

HOUSE AND GARDEN

Place No. 394

ADDRESS 116-122 Old Warrandyte Road
Donvale

Last Update 22/06/2005

DESCRIPTION This house at 116-122 Old Warrandyte Road, Donvale comprises the original 1958 building and a 1970 brick extension. The 1958 section at the front is a flat roofed timber house with timber 'window walls' to the front elevation. To the side and rear are the 1970 brick extensions.

The house is situated at the end of a gravel driveway with four large *Pinus Radiata* at its terminus (possibly from an earlier alignment). The drive is lined by an Australian native woodland style mix of spotted gums (*Eucalyptus maculata*), She oak (*Casuarina* sp.) and other trees. The garden surrounding the house is in a native woodland style that is typical of Gordon Ford's work. It contains a small lily pond set into the lower part of the rise on the north side of the drive which acts as key viewpoint. This is planted around the outer northern arc with Australian native trees and shrubs. In front of the house there is a small rockery with steps of fieldstone/boulders and small native shrubs. Ford's skill is evident as it is hard to discern where his landscaping ends and the natural bushland begins. There are also a number of remnant fruit trees from an earlier orchard scattered throughout the site.

The timber house and cottage, and the former quarry reputedly on the property (identified by Richard Peterson in 1994) could not be located.

Condition Fair **Integrity** Altered - minor modifications

Threats Deterioration **Key elements** Garden
Group of buildings
Tree(s)

Designer W Adamson, G Trewenack, G

HISTORY City of Manningham Building Permit records confirm that on 22 October 1957 Robert Ernest Matthews, merchant, and his wife, Rivka, of 285A Glenferrie Road, Malvern, purchased the site of this property located on parts of Crown Allotment 145, Parish of Nunawading. It contained 14 acres and was in Lots 3 and 4 on Plan of Subdivision LP 6095. The previous owner was Thomas Henderson, a Surrey Hills solicitor (1).

Soon after, on 31 January 1958, the Matthews family applied for permission to build a house on the Old Warrandyte Road at a cost of 2700 pounds. It was to be a domestic dwelling by Moorabbin Builders of Moorabbin (2). The designing architects were William Adamson and Associates, also of Moorabbin. The working drawings, held in Building Permit records, included a ground plan, elevations A, B, C and D, and kitchen details. The ground plan depicted three bedrooms, living room and kitchen, a sunroom leading out to a deck area, a play room, bathroom and laundry, and a verandah (3).

About 11 years later, in 1969, the Matthews applied for a permit for brick veneer additions to their house at a cost of \$7000. This time they chose a well-known Melbourne architect, Geoff Trewenack, for the work (4). The working drawings for the 'Proposed Brick Extension', are held in Manningham Council's Building Permit records. The Site Plan showed the existing 1958 residence and the proposed extension in Lot 3. This lot was separated by a roadway from Lot 4, which stretched down to the Mullum Mullum Creek. A Ground Plan showed the proposed extension with one large bedroom and three smaller bedrooms separated by a long gallery. The drawings also included north, south and west elevations of the extensions and the east Gallery elevation (5). Builders for the extension were D.N. Henderson Pty Ltd of Mentone (6).

The designing architect, Geoff Trewenack, often worked with another notable Melbourne architect, Kevin Borland. Among the mainly residential work of Borland and Trewenack were houses in Glen Waverley (1954), North Balwyn (1958), North Essendon (1958), Box Hill (1961), and Daws Road, Doncaster (1963). In addition, the partnership of Borland, Trewenack and Brooks designed houses in Forest Hill (1950), Beaumaris (1957), Vermont (1959), Camberwell (1960) and Dandenong (1963) (7). Kevin Borland in partnership with Bernard Brown was associated with the substantial 1986 extensions to another Manningham property, the Thomson house at 29 Edwin Road, Templestowe (8).

Garden features at 116-126 Old Warrandyte Road were designed by the important Melbourne garden designer, the late Gordon Ford, with some alterations by Barry Dowling (1933-2005). (9).

Gordon Ford was one of the foremost landscape designers of the post-war period, who was known as a 'master of rockwork'. In the late 1940s he and his wife purchased a former orchard property near Eltham, which became known as Fullings. Over the next 50 years they developed a 'water-wise' native Australian garden, which he used to develop the landscape skills he was to apply in his professional life. In the formative years of his career Ford worked with the environmentally sensitive building designer Alistair Knox. It was through Knox's wife Margot that he was introduced to the pioneer 'natural' landscape designer Ellis Stones for whom he worked in 1950 and 1951, learning the principles of native landscape design. He described Stones as both a friend and mentor. In 1952 Ford commenced his own practice as a landscape designer. Through Ellis Stones Ford was introduced to Edna Walling for whom he seems to have worked on occasion during the 1950s. (10)

The important role of these people in shaping people's attitudes to post-war design has been described as follows:

'The development of the Victorian Type proclaimed by Boyd in Victorian Modern in the late 1940s was strongly dependent on a close relationship with a semi-rural or completely rural native landscape. ... A tradition of landscape design using indigenous plants and materials which commenced perhaps with Edna Walling around 1950 continued through her friend and sometime employee Ellis Stones to his friend and sometime employee Gordon Ford who died in 1999. ... The joint involvement of these landscape designers and many of the significant Melbourne architects of the time [particularly Borland and Boyd] with the urban-peripheral artists' colonies in Eltham [where Alastair Knox was a key figure] and Warrandyte with their proclamation of the virtues of the natural landscape strongly influenced the spread of a positive attitude to the indigenous landscape during the late 1950s and 1960s.' (11)

Dowling, who died recently, was known as a writer, natural historian and gardener (12).

SOURCES

- (1) Certificate of Title Vol. 5604 Fol. 704.
- (2) City of Manningham Building Permit No.948.
- (3) Ibid; 'Proposed brick Veneer Extension for Mr and Mrs Matthews, 3 and 4 Old Warrandyte Road, Doncaster', 31 January 1958 (1 sheet).
- (4) 'Proposed Brick Veneer Extension for RE & R Matthews at lots 3 and 4 Old Warrandyte Road, Doncaster', signed Geoff Trewenack and Associated, East Melbourne, 5 March 1969; City of Manningham Building Permit No. 4113.
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) City of Manningham Building Permit No. 4113.
- (7) 'The Work of Kevin Borland (and partners)' compiled by Peter Y. Navaretti and supplied to consultants, 10 May 2005.
- (8) Manningham Heritage Study Property No. 269.
- (9) 'Additional sites identified by Richard Peterson', letter to Manningham City Council 6 June 1994.
- (10) Modern in Melbourne. Melbourne Architecture 1950-75 'Many Strands' listed on http://users.tce.rmit.edu.au/E03159/ModMelb/mm2/lect/50_60_70/html/ford.html (accessed 22 June 2005, 1.25 pm)
- (11) Ibid.
- (12) Age newspaper, 6 June 2005, Obituary.

Creation Date 1958

Change Dates 1970

Associations

Local Themes

Geoffrey Trewenick, Gordon Ford

7.06 - Houses of the 1940s-50s

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

What is Significant?

The house, comprising both the 1958 section designed by William Adamson and Associates and the 1970 addition designed by Geoffrey Trewenack, and the garden designed by Gordon Ford with alterations by Barry Dowling, at 116-122 Old Warrandyte Road, Donvale.

How is it Significant?

The house and garden at 116-122 Old Warrandyte Road, Donvale are of local historic and

aesthetic significance to Manningham City.

Why is it Significant?

The house and garden at 116-122 Old Warrandyte Road, Donvale are of historic significance as a representative example of the development of a distinctive Victorian Modern style as first described by Robin Boyd. It is especially notable as an example that includes both a house and complementary garden. It is significant for its associations with the architect Geoffrey Trewenack, and the garden designer, Gordon Ford. (RNE criteria A.4, B.2, D.2, and H.1)

The house and garden at 116-122 Old Warrandyte Road, Donvale are of local aesthetic significance as a representative example of the Victorian Modern style as described by Robin Boyd. The house is typical of its style, while the garden contains many elements that are emblematic of Ford's style including the careful use and placement of rocks, and the use of native trees in a naturalistic layout. (RNE criteria E.1)

LEVEL Local significance

RECOMMENDATIONS

Heritage Register Listings

Register	Reference	Zoning	Status
Planning Scheme	HO		Recommended

Extent The whole of the property as defined by the title boundaries.

Heritage Schedule

External Paint Controls:	No	On VHR:	No	VHR Ref No:
Internal Alteration Controls:	No	Prohibited Uses:	No	
Tree Controls:	Yes	Aboriginal Heritage Place:	No	
Outbuildings or Fences:	No	Incorporated Plan:	No	Incorporated Plan Details
Description:				

Conservation Management

In order to conserve the heritage significance of this place, it is recommended that the following conservation objectives, as appropriate, be given priority in the future maintenance, development or management of the place:

1. Conserve the fabric of the building/s or other built elements, which is identified as contributing to the significance of the place. This includes the original fabric as well as fabric that may demonstrate important successive stages in the historic development of the place and/or provide evidence of changing architectural styles or techniques.

2. Discourage the demolition of significant or contributory buildings unless the demolition is only of part of the building and it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the responsible authority that, as appropriate:

- The fabric to be removed is not significant, or
- The fabric to be removed is not of primary significance and its removal will not adversely affect the significance of the place, or
- It will assist in the long term conservation of the place, or
- It will facilitate the historic use of the place and will not result in the loss of fabric considered to be primary significance.

Note: The poor condition or low integrity of a heritage place should not be used as justification for its demolition, particularly if it appears the condition of the heritage place has deliberately been allowed to deteriorate.

3. Where there is a complex of buildings and other elements the aim should be to conserve or reveal the historic visual relationship between the buildings and other elements in order to demonstrate the historical use and/or layout of the place.

4. Conserve significant plantings on the property, and maintain a visual relationship between the plantings and the significant buildings on the property.
5. Encourage the removal of non-significant or intrusive elements, particularly where this would assist in understanding or interpreting the significance of the place.
6. Ensure that the siting and design of new development does not overwhelm the historic setting of the building and the site as a whole by becoming a dominant element or by interfering with key views to and from the site.
7. Encourage any new development on the property to relate and be complementary in form, scale and materials to the significant buildings and other elements, but be clearly contemporary in design.
8. Retain views of significant building(s) and plantings from the street.
9. In the case of subdivision of the property, encourage the retention of the significant buildings, trees and related elements on one lot.

NOTE:

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this citation is accurate, it is possible that more detailed investigation may reveal further information about the significance of the place. For example, in most cases an internal inspection was not made of buildings at the time of initial assessment. In the time since the place was first assessed it is also possible that the condition of buildings or trees may have changed.

The information contained in this citation should therefore be reviewed at the time that it is proposed to make changes to the property. This would likely require a more detailed assessment of any significant or contributory element that is affected by any proposed buildings or works. Once this more detailed assessment has been made, a review of the significance of the place should be carried out by Council's Heritage Adviser or an appropriately qualified professional.

Extra Research

BIBLIOGRAPHY Context Pty Ltd, (2005), *Manningham Heritage Study Review*, Manningham City Council, Doncaster