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<b>Name</b>	Roy Newton House	<b>Reference No</b>	
<b>Address</b>	177 Glen Iris Road, Glen Iris	<b>Survey Date</b>	20 September 2005
<b>Building Type</b>	Residence	<b>Grading</b>	B
<b>Date</b>	1935	<b>Previous Grading</b>	B



**Extent of Overlay**

To title boundaries.

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**Intactness**     Good     Fair     Poor

**Heritage Status**     HV     AHC     NT     Rec.    BPS Heritage Overlay

**History**

Builder J.L. Richards was commissioned to build a residence for Roy William Newton, an engineer, in 1935.<sup>1</sup> The nine roomed, brick residence was estimated to cost £2,850.<sup>2</sup> Newton continued in residence until at least 1952.<sup>3</sup>

(G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study 1991)

**Description & Integrity**

The Roy Newton house, at 177 Glen Iris Road, is a nine-roomed, two storey house in clinker brick relieved with glazed tapestry brick at the doorways and the curving front gate reveals. It has a projecting central wing, like a deepened break front but stepped out in two layers. The ground floor layer is enclosed with iron framed windows that curve at each end, and is topped with a flat roof forming an upstairs balcony with brick and wrought iron parapet. The first floor wing juts out behind this, again lined with cantilevered iron-framed windows. A north-facing wing has a rounded end below a half-conical roof wing. All eaves are boxed with spaced planking and conceal their guttering behind large fascias. The roof is clad in terra cotta shingles and punctuated by two brick chimneys patterned in a symmetrical Art Deco design. Similar Art Deco patterning appears over the front door, using Roman and other brick textures. The basic form, texture and all window frames appear original; the garage and rear fences, facing Ashburton Road, appear to have been added soon after the original house was complete.<sup>4</sup> The garden is mature; it largely obscures the north side from the street but has higher leaf cover to the west side, allowing good views of the house from Glen Iris Road.

## Historical Context

Extensive suburban residential development occurred in Glen Iris in the interwar period, generally on subdivisions that had occurred around WWI but were built on the 1920s. It was an area which was relatively well-served by public transport (both train and tram services).

## Comparative Analysis

The Roy Newton house was a prototype for what is now known as the 'Postwar Vernacular' housing that dominated Australian suburbs after World War II<sup>5</sup>. The house was published in *Home Beautiful* in 1937 and was widely known at the time.<sup>6</sup> In Boroondara it is a clear antecedent to the curved bay apartment complex at the Burke Road-Whitehorse Road corner, from just after WWII, and to two-storey houses in Balwyn North's Mortgage Hill area of c. 1939-58, east of Bulleen Road and south to Myrtle and McLeay Parks and the Hislop and Barnard Reserves. It is roughly contemporary with A V Jennings' Beauview and Beaumont estates at Ivanhoe, that firm's first foray into brick-surfaced Moderne and Modernism.<sup>7</sup> It recalls the simplified Colonial Revival seen in designs by R M and M H King in Mont Albert Road, Camberwell and in Ballarat from c. 1931 on, and the bow-fronted Irwin and Stevenson house for Edgar Fullwood in Mont Albert Road, of c. 1926, both of which were antecedents for Australia's predominant suburban style after c. 1939-40. Conrad Hamann argues that what is now seen as 'post war vernacular' was actually developed through the late 1920s and early-mid 1930s by a series of well-known architects: the King brothers, G M Sneddon, Hume Sherrard, Arthur Ziebell, even Marcus Barlow and Harry Norris- who adapted modernism as seen overseas to an amalgam of neo-Georgian and simply applied pitched roof designs in brick and tile. A number of these designs were built in Camberwell.<sup>8</sup> Through its able and detailed application of Art Deco and Streamlined Moderne details,<sup>9</sup> primarily through brick patterning and the use of curved, iron-framed 'cantilever' windows, the Newton house makes a major contribution to the developing canon of form that marked a new direction for Australian suburban housing in this period.

In the local context, the house forms a group with other designs in the area that mix traditional references with architectural modernism. These include two local schools, Glen Iris Primary's 1938 wing diagonally opposite, and the more homogeneous Solway Primary in Taylor Street, Ashburton, both by the Public Works department under Percy Everett's direction.<sup>10</sup>

## Assessment Against Criteria

### *Amended Heritage Victoria Criteria*

*CRITERION A: The historical importance, association with or relationship to Boroondara's history of the place or object.*

The Newton house is a two-storey prototype of what would become known as *post-war vernacular*, or *Australian post-war*, being constructed some 10 or 12 years before the Australian post-war mode gathered momentum. The Newton house is one of several in the municipality that marked the initial formation of a suburban style that would spread throughout Australia (see comparative analysis, above). Boroondara was not the exclusive location for this development, but its role was an important one and this was a key example in the early development of the style.

*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 Newton house design is skilled in balancing the inherent weight of tile and brick cavity wall construction with a series of robust details and solid scaling. The design shows a sense for the richness of its contemporary materials and exploits this in a vivid manner.

## Statement of Significance

The Roy Newton House, 177 Glen Iris Road, Glen Iris, is of historical and architectural significance at a municipal level as a two-storey prototype for what is now known as the 'Postwar Vernacular' housing that dominated Australian suburbs after World War II. It is one of the earliest and key examples within Boroondara which demonstrate the adoption of this new direction in suburban housing style.

Architecturally, the Newton house design is skilled in balancing the inherent weight of tile and brick cavity wall construction with a series of robust details and solid scaling. The design shows a sense for the richness of its contemporary materials and exploits this in a vivid manner.

## Grading Review

Unchanged.

Note that the Roy Newton House is broadly contemporary with other key developments in the development of the 'Post-war Vernacular' including the AV Jennings Beauview and Beaumont estates at Ivanhoe. Subject to more detailed comparative analysis, the building may be assessed as significant at a higher level (possibly A grading/state significance)

## Recommendations

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

## Identified By

G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study, 1991.

## References

*General:* G Butler, Camberwell Conservation Study, 1991.

*Specific:*

<sup>1</sup> Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index # 5582, dated 4 October 1935, Electoral Roll 1938.

<sup>2</sup> Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index # 5582, dated 4 October 1935.

<sup>3</sup> *Sands and McDougall Directory of Victoria*, 1940; *Sands and McDougall Directory of Victoria*, 1952.

<sup>4</sup> Details sourced from the City of Camberwell Building Index, #5582, 4 October 1935.

<sup>5</sup> See, esp., Graeme Davison Tony Dingle, Seamus O'Hanlon, eds., contrib., *The Cream Brick Frontier: Histories of Australian Suburbia*, Melbourne: Monash Publications in History 19, 1995. In their introduction Davison and Dingle present the suburban house style as primarily a post war influx of Americanism, fitting a general interpretation of America as being 'discovered' by Australian society during and after World War 2. They note its Melbourne underpinning by the brick veneer system, ascribed (significantly) to a Camberwell house by John S Gawler of 1915: p. 10, citing *The Age*, 27 February 1961, and note, briefly, A V Jennings' origins in the 1930s. See also Don Garden, Ch. 11, p. 142, and *Builders to the Nation: the A V Jennings Story*, Melbourne, 1992. The perception of the housing style as synonymous with the post war building recovery reflects, arguably, Robin Boyd's interpretation of the mode as originating post war in the wake of architectural modernism, which he 'gives' to the 1930s: *Victorian Modern*, Melbourne: RVIA, 1947, *Australia's Home*, Melbourne: University Press, 1952, and Don Garden's emphasis on Jennings as an economic rather than an architectural history.

<sup>6</sup> *Home Beautiful*, 1937, photographed from the journal in 1983 and used as a teaching slide by Conrad Hamann at Monash University. Slide is in Monash University Slide and Multimedia Library, Faculty of Arts. c.f. Conrad Hamann, 'Architecture', in Andrew Brown-May and Shurlee Swain, eds., contrib., *The Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, Melbourne: Cambridge, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Graeme Butler, 'A V Jennings: the early Estates', *Historic Environment*, 3, 2, 1983, pp. 32-46, esp. pp. 34-42. The Beaumont houses by Edgar Gurney, Jennings' architect, date from 1937-8, including Gurney's own house: pp. 38-40. c.f. Don Garden, *Builders to the Nation, The A V Jennings Story*, esp. pp. 40-1

<sup>8</sup> C Hamann, 'Architecture', in *The Encyclopedia of Melbourne*. Peter Cuffley illustrates The King brothers' Cindcrete house at Preston: *Australian houses of the '20s and '30s*, Melbourne, Five Mile Press, 1989, p. 142; he links it visually to other Cindcrete houses of 1938, p. 145, and parapet-roofed houses by Hedley Sanders in *Home Beautiful*, 1935, pp. 143-4.

<sup>9</sup> Graeme Butler credits 177 with being an 'early example of the Modern style', seeing it as commencing in Victoria with Oakley and Parkes' Yuille House, Melbourne, in 1932: Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, v. 4, p. 129. *Art Deco*, while taking its name from the 1925 International Exposition of Decorative Arts held in Paris, developed from transformations of Art Nouveau after c. 1903, particularly in Germany, Austria and Finland, and its emerging forms can be seen in the architecture of Eliel Saarinen, Josef Hoffmann, Josef Maria Olbrich and Alfred Messel, and later Bertram Goodhue and Raymond Hood in the United States. Kenneth Frampton has described this change as a 'crystallisation' infused with mysticism and an equation of new architecture with glass and gleaming surfaces: *Modern Architecture*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1979. Part of the intention, though, was to reconcile Classical and Gothic styles- a quest widely seen as solving the problem of a genuinely contemporary architecture. Compositions were often symmetrical or in balanced asymmetry. In Australia Art Deco gained ground as part of an admiration for these European and

American-based architects, and its patterning and details were used in Australia from around 1927 onwards. *Streamlined/Moderne* fused Art Deco with the developing machine aesthetic seen in Expressionist and early Functionalist architecture, and by 1935 was emerging as a major commercial mode in Australia, particularly in cinema design.

<sup>10</sup> Details sourced from their foundation stones.