and updated as required.

### Aboriginal cultural heritage

If works are proposed which have the potential to disturb or have an impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage it is necessary to contact Aboriginal Victoria to ascertain any requirements under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*. If any Aboriginal cultural heritage is discovered or exposed at any time it is necessary to immediately contact Aboriginal Victoria to ascertain requirements under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

**Other approvals**

Please be aware that approval from other authorities (such as local government) may be required.

**Archaeology**

There is no identified archaeology of state level significance at the place.

## CATEGORIES OF WORKS OR ACTIVITIES (PERMIT EXEMPTIONS) RECOMMENDED UNDER S.38

There are no categories of works or activities for this place which may be completed without a permit from Heritage Victoria.

**RELEVANT INFORMATION**

<b>Local Government Authority</b>	City of Boroondara
<b>Heritage Overlay</b>	HO116 (Individual)
<b>Other Overlays</b>	Special Building Overlay (SBO)

**HISTORY****Post-war domestic architecture**

By the mid-1950s, after a period of post-war austerity, the Victorian economy was recovering and a building boom was underway. This occurred in tandem with cultural developments in a many creative fields. This was influenced by pre- and post-war European immigration and also by Australian-born artists, architects, and designers seeking to create a modern Australian identity. In architecture, various forms of modern architecture were being adopted. These experiments were eloquently explored in the design of new private homes. Approaches to domestic living were changing, with a new casualness and positivity expressing itself through open plan living. Design began to respond to the Australian landscape and climate, with outdoor and indoor areas increasingly integrated. Innovative design and construction approaches were being explored by people like Robin Boyd, Roy Grounds, Peter McIntyre, Kevin Borland and Neil Clerehan. Many of these architects, and Robin Boyd in particular, also published widely and their ideas became both influential and fashionable, achieving a widespread popularity that has left a lasting legacy on Victoria's built environment.

**The Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RVIA) Small Homes Service**

The RVIA established the Small Homes Service in 1947 and Robin Boyd was appointed at its first Director. The service provided architect-designed plans and specifications for purchase, as well as advice about selecting a suitable block of land. *The Age* featured a selection of the house designs in a weekly article which was also aimed at educating and informing the public about contemporary design.

**Robin Boyd**

Robin Boyd was born into the Boyd family artistic dynasty in 1919 and trained in architecture at Melbourne Technical College and Melbourne University before commencing his articles in the office of A & K Henderson and Partners in 1935. He worked for other architects before becoming an assistant to Roy Grounds in 1941. He continued his interest in architecture while serving during World War II and wrote a number of articles for *SALT*, the official education journal of the Australian Army and navy. On his return to civilian life in 1946, Boyd was registered as an architect and became Director of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RVIA) Small Homes Service promoted through *The Age* newspaper. He founded a practice with friends Pethebridge and Bell practice in the mid-1940s and began designing a series of innovative family homes, including his own on land he and his wife Patricia had purchased at 158 Riversdale Road (now 666 Riversdale Road). It

was while residing in this house that the public persona of Robin Boyd grew through his work as Director of the Small Homes Service and through articles he wrote for *The Age*, *Herald* and later *The Australian* newspapers. He was also writing and lecturing part time at the University of Melbourne, giving public talks, and published his first book, *Victorian Modern* in 1947. His second book, *Australia's Home: Its Origins, Builders and Occupiers* was published in 1952 and in 1958 he began work on his third book, *The Australian Ugliness*. In the publication, *150, An Unfinished Experiment in Living, Australian Houses 1950-65*, Robin Boyd is described as “a key and unique contributor to the immediate post war period in Australia – as a residential architect, as an astute architectural commentator who enjoyed international exposure, and as the first director of the Small Homes Service.”<sup>4</sup> He continued to publish extensively and influentially throughout his career. Between 1953-62 he was in partnership with Roy Grounds and Fred Romberg and concentrated on the firm’s domestic commissions. He is credited with the design of more than 200 buildings and developed a national and international profile. Robin Boyd was a key exponent of progressive modern architecture and design to the Australian context. He died in 1971, aged 52.

### **The Former Robin Boyd House**

The land on which the Former Robin Boyd House is located was formerly a large parcel of land which was subdivided into 40 allotments in 1938. It was sold to Samuel Whitehead in 1941 and sold by his widow to Robin Boyd on 12 December 1946. Boyd’s plan for the house is dated 11 March 1946, and he was issued a building permit the day after he purchased the land.<sup>5</sup> He received the title for the land on 31 January 1947 and the house was constructed in the same year as a home for Boyd, his wife Patricia and their daughter. In 1952 Boyd designed additions to each end, comprising a living area and guest bedroom to the north and additional bedrooms for his two sons to the south. It was designed during Boyd’s formative years as an architect, writer and critic and allowed him to put his theories into practice. As he wrote in *Victorian Modern* in 1947, ‘... when an architect builds his own home, it may be assumed that the false influence of economic expediency depart and leave him as free to create as a painter at his blank canvas, as a musician or a poet ... In his own home all his philosophy of building must surely blossom, if ever it is to.’

The house had a narrow plan, which was a response to the slope of the site, council required setbacks to the western side, and the location of a creek (now covered over) along the eastern boundary. The external walls are of brick and timber which were originally painted putty green and white. The floors are timber in the bedrooms with a concrete slab to the living and service rooms. Internally, brick walls were originally painted yellow-green and timber walls were painted with a thin coat of white paint. The ceiling and roof were constructed of Solomit compressed strawboards, exposed below and covered on top with bituminous felt and gravel membrane<sup>6</sup>, some of which have now been replaced. The original ceiling to the northern 1952 extension was made of interwoven plywood sheeting. This room also contained a removeable fireplace with a removeable flue which is no longer in place. The house was built by John F Murphy of Murphy and Green who also built the second home Boyd designed for his family, Robin Boyd House II, 290 Walsh Street, South Yarra (VHR H2105). In 1959 the Boyds moved into the Walsh Street house and the Riversdale Road property was sold to David Ferrier and Heather Strickland. It was sold for a third time in 1973 to the parents of the current owners, who constructed a two storey extension to the southern end of the building in 1975. The property was vacated in the early 1990s and has not been occupied since.

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<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey London, Philip Goad, Conrad Hamann (2017) *150, An Unfinished Experiment in Living, Australian Houses 1950-65*, UWA Publishing, Western Australia

<sup>5</sup> Beeston, Roger (2001) Conservation Management Plan

<sup>6</sup> Robin Boyd, (1950) “House near Melbourne” in *Architectural Review*

## CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

<b>Architect name:</b>	Robin Boyd
<b>Engineer name:</b>	John F Murphy
<b>Architectural style name:</b>	Post-war modernist
<b>Construction started date:</b>	1947
<b>Construction ended date:</b>	1952

## VICTORIAN HISTORICAL THEMES

### 06 Building towns, cities and the garden state

- 6.3 Shaping the suburbs
- 6.6 Marking significant phases in development of Victoria's settlements, towns and cities
- 6.7 Making homes for Victorians

### 09 Shaping cultural and creative life

- 9.3 Achieving design and artistic distinction

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Former Robin Boyd House is located on an irregularly shaped block of land at 666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell. The land slopes away to the south from Riversdale Road, and the eastern side slopes down to a former creek gully. The land is overgrown with large trees and grass with little evidence of landscaping. The house is located along the western boundary and steps down to the south following the slope of the land. The low-pitched gable roofs are at multiple levels and the original Solomit thermo-acoustic panels are evident in some areas. External walls are painted brick interspersed with large expanses of windows, including a canted window with fixed and operable sashes across the dining and bedrooms area.<sup>7</sup> The main entrance opens into a living room, divided from a former bedroom by a storage unit. A glazed walkway connects this area to the remainder of the house which is accessed by a set of stairs descending into an open plan living, dining and kitchen area with a bathroom and bedrooms beyond. The kitchen joinery, cupboards, wardrobes and Oregon wall panelling are intact but have been dark stained or painted. Some of the cork floor tiles appear to survive in the living room. A two storey addition is located at the southern end of the building.

## INTEGRITY/INTACTNESS

Intactness – The intactness of the place is very good. The plan and layout remain evident. Joinery items such as the kitchen, wardrobes and room dividers survive although they have been painted or dark stained. Ceilings have been altered and some windows appear to have been replaced. (June 2020).

Integrity –The integrity of the place is excellent. The cultural heritage values of the place can be easily read in the extant fabric. (June 2020)

### Condition

The place is in very poor condition. There has been very little or no maintenance or cleaning since the 1990s and the house is used as storage for household items. The land has also not been maintained and there is little surviving evidence of any landscaping. Plants are encroaching on the interior of the house. (June 2020)

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<sup>7</sup> According to Phillip Goad in *From Art To The Everyday: Robin Boyd And The 'Windowwall'* the intention of this window was to direct the view into the adjacent creek gully.

## COMPARISONS

### Residences designed by Robin Boyd in the VHR

#### **Robin Boyd House II, South Yarra (VHR H2105)**

The Robin Boyd II House, Walsh Street, South Yarra is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria. Boyd, built the house for his family on a narrow, sloping block of land in 1958. The house features open plan living areas, courtyards, and an 'introverted' orientation. This house was the second Boyd designed for his family, the first being built at 158 (now 666) Riversdale Road, Camberwell in 1946 (VHR H0879). Robin Boyd II House is of architectural significance as one of the most innovative houses built in Victoria in the post-war decades and as one of the most important houses designed by Boyd.



#### **Inge and Grahame King House, Warrandyte (VHR H1313)**

The Grahame and Inge King house is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria. The Kings, both artists, designed the house in collaboration with Boyd in 1951. The King house is one of a group of about twenty small, low-budget houses designed during Boyd's experimental, style-forming period (1949-52). Like the other houses constructed during this period, the King house demonstrates Boyd's central concept for the relationship between internal and external house and site, his use of extensive glazing, modular grid construction and eagerness to adopt new materials and methods. The house is also of historical significance for as the home of prominent artists Inge and Grahame King.



#### **Baker House, Long Forest (VHR H2118)**

The Baker House comprises a group of three buildings and is of architectural significance to the State of Victoria. Michael and Rosemary Baker commissioned Robin Boyd to design the house in 1964 on a bush block near Bacchus Marsh. It comprises a group of buildings, some designed by Boyd and others by Roy Grounds. The two buildings designed by Boyd, the Baker and the Dower house, are particularly innovative examples of the architect's work.



**Clemson House, Kew (VHR H2006)**

The Clemson House is of architectural significance to the State of Victoria. It was designed by Boyd for the Clemson family and was constructed in 1959-60. The house clearly reflects some of the major design themes of Boyd's work, including the strong controlling idea of the dwelling stepped down under a single sloping V roof, the clear expression of structure in the scissor frames, and the specificity of the solution to the steep bush block and the clients' living requirements.

**1950s residences designed by other architects in the VHR****Grant House, Beaumaris (VHR H2392)**

The Grant House is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria. It is a residence in Beaumaris designed in 1956 by architect Peter McIntyre with input from engineer Bill Irwin. It is historically significant for its clear association with post-war residential development in Victoria and is a fine example of a small-scale Modernist house. It is inventive in its design and planning, both of which were a response to the post-war scarcity of building materials. It is architecturally significant as a notable example of an innovative solution to the challenge of providing affordable post-war housing.

**McCraith House (Larrakeyah), Dromana (VHR H1906)**

The McCraith House is of architectural significance to the State of Victoria. It was constructed in 1955, for Ellen and Gerald McCraith and was designed in the office of Mornington Peninsula architects Chancellor and Patrick. The McCraith House is architecturally significant as an example of structurally inspired modernism in Victoria in the 1950's. The McCraith house was used as an example of the 'structural functional' idiom in the architectural journals of the time alongside the works of Robin Boyd, Roy Grounds, Harry Seidler and Peter and Dione McIntyre. The use of a prefabricated structural steel frame of this scale was unusual in domestic construction of the period. The design of the McCraith house displays a creative architectural response in a period when conventional building materials were in limited supply post WW2.



**Rice House, Eltham (VHR H0123)**

The Rice House is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria. It was designed by Kevin Borland in 1953 and is of architectural significance for its innovative and experimental design and as the most intact example of the use of the ctesiphon system of construction in Victoria. It is an outstanding example of the post-war period of experimentation in domestic architecture in Melbourne that was an outcome of late-Modernism coupled with the post-war shortage of regular building materials that saw the development of a recognisable Melbourne regional style of architecture. This experimentation was characterised by the designs of Robin Boyd, Peter McIntyre, Neil Clerehan, Kevin Borland and others for the Age Small Homes Service (1947-1953). Rice house is of historical significance for its association with Borland whose innovative designs in both domestic and public architecture make him notable amongst the Melbourne architects of the second half of the twentieth century.

**Round House, Frankston South (VHR H0966)**

The Round House (also known as Henty House) is of significance to the State of Victoria. It was constructed in 1953 to a design by Roy Grounds. It is significant as an accomplished domestic work by Grounds which demonstrates the architectural interest in simple geometries during the period. These smaller domestic commissions informed the design of some of Grounds' well-known institutional buildings notably the Academy of Science Building in Canberra (1958-59) and the Arts Centre in Melbourne (1959-81).



**Snelleman House, Ivanhoe East (VHR H2282)**

The Snelleman House is of architectural significance to the state of Victoria. It was built in 1954 as a family home for Hans Snelleman to a design by Peter McIntyre who had established his own architectural practice in 1950. It received acclaim at the time of its construction in both architectural and mainstream publications and has since then been considered to be one of the most outstanding houses built in Melbourne in the early post-war period. It was an inventive response to the site, and is an outstanding and intact example of the innovative residential designs produced in Melbourne at this time, when the limited availability of materials resulted in much experimentation with materials and structures by a number of highly individual architects.

**Grounds House, Toorak (VHR H1963)**

The Roy Grounds house and flats are of architectural significance to the State of Victoria. Noted architect Roy Grounds (later Sir Roy) designed the front house as a home for himself and his wife Betty. The house in Toorak was widely praised at the time, and won the Victorian Architecture Medal of 1954. It is of architectural significance as one of the most celebrated works of Modernist domestic architecture of the mid-twentieth century in Victoria. The perfectly square plan, with a circular courtyard at its centre, is a striking essay in pure geometry, a hallmark of Ground's work, and one of the best examples of experimentation with geometry in the work of post war avant-garde architects in Victoria.

**Summary of Comparisons**

Like all the comparator places, the Former Robin Boyd House demonstrates innovative and experimental approaches to post-war modernist design. Like the comparator places the Former Robin Boyd House pushed the boundaries of layout and design and reconsidered how a family occupied a home. They all demonstrate experimentation with the use of new materials, or the innovative application of existing materials and technologies, but the Former Robin Boyd House is the earliest to do so.

The Former Robin Boyd House is the earliest post-war modernist residence included in the VHR and the earliest known built work of Robin Boyd. It reflects Boyd's early experimentation and philosophies around the development of a new, modern way of living. Some of the planning and spatial qualities explored and expressed in a modest way in the Former Robin Boyd House are repeated and more fully explored in Robin Boyd House II. Such qualities include rooms with multiple uses and a blurring of the boundaries between living spaces. The Former Robin Boyd House represents Boyd's earliest experiments with open plan living and consideration of the way in which the design of a building can be informed by its location. Elements such as circular door handles to joinery, cupboards used as room dividers and multi-functional rooms are all

evident in this house and are elements which were repeated in his later work. The Former Robin Boyd House is significant as a notable and early example of a class of place which contributed to the development of new suburbs and building styles.

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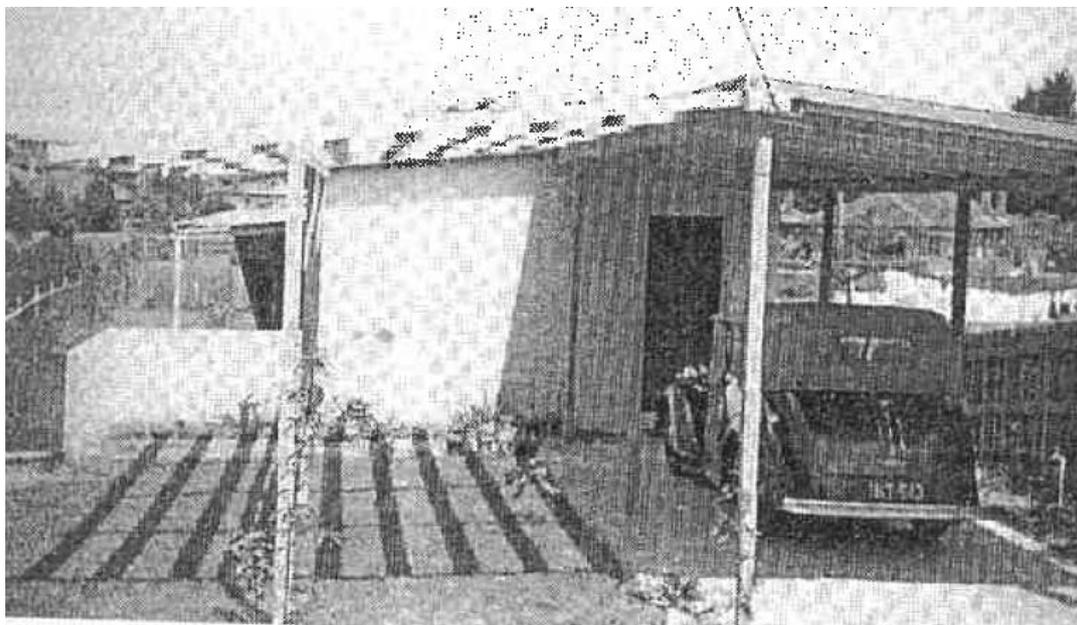
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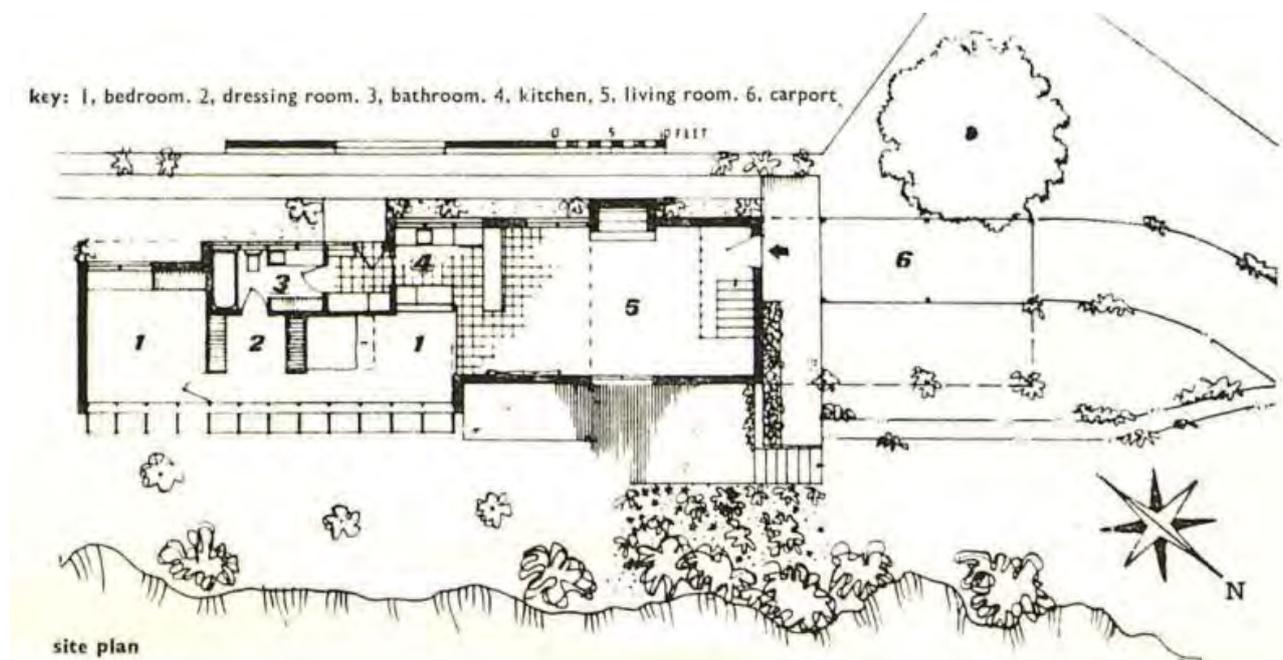
## IMAGES

As part of the assessment process, officers from Heritage Victoria conducted a site inspection of the place on 26 June 2020. Photographs were taken at the time, but the owners have requested that they are not made publicly available. The photographs included in this section have been sourced from publications, websites and Heritage Victoria archives which are all publicly available. The owners have given their permission for the Heritage Council of Victoria to be provided with current photographs to inform their determination.



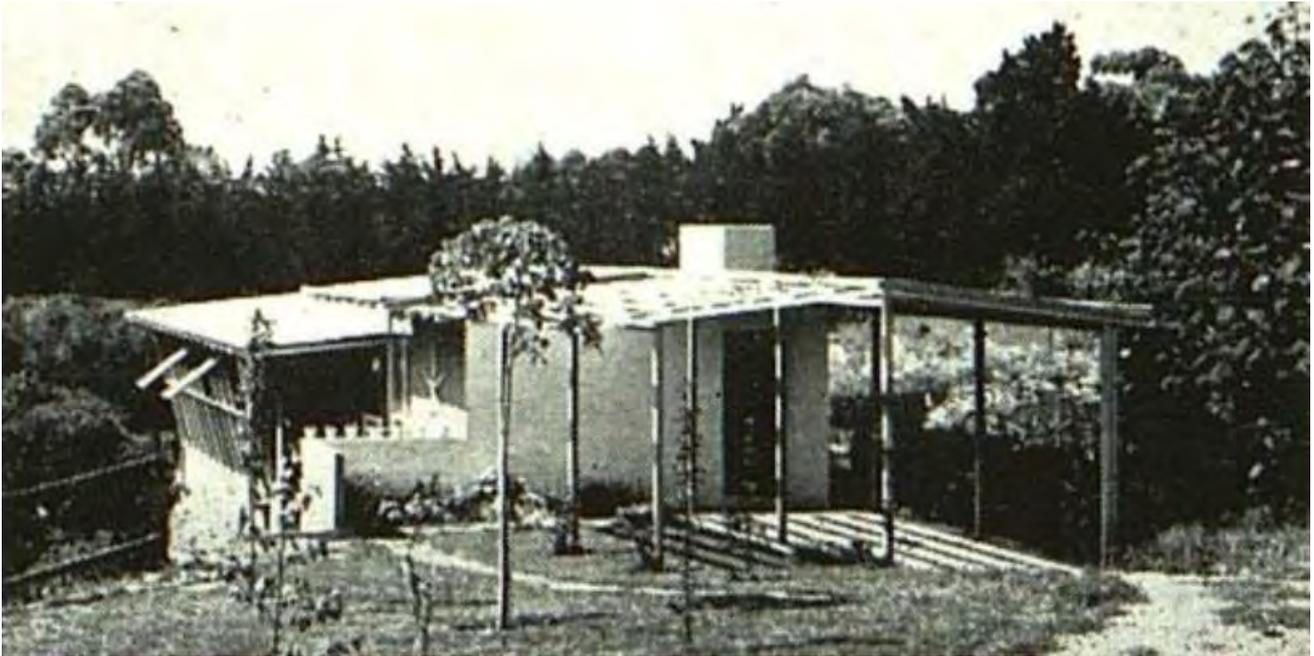
1947, View from the entrance gate. The garage on the right is now the enclosed glazed walkway between the 1952 northern extension and the 1947 section.

Source: Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd, A life*

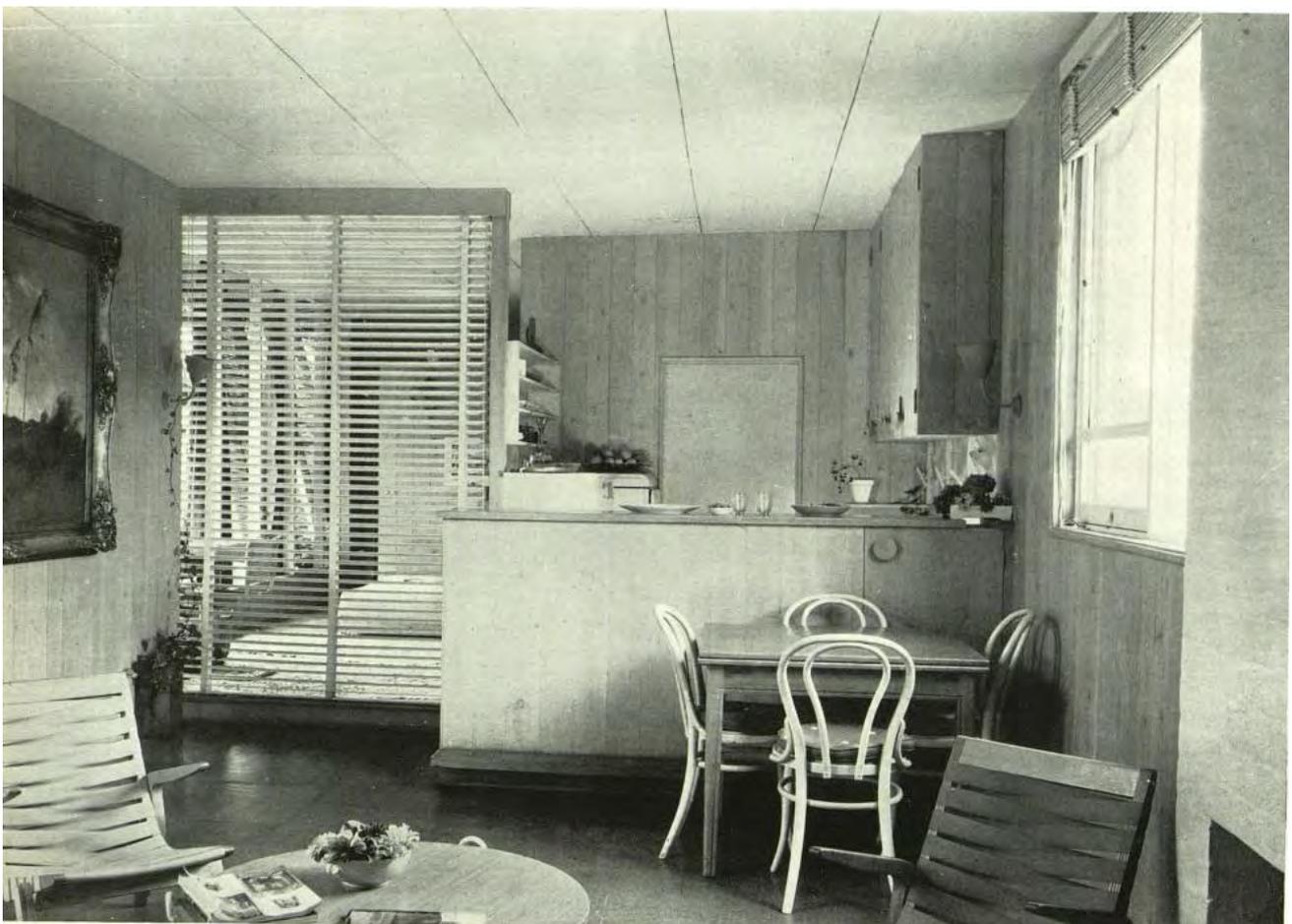


1950, Plan of the Former Robin Boyd House prior to 1952 extensions.

Source: *The Architectural Review*



1950, view from the entrance gate.  
Source: *The Architectural Review*



1950, Living room, looking towards the kitchen and a bedroom screened by a venetian blind.  
Source: *The Architectural Review*

Current Name: Former Robin Boyd House  
VHR number: VHR H0879  
Hermes number: 191



5, the living room. The front door is on a higher level behind the screen. Brick walls are painted yellow green, the ceiling is white and the floor is cork tiled.



6, the kitchen, divided by a bar from the living room. 7, the bedroom with the Venetian blind raised. By day the bed slides under the cupboard division to the dressing bay.



7, the bedroom with the Venetian blind raised. By day the bed slides under the cupboard division to the dressing bay.

1950, Interior views

Source: *The Architectural Review*



1950, Brick terrace outside the living room.

Source: *The Architectural Review*



1950, View from the east.

Source: *The Architectural Review*



Left: 1947, Canted windows to the living area, showing the structural studs internally.

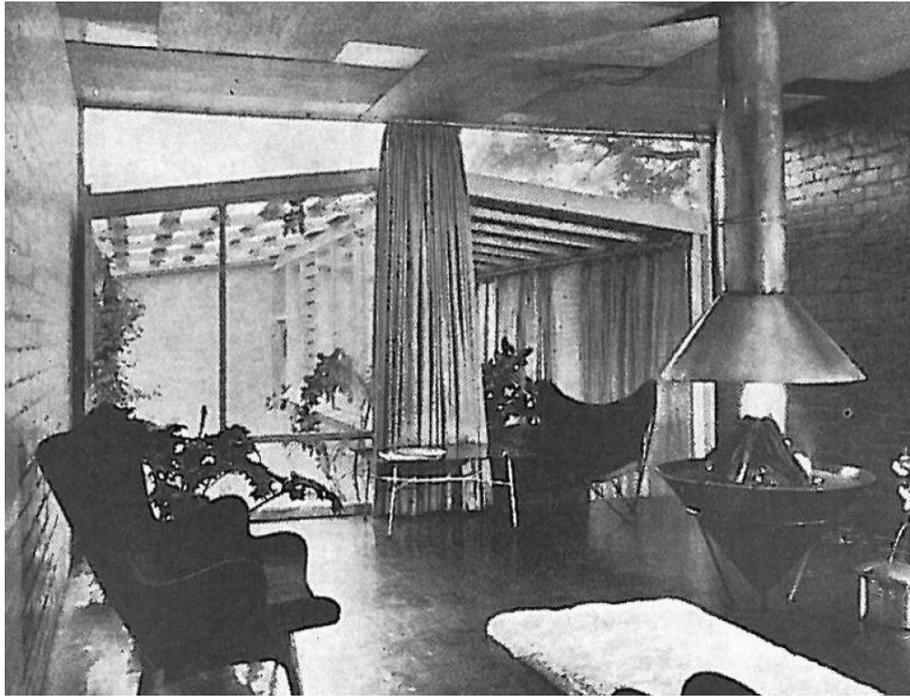
Right: 1947, Main entrance.

Source: State Library of Victoria



c. 1950s, showing canted windows to the 1947 section of the building.

Source: State Library of Victoria



1952: Interior of extension to the north.  
Source: Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd, A life*



c. 1950s, showing 1952 extension to the northern end of the building.  
Source: State Library of Victoria



1950s, 1947 entrance with 1952 extension visible on right.  
Source: State Library of Victoria



c. 1940s/50s, view of the living area looking south. Note the yellow green finish to the door, thin white paint layer to timber boards and the venetian blind separating the bedroom from the living area.  
Source: State Library of Victoria

Current Name: Former Robin Boyd House  
VHR number: VHR H0879  
Hermes number: 191



Post 1952, view of the main living area looking north.  
Source: State Library of Victoria



Left: pre-1990s, interior of 1952 extension to the north, looking north towards the room divider.  
Right: pre-1990s, interior of the 1952 extension, looking south.

Note the basketweave plywood sheeting to the ceiling and the removable fireplace and flue in both images.  
Source: State Library of Victoria



1990, View of the southern end of the building.  
The two storey 1975 addition by subsequent owners is on the left.  
Source: Victorian Heritage Database

Page 32



**Houses in the Air**

Written and illustrated by Sgt. Robin P. Boyd, VX138171

There are other avenues open for raising money for building, the WSHS has conditions and terms no serviceman could hope to better. Briefly, it offers a clear loan (maximum \$500, asking only 5% (\$47.50-) deposit, and repayment over 48 years at 17/8 weekly. Assuming then, that we have 150 (which the most reckless armistice-night reveler will surely have left), we can raise £1000.

To show what can be done with £1000, we will take the typical case of our tentative: Cpl. J. H. Jones. Married early in the war, he was on leave last March. Thus, he has reason to plan on a family of three, and sees no reason why eventually 3 should not be larger still. He works in a capital city. The only cash he expects to have after the war is his deferred pay.

A typical case, the details set out below for Cpl. Jones may be adjusted to suit any one of us. It is a minimum case: if you are more financial than the Irresponsible Corporal, expect more than he. How much more, only you can decide.

For the most efficient use of his £1000, we portion it out:

Land .....	£100
Building Contract .....	650
Architect .....	40
Furniture .....	150
Extra Fees .....	10
	£1090

Page 33

◆ **LAND.**—Only general advice can be given here. In fact, Cpl. Jones had little difficulty in finding a lot in an outer suburb, close to transport to the city. It was 55 ft. (frontage) by 120 ft., in a new street. Electricity, gas, water and sewerage facilities were available. He was even lucky enough to catch a view of the hills: the frontage faced north.

◆ **HOUSE.**—Having picked his land, Cpl. Jones looked for an architect. His sceptical brother Percy told him he was wasting his money. "440 to someone for doing a pretty drawing," he sneered knowingly. But Jones knew that an architect did more than that. He wanted an individual, economical plan, expert supervision of the building, and no legal troubles through loose contracts. He knew an architect would cost a little more, but be cheaper in the long run. Ignoring Percy, he sought out an architect whose style he liked, and told him to start on sketches.

Three months later his house was built.

Here is the plan of Cpl. Jones' house, the street view of which is shown on opposite page. On our



◆ **LIVING ROOM.**—Only general advice can be given here. In fact, Cpl. Jones had little difficulty in finding a lot in an outer suburb, close to transport to the city. It was 55 ft. (frontage) by 120 ft., in a new street. Electricity, gas, water and sewerage facilities were available. He was even lucky enough to catch a view of the hills: the frontage faced north.

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Three months later his house was built.

Here is the plan of Cpl. Jones' house, the street view of which is shown on opposite page. On our

Page 34



◆ **Dining Space.**—From Mr. Jones position at the writing desk, look at the dining end of the room (shown above). Half the end wall is glass doors, opening onto a paved terrace. Over the terrace is an open pergola on which Mr. Jones has persuaded creepers to climb. Beside the door to the kitchen (left) is a wall fitting: combined sideboard and liquor cupboard. A hatch above it slides into the wall when meals are being served. When informal friends call, Jones sometimes stands on the kitchen side of this double-sided buffet, serves their drinks straight from the icebox.

◆ **Bedrooms.**—This is where Mr. and Mrs. Jones sleep (sketch below). Little Jimmy (who arrived safely, thank you) has a similar but smaller room. The large windows face east to catch the morning sun. The wardrobe is built in (right), its doors flush with the wall. A bedside cupboard and bookshelf carries a reading lamp.

◆ **Kitchen.**—In this bright, compact room (next column), Mrs. Jones cooks meals that make a Saturday Evening Post advertisement look as dull as

Page 35

**AT AN ADVANCED DRESSING STATION**

by Sgt. C. P. Jacobs, VX17859

◆ **Bathroom, Laundry.**—The private hall which gives the bedrooms access to the bathroom, has wide glass doors onto the back garden, and a linen closet between the bedroom doors. The bathroom has standard modern toilet fittings, and a shaving cabinet. The laundry has troughs, gas copper, ironing board, cupboard. Fittings in all utility rooms are supplied with hot water from a central storage system in the roof.

◆ **Construction and Finish of House:**  
**Structure:**—Timber frame, brick fireplace, window box, terrace.  
**Lining:**—External: weather boards; Internal: fibrous plaster sheets, flush-jointed.  
**Roof:**—Fibro-cement sheets.  
**Floors:**—Living rooms: local timber, waxed. Utility rooms: linoleum.  
**Lighting:**—Living rooms: central ceiling enclosed bowls, supplemented by reading lamps. Utility rooms: enclosed ball.  
**Furnishing:**—Built into the structure, as described above, are all the items of furniture that would have been most expensive if Jones had

bull's-beef. And small wonder. Planned for convenience and labour saving, it is fully equipped with modern appliances. Just inside the door from the porch stands (left) the icebox (though Jones has his eye on a refrigerator for next Christmas). Next is the stainless-steel sink and drainer, with dry food cupboard below, ventilated to the open air. At the end is the gas range, with hood above. The counter (right) is the other side of the dining buffet. High cupboards store the crockery at a handy height.

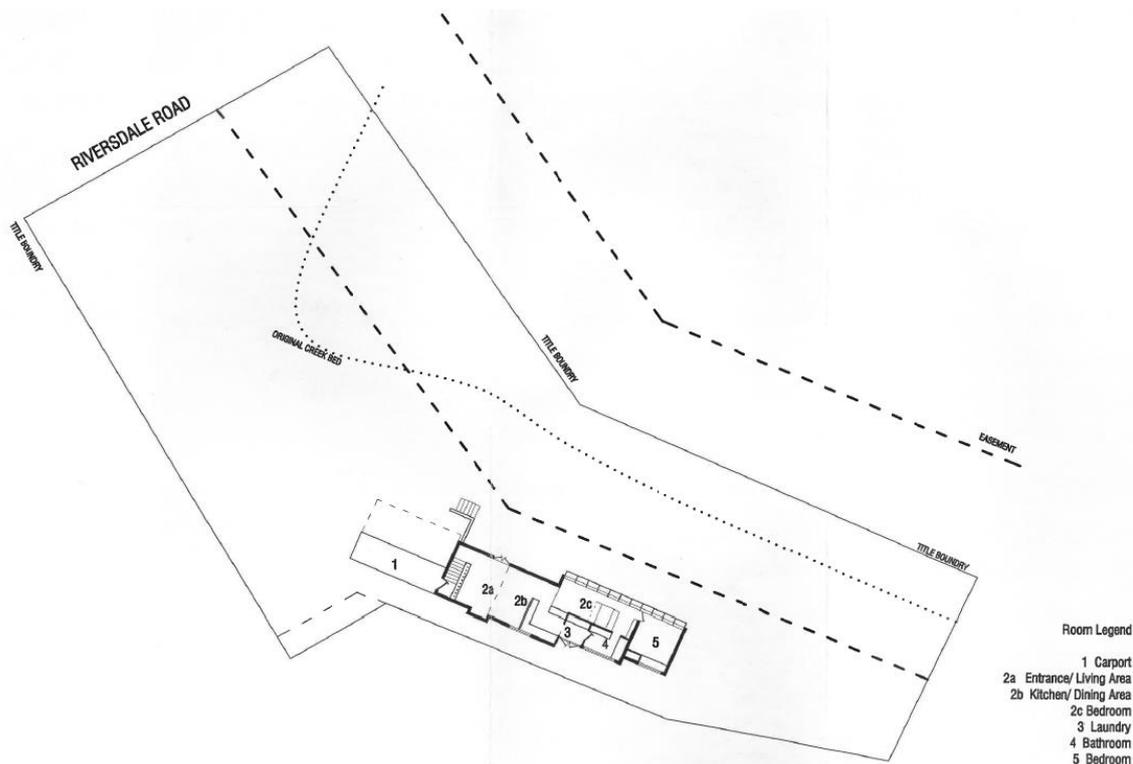


◆ **Construction and Finish of House:**  
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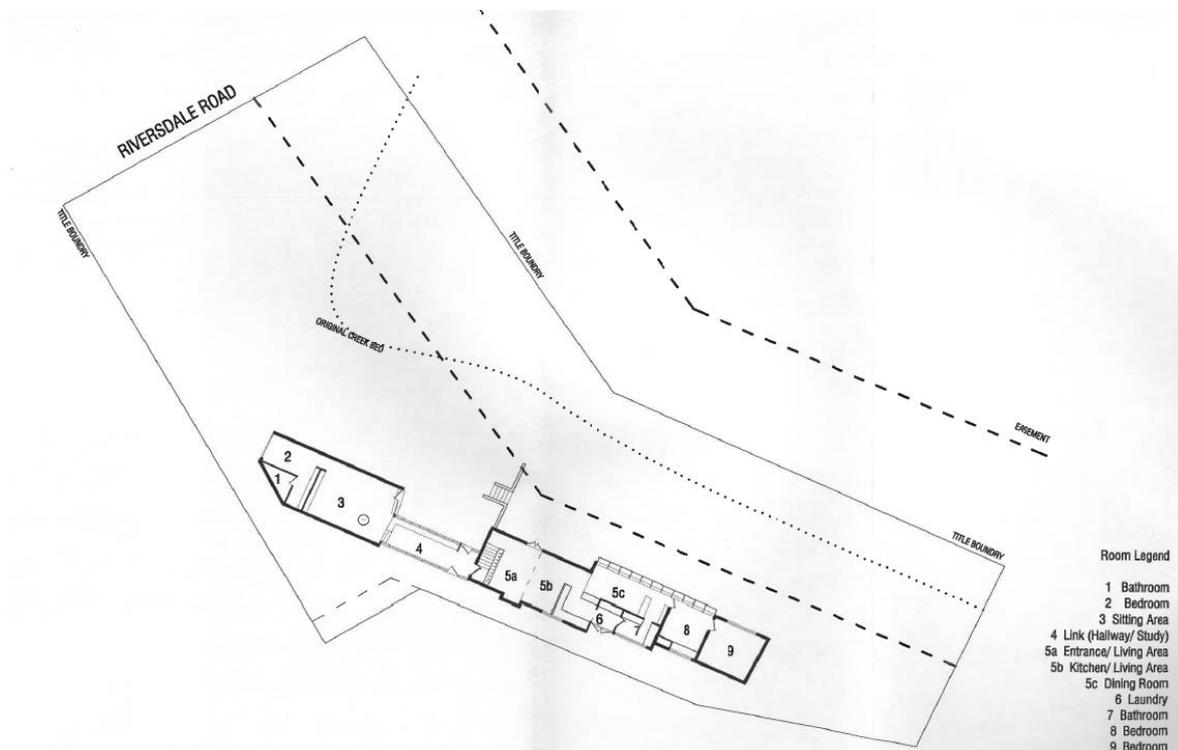
1943, Article in SALT by Sgt Robin P Boyd

Current Name: Former Robin Boyd House  
VHR number: VHR H0879  
Hermes number: 191

# PLANS

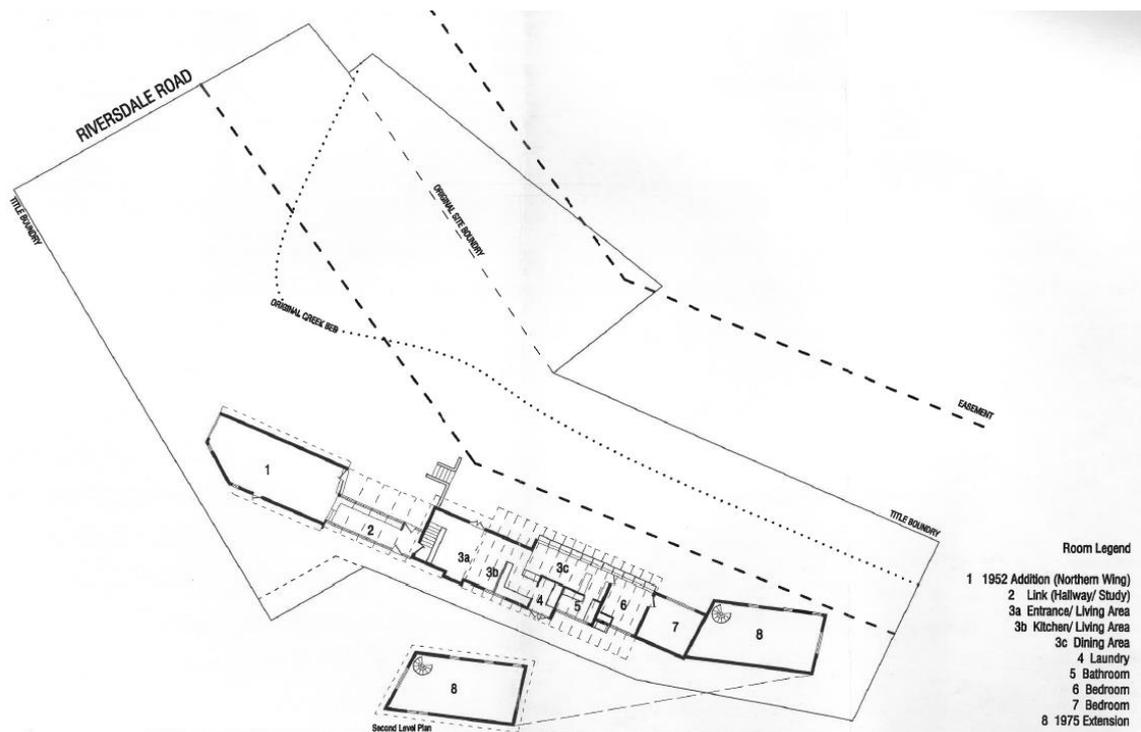


Plan showing 1947 plan and location on land.  
Source: CMP (2001)



Plan showing 1952 additions (Areas 1, 2, 6, 7).  
Source: CMP (2001)

Current Name: Former Robin Boyd House  
VHR number: VHR H0879  
Hermes number: 191



Plan showing 1975 addition (Area 8).  
Source: CMP (2001)

## ATTACHMENT 1

### REASONS PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT FOR REMOVING THE FORMER ROBIN BOYD HOUSE FROM THE VHR

The former Robin Boyd house at 664-666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell (previously known as 158 Riversdale Road) was built in 1946-7. It has historical and architectural significance for the following reasons: the house is the earliest known extant residence designed by the renowned Australian architect Robin Boyd.

This is not correct as it was the second house that followed the design of an earlier house built in September 1943 for Corporal Jones, as noted in the 'The Boyd's Family Biography' by Brenda Niall, the book transcript and link to the relevant page section is attached below. Therefore the 'House for Corporal Jones' had historical and architectural significance as it was Boyd's earliest example of an open plan design without embellishment with the focus on reducing costs and saving space.

Extract from Brenda Niall, *The Boyds: A Family Biography*:<sup>8</sup>

nostalgic English cottage style, Robin drew open-plan houses, without embellishment, with attention to keeping costs down and saving space. These were his houses of the future, designed to meet the needs of other servicemen who were dreaming of home. Robin's 'House for Corporal Jones', published in the army journal *Salt* in September 1943, was a modest open plan design, which at £650, on a deposit of fifty pounds and weekly payments of seventeen and sixpence, could be built under the War Service Housing Scheme. In essentials it was a smaller version of the house in Camberwell which he was later to build for himself.

**It is unique in being a house that Boyd designed for his personal use and occupied and extended over a period of twelve years.**

The house at '666 Riverdale Rd Camberwell' is not unique as the 'Walsh Street' house that Boyd designed in 1957 was also designed for his own family and is universally described by the Robin Boyd Foundation as his most well known work. It has been extensively published both nationally and internationally as an exemplar of modernist Australian architecture and a house that continues to influence architectural thinking. It is now the home of the Robin Boyd Foundation which was specifically purchased by the Foundation to preserve its uniqueness. If the house at '666 Riverdale Rd Camberwell' is so unique, then why was it not celebrated and recognized to the extent as the house at Walsh Street? In contrast there was no clear guidance provided on a conservation plan for '666 Riversdale Rd Camberwell', that raises the question of how much its uniqueness was truly valued and was sought to be preserved.

The relevant link to the Walsh Street house is attached below:

<http://robinboyd.org.au/event/walshstreetdesigntours/>

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<sup>8</sup><https://books.google.com.au>

## ATTACHMENT 2

### EXISTING REGISTRATION DETAILS

#### EXISTING CATEGORY OF REGISTRATION

Heritage place

#### EXISTING EXTENT OF REGISTRATION

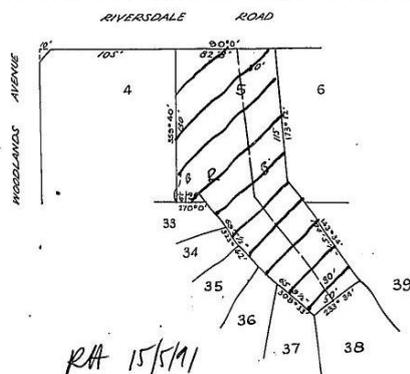
AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 879.

Former Robin Boyd House, 664-666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell.

(To the extent of all the buildings known as the former Robin Boyd house, 664-66 Riversdale Road, Camberwell and all land entered in the Register Book Certificate of Title Volume 6968 Folio 567 shown hatched on the plan endorsed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council.)

[Victoria Government Gazette No. G38 2 October 1991 p.2734]



#### Existing Statement of Significance

The former Robin Boyd house at 664-666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell (previously known as 158 Riversdale Road) was built in 1946-7. It has historical and architectural significance for the following reasons: the house is the earliest known extant residence designed by the renowned Australian architect Robin Boyd. It is unique in being a house that Boyd designed for his personal use and occupied and extended over a period of twelve years. This strong association with Boyd is particularly significant because Boyd was an important architect and a prominent social critic and commentator. He played a major role in the development of architecture and architectural thinking in Victoria for four decades. The house through its alteration is important in that it demonstrates the architectural development of Robin Boyd from the early period of his career in the 1940s when he expounded his Theories on "Victorian Regionalism", to the emerging "internationalism" of the 1950s the building is a seminal work which can be regarded as the prototype of the post war modern Victorian house. It extended the leading architecture of its time and strongly influenced an emerging group of architects the house is of architectural significance in that it demonstrates innovative design with regard to response to site, informality in planning, flowing spatial arrangements, innovative use of materials and incorporation of built-in features. These are all aspects of domestic design which have now become common.

#### Existing Permit Exemptions

There are no permit exemptions for this place.

Current Name: Former Robin Boyd House

VHR number: VHR H0879

Hermes number: 191