

## 63 COTHAM ROAD, FORMERLY 'WILTON'

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Original Use: Residence and Offices  
Date of Construction: 1886<sup>1</sup>  
Architect: Guyon Purchas<sup>2</sup>

DESIGNATION A  
CITATION NO.15

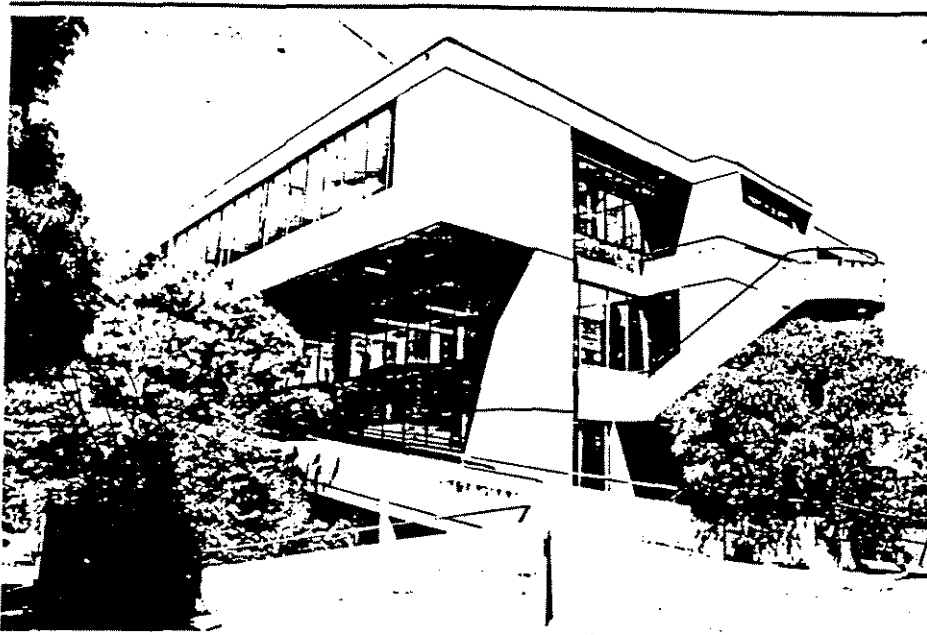
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### HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

This house is built on land that was originally a part of James Venn Morgan's land holding<sup>3</sup>. Upon subdivision of that holding, eight brick houses were built on it in 1884<sup>4</sup>, although at that stage this block remained vacant. Having arrived in Victoria soon after gaining his M.D. from Dublin University in 1881<sup>5</sup>, Dr William Butler Walsh purchased this property by July the following year<sup>6</sup> and in March 1886 his 'unfinished' house received an N.A.V. of £30<sup>7</sup>. Designed by Guyon Purchas, the son of the noted Melbourne architect Albert Purchas and a designer with a considerable reputation of his own, the contractor for 'Wilton' was James Anderson<sup>8</sup>. By October of 1886 the two-storey house was completed, and the building attracted an N.A.V. of £220<sup>9</sup>. Soon after its construction, the house was described in the local press as '... a comfortable and luxurious home ...' and that it was '... carried out in the Domestic Gothic style, and a tourelle at the corner is made a prominent feature'<sup>10</sup>. The house was progressive for its date and such attention is to have been expected. The contrast of the red brick with render bands and quoining add liveliness to the already picturesque forms of the corner tower, the gothicized front porch and the projecting gabled unit. There are few houses in Melbourne that compare with 'Wilton'. 'Bona Vista' in South Yarra by Reed Henderson and Smart, and 'Redholm' (dem.) attributed to Albert Purchas, but probably also by his son Guyon, were both built in 1884 and were both very similar in styling and materials<sup>11</sup>.

Walsh practised in Kew for twenty-two years<sup>12</sup> and his surgery and consulting rooms were accommodated in his residence<sup>13</sup> in Cotham Road. In 1934, following Walsh's death, the Kew Council bought a number of properties near the corner of Cotham Road and Charles Street, including 'Wilton' (by that time known as 'Landene') with the intention of erecting a new town hall<sup>14</sup>. The scheme did not eventuate and 'Wilton' was leased as an A.R.P. Centre and First Aid Post during World War II<sup>15</sup>. In 1948 the Kew Sub-Branch of the R.S.S. & A.I.L.A. purchased the building for its meeting rooms at a cost of £10,067<sup>16</sup>. Additions and alterations have been made at the rear and west



#### SIGNIFICANCE

The M.L.C. Resource Centre is of significance for having been an early, successful and influential example of the use of off-form concrete as a finishing material.

#### HERITAGE LISTINGS

HBR: Recommended for inclusion on the register.

GBR: N/A

RNE: Recommended for inclusion on the register.

National Trust: Not currently listed.

<sup>1</sup> *Architecture in Australia*, June 1975, p.86-87

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Architecture in Australia*, June 1975, p.86

The Resource Centre, MLC, is an innovative (for Australia) design in the Brutalist mode which was to characterise the institutional work of Jackson and Walker in the 1970s and of which they were arguably Australia's leading exponents. It was of recognised innovation in terms of form, materials and detail at the time of completion. This significance is heightened by the position Jackson has attained in the last decade as one of Australia's foremost architects and by the building's association with other significant buildings on the important MLC site. It is recommended that this building retain its A classification.