Name	*Lodge House*	**Reference No**	
Address	24 Lister Street, East Kew	**Survey Date**	11 December 2005
Building Type	Residence	**Grading**	A
Date	1959	**Previous Grading**	A, downgraded to B

Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

Intactness ☑ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

Heritage Status ☐ HV ☐ AHC ☑ NT Rec. BPS Heritage Overlay

History

This steel and timber framed house was designed and built in 1959 by architect Keith Lodge, a graduate of the University of Melbourne and later partner in the firm Boileau, Henderson & Lodge, later Henderson & Lodge.[1] The house was designed when Lodge was working in Sydney; however, he and wife Patricia have lived there since its completion. As their family grew, a number of additions were made, all designed by Keith Lodge including brick and timber alterations in 1967 and again in 1973. [2]

The house was included in a c. 1962 guide to modern houses in and around Melbourne, where it was noted as being designed by Boileau, Henderson & Lodge.[3]

The house has been classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) as being of regional significance.[4]

(G Butler & Associates, Kew B-graded buildings study (draft), 2001, additional research by Lovell Chen, 2006)

Description & Integrity

24 Lister Street, Kew East, is on a corner site, with its entry off McCubbin Street to the immediate north. It is built up from triangulated steel framing, using channels and rolled steel joists, augmented with some timber wall supports.[5] This allows the house to be positioned above its site for the most part.[6] The structure is then drawn together by a broader, elongated A-frame so that the main living floor is effectively cantilevered, like a Warren-truss spar in a cantilever aircraft wing. This is clad in asbestos cement sheeting, corrugated on the long roof slope and flat on the side walls. The elevations are marked by a rhythmic patterning of diagonal steel trusses cutting across a contrasting pattern of ribbon windows, changing only to full height French windows, on the west side. These diagonal trusses

descend below the main living floor, down to ground level, so that they visually anchor the house to the ground toward either end. Structurally, their role is more one of pylon support, acting as two superimposed A-pylons. The house is entered by an L-shaped gangway at the top of an external stair on the north side; the back door leads onto a return ramp on the south side. The colours of the house were originally purple and yellow.[7]

The following explanatory comments were provided by the original architect and current owner, Keith Lodge:

> The concept including the steel suspended structure was a design solution responding to site orientation, building regulations and economic factors. The land was subject to flooding, resulting in regulations directing the floor line be set at approximately 5 metres above natural ground level at the west end. No plumbing points [were] allowed below this level. The small original building was designed to be relocated when financed permitted a larger structure. To satisfy this concept the heads of the holding down heads for the steel supports were exposed above the concrete foundations and the supports are spliced just below floor level.[8]

The interior is quite simply organised, with a broad living area at the west end, and a kitchen, bathroom and laundry separating this from the two bedrooms, placed at the east end to catch the morning sun. The other division between the living and sleeping area is through a visual indentation with a notch balcony halfway along the north side, extended into a combined entry hall and sun room. This is divided from the living area by the chimney breast but is open to the rest of the central passage.

Drawings dated March 1963 detail an extension to the house (also designed by Lodge). Externally, this addition shows in a marginal shift in roof angle at the east end, with the original fabric of steel frame and cement sheet infill maintained.[9] In 1967 a further addition was made in brick and timber,[10] which added a playroom and two further bedrooms in the undercroft. These were linked to the main living floor by a spiral stair, and this went up into the previous third bedroom of 1963. That space was now divided between the stair head and a new bathroom added at the south-east corner.

Historical Context

The housing stock in the surrounding area is fairly homogeneous 1950s and early 1960s, and the property looks out on a broad flood plain, with the Hays Paddock park opposite Lister Avenue and the Eastern Freeway concealed in trees three hundred metres away.

Comparative Analysis

The structural arrangement of the Lodge House continues that of various renowned houses that appeared in Australia after 1950, such as Harry Seidler's houses for his family at Turramurra, NSW, of 1949-50, or the Rose House at Wahroonga, of similar date.[11] The Rose house plan has similarities to Lodge's plan here, particularly in the simple organisation of bedrooms at the east end, living area at the west, and an open kitchen and a bathroom-laundry area as the principal visual divider between living and sleeping areas. The Rose house has a related but differing structure, being hoisted off the ground on four single steel columns, linked to the floor plate with diagonal girders in tension.

In Melbourne, and in Boroondara, the Lodge house has formal and structural parallels with Peter and Dione McIntyre's 1954 house at 12 Hodgson Street Kew (A-graded), an iconic design in Australian terms. That house is diagonally braced on both its external and internal walling, as here, and is hoisted above its site. Structurally it differs in being suspended from a single central pylon distinct from the walling frame rather than the paired A frame support used here, and which Lodge directly integrated with the walling frame.

In the Melbourne area, other structural parallels include a series of Robin Boyd's houses from the early to middle 1950s. These include the Marriott and Gillison House designs in Flinders and at 43 Kireep Road, Balwyn, respectively, of 1951-3. These used an external geodetic diamond-pattern bracing. Boyd's Wade house at Mt Eliza, 1951, was hoisted on a small entry plinth as here.[12] Boyd's First Richardson house at 7 Blackfriars Close Toorak, now altered, of 1953, where the house was placed in a suspension arch across a flood easement and the external walling grid then carried the house load through to the arch.[13] It also parallels the diamond-pattern tension-rod braced structure used by Peter and Dione McIntyre in their McCartney house of 1954, also in Kew East, but now radically

altered. Several Chancellor and Patrick designs, such as the McCraith and English houses of 1954-6 at Mount Eliza and Mount Martha respectively, also have structural parallels, particularly in their use of diagonal trussing to anchor their houses to a flat surface below.

Lodge produced a work typifying a structural boldness and dramatized expression of structure and materials externally, and a projection, through architecture, of a distinct social 'optimism'. [14] These elements are often seen as distinguishing Melbourne architecture in a general Australian context, and are seen as climaxing in the Olympic Swimming Pool by Borland, Murphy and McIntyre (1953-6) and Yuncken Freeman's Myer Music Bowl (1956-59). Visually abrasive at the same time, these Melbourne 'scratchies' are marked by inexpensive-looking designs with lightly scaled materials and structure with a mixed air of urbanity and a quality of precariousness and improvisation left over from years of austerity between 1928 and 1953. This is seen as separating much of the best new Melbourne architecture from its more sumptuous Sydney counterparts and the more climatically driven and thickly-grained Queensland and Western Australian designs in this period.

In plan the extensions to the house sustain the initial concept well, stretching the house profile out into a wandering incline while maintaining the triangulated steel structure and its direct expression.

Assessment Against Criteria

Amended Heritage Victoria Criteria

CRITERION D: The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as a part of a class or type of places or objects.

24 Lister Street is a fine example of conspicuously structurally expressive Melbourne housing of the 1950s, part of that movement later dubbed Melbourne Optimism and seen as part of the leading Australian designs of that period. Responding to a combination of site conditions and economic factors, the house also demonstrates a number of 1950s planning methods and emphases, in particular those of accommodating the expanding family and leaving its trace in the external form and the conspicuous use of climate and sun angling.

CRITERION E: The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

24 Lister Street employs a strong structural device in its double A-frame pylon, integrated with the diagonal framing of the external first floor walling. This is quite individual in both its engineering role and its general form, but is handled with ease and urbanity at the same time.

Statement of Significance

24 Lister Street, Kew, is of municipal historical and architectural significance. The house is a fine example of conspicuously structurally expressive Melbourne housing of the 1950s, part of that movement later dubbed Melbourne Optimism and seen as part of the leading Australian designs of that period. Responding to a combination of site conditions and economic factors, the house also demonstrates a number of 1950s planning methods and emphases, in particular those of accommodating the expanding family and leaving its trace in the external form and the conspicuous use of climate and sun angling. 24 Lister Street employs a strong structural device in its double A-frame pylon, integrated with the diagonal framing of the external first floor walling. This is quite individual in both its engineering role and its general form, but is handled with ease and urbanity at the same time. In plan the extensions to the house sustain the initial concept well, stretching the house profile out into a wandering incline while maintaining the triangulated steel structure and its direct expression.

Grading Review

This house was originally graded A in the 1988 Kew Urban Conservation Study,[15] and was downgraded to B in a subsequent review by Bryce Raworth. The building is considered to be of sufficient significance and individuality to warrant the reinstatement of the A grading.

Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Boroondara Planning Scheme.

Identified By

Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988

References

General: Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, Kew Urban Conservation Study, 1988, G Butler & Associates, Kew B-graded places study (draft),2001.
Specific:
[1] Details sourced from City of Kew Building Index, #439, dated 29 April 1963, #46, dated 28 July 1967 and #3848, dated 30 March 1973.
[2] City of Kew Building Index, #300, dated 16 December 1958, cited in G Butler & Associates, *Kew B-graded places study* (draft), 2001.
[3] *Modern Houses: a guide to residential architecture in and around Melbourne*, Small Homes Service of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in conjunction with The Age [comp.], Melbourne, c. 1964.
[4] National Trust of Australia (Victoria), online register. File no B6373.
[5] Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, *Kew Urban Conservation Study*, 1988, vol. 2, Citation 60.
[6] Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, *Kew Urban Conservation Study*, 1988, vol. 2, Citation 60.
[7] Correspondence from original architect and current owner, Keith Lodge, to Council, April 2007.
[8] Correspondence from original architect and current owner, Keith Lodge, to Council, April 2007.
[9] Keith Lodge's working drawings, 300/58, dated 1956, and 439/63, dated March 1963, sourced from the City of Kew Building Index, #300, 16 December 1958; #439, 29 April 1963, #46 , 28 July 1967, and 3848, 'Additions', dated 30 March 1973.
[10] Keith Lodge's working drawing, dated 28 July 1967.
[11] Details sourced from Graeme Jahn, *A Guide to Sydney Architecture*, Watermark, Sydney, 1997, p. 154.
[12] See the catalogue in *Transition*, 32, 1992, for a detailed listing of Robin Boyd's projects. The diamond-patterned houses were one of several Boyd structures that owed something to wartime aviation, most particularly the geodetic cantilever construction used by Barnes Wallis in the Vickers-Armstrongs *Wellesley* (1930-3) and *Wellington* (1932-4) bombers. In terms of these parallels, Lodge's triangulated cantilever most approximates that of Fowler and Baker's Forth Bridge in Scotland, of 1883-90, or Sydney Camm's steel Warren truss wing spar system as used, again, in Hawker's wartime *Hurricane* fighter (1934-5).
[13] The Richardson house paralleled Dorman Long's arch suspension system as used on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, 1925-1932. Boyd's second Richardson house, at Barwon Heads, 1959, was more conventional structurally.
[14] See Winsome Callister and Ian McDougall, *Melbourne Optimism*, exhibition of architectural design, Judith Pugh Gallery, 1986, later discussed by Winsome Callister in *Transition*, 1987. See also Norman Day, *Heroic Melbourne: Architecture of the 1950s*, RMIT, Melbourne, 1995. Also, Max Delany, 'Architecture', in Graeme Davison et al., *Melbourne 1956*, NGV, Melbourne, 1996. A general study of these architects is being prepared by P Goad, C Hamann and G London*, An Unfinished Experiment in Living: Architect-designed Detached Houses in Australia, 1950-1965*, Miegunyah, Melbourne, scheduled for publication in 2007.
[15] Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, *Kew Urban Conservation Study*, 1988, vol. 2, Citation 60.