
Name	<i>Krongold House</i>	Reference No	
Address	25 Studley Park Road, Kew	Survey Date	20 September 2005
Building Type	Residence	Grading	B
Date	1959	Previous Grading	B

Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.



Intactness Good Fair Poor

Heritage Status HV AHC NT Rec. BPS Heritage Overlay

History

The land upon which 25 Studley Park Road was constructed in 1959 formed part of the grounds of *Field Place*, the home of Francis Henty, a member of one of Victoria's pioneer families. *Field Place* or *Fieldplace* as it was later known, was owned by the Henty family and their descendants until c.1961.¹ For many years it was also known as *Fieldplace Flats*.² The main entrance to the property, marked by a pair of wrought iron gates,³ was from Studley Park Road until c. 1957 when this last portion of the property's Studley Park Road frontage was sold - allotments today occupied by buildings at 29 and 31 had already been subdivided and built upon during the late 1930s and early 1940s⁴ - allotment 31 became the site of the subject property. Subsequently, Henty Court was formed to provide access to *Field Place* from Tara Avenue, as well as to several other subdivided blocks of land. *Field Place* is still extant, at 3 Henty Court.

Allotment 31 was acquired by Mr & Mrs Krongold who commissioned architect Theodore Berman to design their new home.⁵ The original drawings show a low flat roofed three bedroom house, with bituminous felt roofing laid on Stramit decking, brick walls and limited use of stone. The floors were traditional timber boarding and framing set out on stumps.

The house was owned by the Krongolds until its sale in February 1997.

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

Description & Integrity

The *Krongold House*, at 25 Studley Park Road, Kew, is a modern single-storey postwar house of brick construction. Original drawings indicate that the flat roof was clad with bituminous felt roofing laid on Stramit decking with minimal eaves overhang, deep timber fascias and concealed box gutters. The double-fronted façade is partially screened by a projecting carport which displays sections of face strata stonework to the adjoining front elevation and piers with light brown face brick elsewhere. The

central entrance is screened by a porch which features an original stone-clad planter box, quarry tiling and panelled timber door which is flanked by a timber-framed picture window. The remaining façade comprises full-height timber-framed picture windows with fixed glazing and sliding door leading to a stone crazy-paved terrace. Elsewhere, windows are timber-framed with fixed and awning sashes and doors are flush-panel timber. The house appears to be externally intact as constructed.

The front fence appears to be contemporary with the house and comprises panels of horizontally-fixed timber battens above a low face brick planter box. Earlier gates have been removed from the driveway.

Historical Context

Studley Park Road, a prominent 'entrance' road to Kew, has been favoured from the earliest years of district settlement as the setting for gracious homes on large land holdings, favoured by the affluent. Studley Park Road provides evidence today of the full gamut of residential development which has affected the municipality; from large homes set in spacious grounds to the later subdivisions of the early and mid twentieth century, comprising inter-war and post-war houses as well as modern flat development.

Comparative Analysis

The *Krongold House* is one of a large number of houses in Kew which date from the 1950s, following subdivision of larger villa estates and is sited in a section of Studley Park Road which contains an eclectic mix of housing stock, reflecting this pattern.

The *Krongold House* is a very low key and understated design when compared with its structurally expressive and sometimes highly coloured Kew counterparts of the 1950s. In part, this may reflect a move in some quarters of the architectural fraternity towards a new and restrained, if not sombre, palette of materials, in reaction to the bright colours employed in many mid-1950s Melbourne houses. It also suggests New Objectivity, a movement within architectural modernism current in the late 1920s and early 1930s, where a deliberately deadpan architecture was fostered as a neutral arena for social and political action.⁶ Hannes Meyer, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, the Taut brothers and Ernst May were its protagonists in Germany and Switzerland between 1926 and 1933-5, and it had a strong influence in post-war England. In the Australian context, it influenced Frederick Romberg's designs for larger buildings in the inner Melbourne fringe suburbs.⁷ Roy Grounds also gravitated to it, as with his *Trudinger*, *Mulvaney* and *Frankel* houses in Canberra of 1965-8.

The *Krongold House* also has an affinity with several Guilford Bell-Neil Clerehan houses of the period, such as the *Simon* house at Mount Eliza, of 1964. The window placements are the principal enlivening of the form, and again, these veer away from the immediate and obvious in their line and placement. The front and side louvre fences were carefully coordinated with the original house, and compositionally this, plus the modulation of windows against a flat roofed prismatic form, is suggestive of Mies' house projects from the 1920s through to the 1931 *Werkbund* exhibition.⁸ The screened courtyard usage is quite early also, being contemporary with Robin Boyd's forays into courtyard houses in 1957-60,⁹ and contemporary with early Sydney experimenters such as Douglas Snelling and Neville Gruzman.¹⁰

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 *Krongold House* is unusual in its embrace of New Objectivity and a subdued palette of colours, an approach which was still unusual in the late 1950s. In its apparent proximity to 1920s modernism it also provided a new take on Mies van der Rohe's compositional legacy, as opposed to Melbourne's more numerous skeletal houses, deriving from Mies' later work. This fits with its increased use of courtyard spaces, at quite an early date.

Statement of Significance

The *Krongold House*, at 25 Studley Park Road, Kew, is of local historical and architectural significance as an interesting and externally highly intact example of residential design of the late 1950s. In its overall approach, it appears to draw on the precepts of New Objectivity, a particular strand of modernism current in the late 1920s and early 1930s, in which a deliberately deadpan architecture was fostered as a neutral arena for social and political action. It varies from the better known architect-designed houses of the period in the Kew area in its understated form and use of a subdued palette of colours. The incorporation in the design of an enclosed courtyard is relatively early.

Grading Review

Unchanged.

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 Rogers, Dorothy. *A history of Kew*, 1973, pp. 146-8.

² *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, various years between 1931-1962.

³ Rogers, Dorothy. *A history of Kew*, 1973, pp. 147-48.

⁴ *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria*, 1930-1944/5.

⁵ Drawings sourced from the City of Kew Building Index, #137, dated 24 July, 1959.

⁶ See Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: a Critical History*, Thames and Hudson, London, Ch. 15, pp. 130-141.

⁷ See Conrad Hamann, 'Frederick Romberg and the problem of European Authenticity', in Roger Butler, *The Europeans: Expatriate European Artists in Australia*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1996.

⁸ See Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: a Critical History*, Ch. Ch. 18, pp. 161-6.

⁹ Esp. Boyd's own house of 1957-8 at 240 Walsh Street South Yarra, and his Second Richardson house at Barwon Heads (1960).

¹⁰ See Graeme Jahn, *Sydney Architecture*, Watermark, Sydney, 1997, pp. 157,160.