

CITY OF DONCASTER & TEMPLESTOWE HERITAGE STUDY.

37, 66, 68 & 70 OLYMPUS DRIVE, TEMPLESTOWE LOWER. A3.

HISTORY : Merchant Builders Pty. Ltd was the most innovative project house building firm in Australia since the early A.V. Jennings estates of the mid-1930s. It was founded by David Yencken and John Ridge in 1965 to produce good architecture at an affordable price. Each house was designed by an architect, who consulted on its siting and landscaping was carefully related to the design. The Olympus Drive houses were built over the period 1967-70 : No.37 commenced August 1967; No.70 commenced May 1968; No.68 commenced June 1969 and No.66 commenced October 1970.¹ This was Merchant's second display centre.

VISUAL DESCRIPTION : Brick houses with flat steel deck roofs, with deep eaves which extend forward over a carport in front, at left. No.37 has coffee coloured brick with matching brick paving and stained timber. It has a mature garden with lemon scented eucalypts. No.66 has light orange brick with grey/green stained timber. It has open landscaping of eucalypts set in lawn. No.68 is of clinker brick, with blue/grey stained timber and a Chinaman's hat flue with planting of shrubs and tree clusters. It is similar in design to No.37, but larger, extending in U-shape around a courtyard. No.70 is more similar to No.37 but as with No.68, the carport is protected by a locker wall. It is coffee brick with matching drive and mission brown stained timber. The garden has a railway sleeper retaining wall.

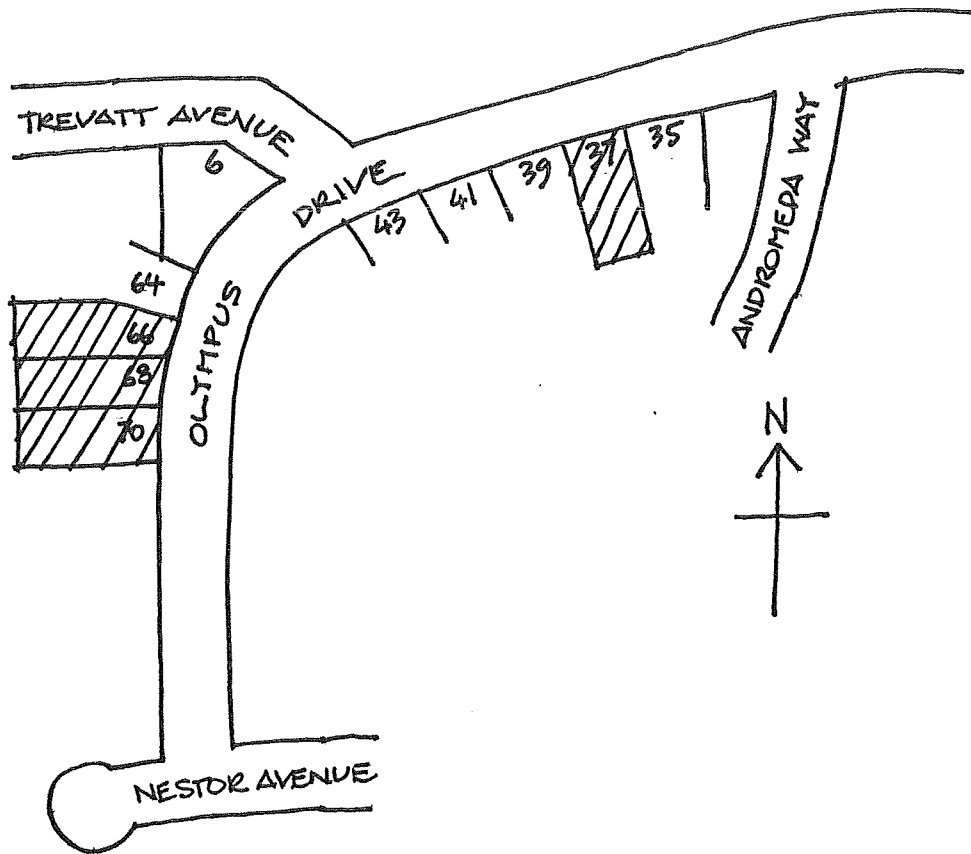
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS : Comparable to Merchant Builders' houses at 412-418 Porter Street (cnr Blackburn Road) and 4-12 Beverley Hills Drive, Templestowe (15 houses, built 1987-9), Winter Park, 137-141 High Street, Doncaster (1970-74) and 1-3 Exford Place, Donvale (1972). Also Landmark, Fasham & Johnson and Merchant's houses at 9,28-34 Rosco Drive, Templestowe Lower. Comparable also to Merchant Builders' first display centre at Glen Waverley (cnr The Boulevard & Springvale Road, 1965-66).²

SIGNIFICANCE : Of regional architectural significance as a particularly intact group of display houses by Merchant Builders, built in 1967-70 of high architectural quality, yet relatively low cost. The landscaping is carefully related to the design. It is Merchant Builders second display centre.

INTACTNESS : Apparently, very good.

CONDITION & THREATS : Excellent.

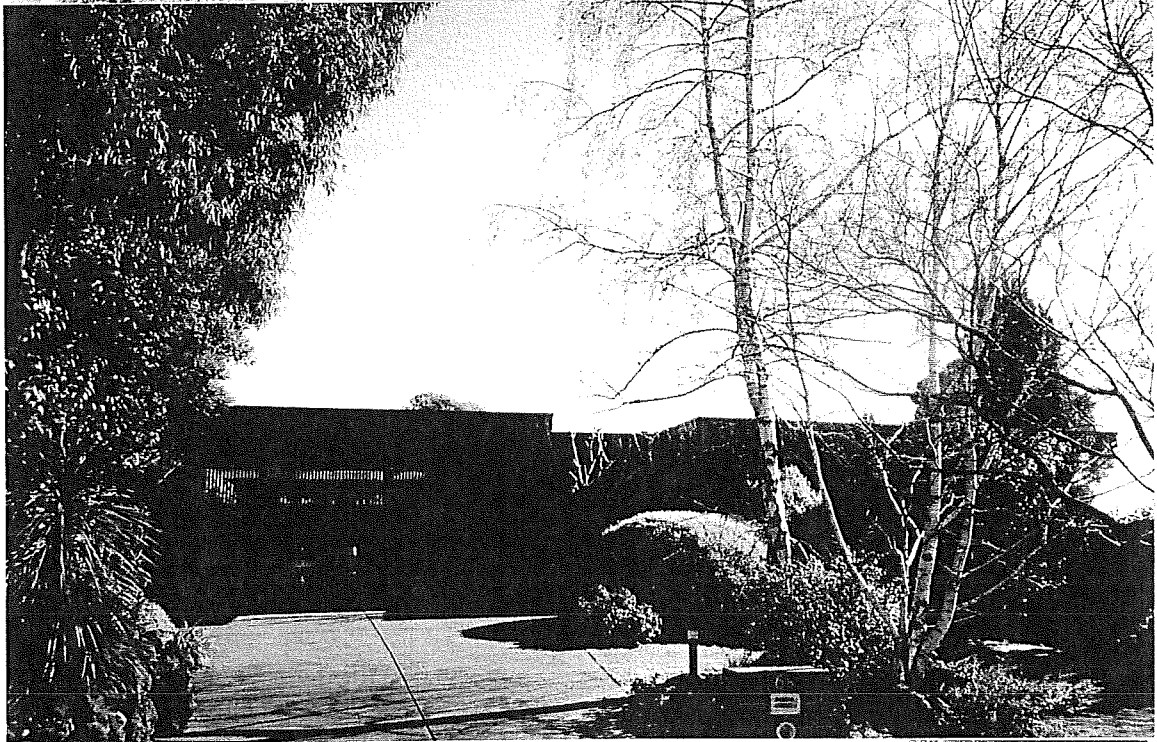
REFERENCES : 1. City of Doncaster and Templestowe Building Approvals Records : No.37, BA 1490; No.70, BA 1689; No.68, BA 5066 and No.66, BA 9609.
2. Various Merchant Builders Pty. Ltd. promotional publications held by Richard Peterson.



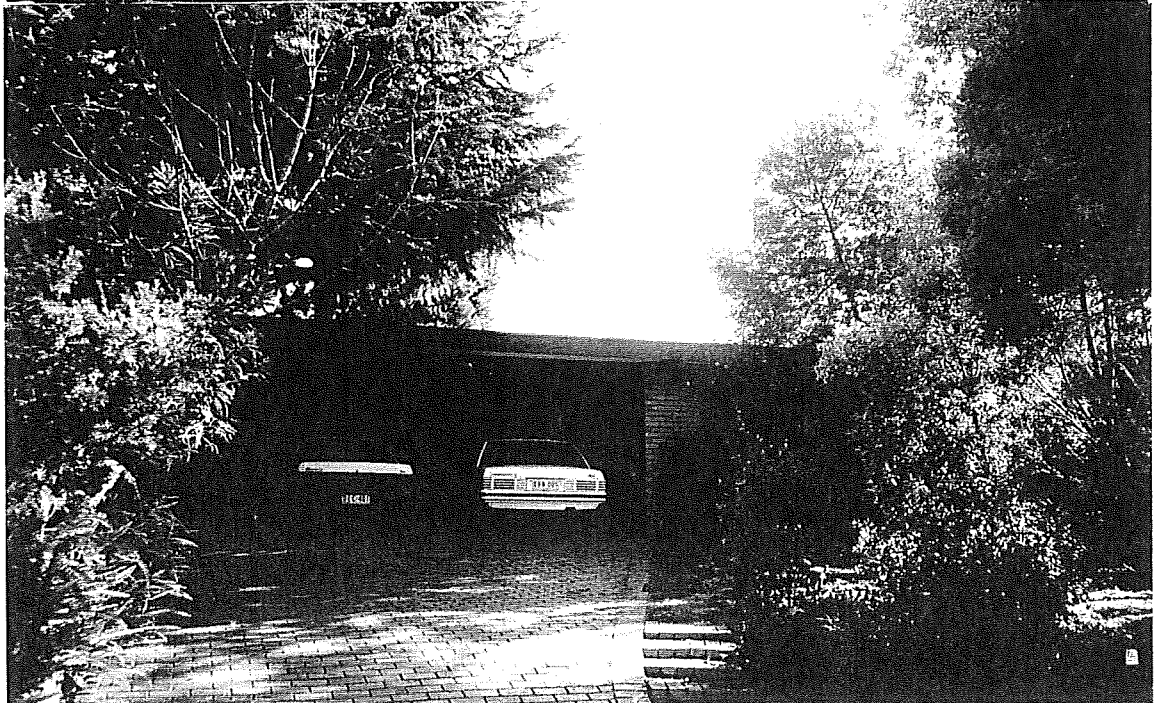
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