
Name	Howard Pettigrew House	Reference No	
Address	21 Redmond Street, Kew	Survey Date	12 September 2005, access visit 11 April 2006
Building Type	Residence	Grading	B
Date	1946	Previous Grading	A/B



Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

Intactness Good Fair Poor (To its 1967 date of alteration)

Heritage Status HV AHC NT Rec BPS Heritage Overlay

History

The site of 21 -27 Redmond Street was an allotment formed from the subdivision of a large Victorian residence into four blocks. Initially known as *Yarra Bluffs or Red Bluffs*, the mansion was built for George H Mott, prominent newspaper owner, prior to 1890.¹ The house faced west, taking advantage of its view across the Yarra to the city beyond.² In 1940, the residence, by then known as 27 Redmond Street, was listed as vacant. The following year the listing stated 'not available', suggesting the house was in the process of being demolished.³ The site was divided into four allotments, with a road running between 21 and 27, to provide access to Redmond Street for the two western allotments, 23 & 25. The 1942 edition of the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, recorded a new occupant at 27, indicating a purchaser who managed to build immediately on their allotment, prior to the enforcement of restrictions on private building caused by the Second World War. Municipal rate records show that Howard Pettigrew, a draftsman of Brunswick, owned the site at 21 Redmond Street by 1945.⁴ After WWII, with private building construction slowly recommencing, the 1947 edition of the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria* recorded a house being built on the subject site. For this task Howard Pettigrew had commissioned student architects Robin Boyd and Kevin Pethebridge to design a brick house to be built in two stages. Boyd and Pethebridge, who knew Howard Pettigrew from the Army Survey Corps and architectural studies previously, undertook this while awaiting demobilization. The first part was to be a four-roomed residence placed north-south on the site, with provision for a later wing running east-west.⁵ This two stage arrangement was common in the mid 1940s, where neither client money nor building materials were abundant, and when most councils imposed temporary size restrictions.

The house was extended to its envisaged size in 1950. This second stage of work took the form of an additional storey which increased the number of rooms to seven, and was designed by Kevin

Pethebridge in collaboration with Frank Bell. Boyd had been a member of this partnership but had left in 1949 when he took up directing *The Age*-RVIA Small Homes Service.⁶ In the event, Pethebridge and Bell produced a new design for the east-west wing, hoisting it above the earlier part of the house on a large reinforced concrete beam that doubled as the new carport roof.

The Pettigrews commissioned a further addition to the residence in 1967. This reproduced the 1945-7 north elevation, immediately west of the original. Kevin Pethebridge was also the architect for these works.

The house remains in the ownership of the Pettigrew family.

(G Butler & Associates, Kew B-graded buildings study (draft), 2001, additional research by Lovell Chen, 2005)

Description & Integrity

As constructed, the *Howard Pettigrew House*, at 21 Redmond Street, Kew, was a single-storey modern house of cream brick construction. Sited on a corner allotment, the original design comprised a L-shaped floor plan with a long wing on an east-west axis, to be built along the southern boundary with a smaller wing projecting from the western end in a northerly direction. The smaller wing was built first, in 1946-7.

The east-west wing was added above the first part of the house in 1950, to an altered design by Kevin Pethebridge in collaboration with Frank Bell, who had joined Pethebridge and Boyd while the early part of the house was being built. In both stages the house presented a blank brick wall to the street, addressing the sun and views to the north and west. The 1950 wing extended eastward to create a ground floor level carport beneath.⁷ This was built on a continuous concrete slab with an off-form soffit, built to minimise interference with the earlier part of the house directly underneath it. The 1950 wing is distinguished by continuous banks of timber-framed casement sash windows which extended the full length of the north and south elevations, over two lower concrete walls running along either side. Structurally, these work as extensions of the concrete slab turned upward to form a trough-girder. The roof is flat, clad with ribbed galvanised steel decking and wide raking eaves. The metal decking, as with most houses built in these years, replaced the original malthoid roof decking.

Further additions were constructed to the north-west of the house around 1967.⁸ This small double-storey wing with ground floor living and basement level garage echoes the original construction and detail and flanks the earlier west-facing ground level terrace. It presents a generally blank wall to the west with access from the original terrace via a panelled timber door and north and south-facing full-height timber-framed fixed sash windows. At the same time the 1950s carport was extended northward by the construction of a steel-framed awning and the main entrance to the house was relocated from the ground floor north elevation to an adjoining area in the east elevation beneath the new section of carport.

The street frontages are fenced with a timber screen of horizontal battens with matching gates. The fence and section nearest the north-south wing was earliest, with the parts nearer Redmond Street being added later.⁹ The house has changed substantially from its modest beginnings in post-war austerity, but remains basically intact externally to its 1967 phase of development.

Historical Context

In the late nineteenth century Redmond Street was the setting for several large mansions, sited to take advantage of the elevated views to the city beyond. During the twentieth century, further residential development began to infill previously vacant land, and to encroach upon or replace the earlier residences. The subject property is one of four post-war residences which supplanted a small nineteenth century estate.

Comparative Analysis

The *Howard Pettigrew House* compares with other modern movement designs in the area, including Robin Boyd's three early Balwyn North. These were the *Latchford House* at 75 Longview Road Balwyn, 1953 (q.v, B-graded, recommended to be downgraded to C in this review), and houses for John Boyd and Don Wood, both in 1949. The *Howard Pettigrew House* compares directly with Boyd's contemporary Camberwell house (1946-52) and the *Gillison House* in Balwyn, 1951-2 (both graded

A). The house also gives a foretaste of Boyd's house designs in the Studley Park Area, including the *Haughton-James House*, 1956-7 (q.v, B-graded, recommended for review to an A-graded) and the *Clemson House*, 24 Milfay Avenue, Kew, 1958-9 (A-graded). Among other architects working in the Boroondara area, the house places Boyd in a group that includes Peter and Dione McIntyre, Douglas Alexandra, Chancellor and Patrick, Keith Lodge, Gerd and Renate Block and John and Phyllis Murphy. With its small scale and vertical window proportions, the *Howard Pettigrew House* has affinities with Roy Grounds designs of 1940-1 such as the *Fenner House* in Kooyong, *Clendon*, *Clendon Corner* and *Quamby*, on which Boyd had worked and -in *the case of Quamby* - lived. Boyd would veer away from this flavouring around 1950, as his design became more consciously 'international' and less regionalist in its modernism.

Assessment Against Criteria

Amended Heritage Victoria Criteria

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.

The original section of the house is a very early example of modern domestic design in Melbourne by noted architects Robin Boyd, Kevin Pethebridge and Frank Bell, and is a forerunner of much of the design which was to originate from these practitioners and other young architects in the decade to follow. The subsequent additions, prepared by Pethebridge and Bell (1950) and Pethebridge (1967) extend the design philosophy.

Statement of Significance

The *Howard Pettigrew House* is of local historical and architectural significance as a very early example of modern domestic design in Melbourne by noted architects Robin Boyd, Kevin Pethebridge and Frank Bell, and is a forerunner of much of the design which was to originate from these practitioners and other young architects in the decade to follow. The subsequent additions, designed by Pethebridge and Bell, and by Kevin Pethebridge, extend the design philosophy. The house is of interest as an example of a house which was extended in a series of stages but by the same architectural practice.

Grading Review

Unchanged, B.

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 *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years between 1889 and 1900.

² An outline of the house and its grounds is shown in MMBW Plan no. 39, Kew & Heidelberg, scale 160':1", dated 1899.

³ Confusingly, Dorothy Rogers in *A history of Kew*, 1973, pp. 191-2, asserts that the residence was still extant in 1973. A comparison of the MMBW plan no. 39, and the City of Boroondara Planning Scheme Base Maps, suggests that this may not be correct.

⁴ City of Kew Rate books, 1944-5, #6453, land, nav £14.

⁵ City of Kew Rate books, 1946-7, #6574, nav £82.

⁶ City of Kew Rate Books, 1951-2, #6674, nav £200.

⁷ Details sourced from the City of Kew Building Index, #24, dated 8 March 1950.

⁸ Drawings sourced from the City of Kew Building Index, # 193/67, dated 13 October 1967.

⁹ Details sourced from the City of Kew Building Index, #28, dated 25 September 1946.