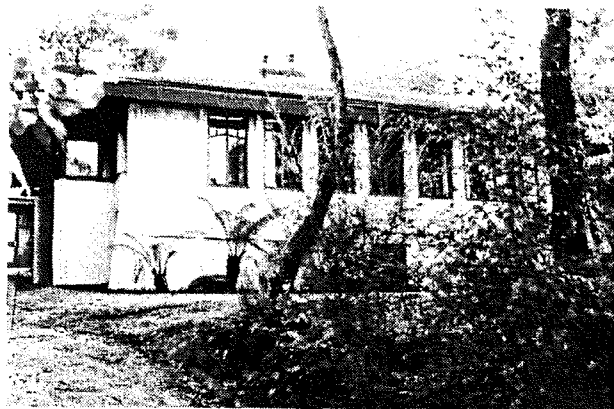


Camberwell Conservation Study 1991  
**BUILDING CITATION**

**House,**  
**7 Warwick Avenue, Surrey Hills**



Historic Buildings Register Registered  
National Trust of Australia (Class/Rec.):  
Classified

NTA File Number: 2281

Study Grading: A

Construction Date: 1923

First Owner: Jefferies, Elizabeth J

Architect: Griffin, Walter Burley

### History

Rated as land in 1922-3, the site included a cement house of five rooms in 1923-4, owned by Elizabeth Jefferies.<sup>1</sup> The rated occupier was Julian Jefferies, an analyst. Directories listed 'Julian S. Jefferies' as occupier into the 1930s, adding 'assayer' in the 1940-50s.<sup>2</sup> By the 1960s, his wife Mrs. R. Jefferies had replaced him.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1960s, Julian's son, Roger, noted that buttressing, along with tie-rods through the building, had been applied to the building around 1936 to prevent collapse. In the same period, he recalled that a skylight was added outside the bathroom and the lounge fireplace altered<sup>4</sup>. The *Herald* quoted Roger Jefferies who described the house as a 'nuisance' because of its poor condition. He was apparently discontented with the National Trust classification which deterred him from demolishing<sup>5</sup>.

Typically square in plan and roofed with a pyramid form, the house is one of two known

examples designed by Griffin and built with both Knitlock roof tiles and wall construction (see also the Salter house, Toorak, 1923). Griffin described his own system thus:

*It is based on machines for cheap manufacture, and lightness and compactness for minimizing transport and on standard units assembled without hand fitting, cutting, bedding or plastering for speedy erection.*

Architectural historian, Donald Johnson, notes the house as being slightly larger than Griffin's Knitlock prototype, Pholiota, but otherwise typical of Griffin's small domestic work in plan<sup>7</sup>. It had an open porch entry, living area (with a small 'carefully planned' kitchen off) and three bedrooms, two having fireplaces. What was claimed by *The Age* as the original Griffin drawing, dated 1924, shows two bedrooms (no fireplaces) and one 'reception' room with a fireplace. However, given that wall buttressing is shown on this drawing it is unlikely to be the original<sup>8</sup>. Another article, in 1985, described the walls as of two layers with bitumen poured between to aid insulation. The woodwork was green-stained, the cedar ceilings pyramid in form and

some surviving light fittings in an inverted prism form, said to have been designed by Griffin to highlight the roofline.<sup>9</sup>

Johnson judged this house as the 'most complete' Griffin interior, with Griffin's pin hinges and slatted timber doors - 'a praiseworthy design.'<sup>10</sup>

### Description

As Pholiota (the mushroom), this small concrete house shows its concrete construction module clearly on the outside walls, with full-height ribs, formed by specially shaped blocks, occurring every three blocks laterally. Between these ribs, there were slim casement windows with the typical Griffinesque chevron-pattern glazing bars evident in each. The entry to the porch is on the east, on the opposite side to the driveway, marked by solid Knitlock balustrading to the stairway, with th pyramid-top posts at the stair's beginning.

### Comparative Examples

The following Camberwell sites may compared

1 RB1922-3, 12314; *Canberra Times* 27.11.69 reported Roger Jefferies of Northcote describing this house as designed by Griffin in 1922 for his parents  
2 D1930-50  
3 D1962, D1973  
4 NTA FN2281, letter from R Jefferies 8.2.69  
5 *The Herald* 12.11.69  
6 cited in *The Age* 10.11.79 property section  
7 Johnson, D.L., *The Architecture of Walter Burley Griffin*. (Macmillan, Melbourne), 1977, p.62

8 G. Woodfall?  
9 *The Herald* 5.7.85  
10 *ibid.*

## Camberwell Conservation Study 1991 BUILDING CITATION (Continued)

with this site but comparison show how distinctive Griffin's house designs were, given little resemblance to mainstream housing.

19, THE RIDGE, 1916  
12, HUNTER ROAD, 1918  
9, SEFTON PLACE, 1919-20  
6, CHRISTOWEL STREET, 1919  
718, RIVERSDALE ROAD, 1919  
33, BROADWAY, 1920  
158, MONT ALBERT ROAD, 1920  
11, PRETORIA STREET, 1920  
23, SUNNYSIDE AVENUE, 1920  
286, UNION ROAD, 1920  
44, CURRAJONG AVENUE, 1920c  
6, IRAMOO STREET, 1920c  
17, THREADNEEDLE STREET, 1920c  
65, YARRBAT AVENUE, 1920c  
42, SPENCER STREET, 1921-3  
899, TOORAK ROAD, 1921  
930, BURKE ROAD, 1922  
210, WHITEHORSE ROAD, 1922  
16, ALMA ROAD, 1923  
648, BURKE ROAD, 1923  
21, CANTERBURY ROAD, 1923  
31, DEEPDENE ROAD, 1923  
7, WARWICK AVENUE, 1923  
90, MONT ALBERT ROAD, 1924-5  
168A, MONT ALBERT ROAD, 1924-5  
9, ROCHESTER ROAD, 1924-6  
630-638, BURKE ROAD, 1924  
322-394, CAMBERWELL ROAD, 1924  
12, MONT ALBERT ROAD, 1924  
10, FITZGERALD STREET, 1924c  
11, ALMA ROAD, 1925(?)  
269, UNION ROAD, 1925-6c  
10, DONNA BUANG STREET, 1925  
2, MARTIN ROAD, 1925  
4, ST. ANDRIES STREET, 1925  
1, THREADNEEDLE STREET, 1925  
931, TOORAK ROAD, 1925  
118, WATTLE VALLEY ROAD, 1925  
55, BATH ROAD, 1925c  
77, GREYTHORNE ROAD, 1925c  
1, THREADNEEDLE STREET, 1925c  
359, WHITEHORSE ROAD, 1925c  
513, WHITEHORSE ROAD, 1925c  
146, YARRBAT AVENUE, 1925c

Historically, the knitlock system is associated with the many remedies evolved for the post-war housing shortage, several of them by architects and a few using modular construction systems: of regional interest.

### External Integrity

Generally original, with the added buttresses on the south side, a carport on the west and a free-standing 'Barn' living area to the north<sup>1</sup>.

### Significance

Architecturally, the most complete Burley Griffin knitlock house with both tiles and walling in the system and hence important as the work of an innovatory and prominent architect in the national architectural realm: of state importance.

<sup>1</sup> see *The Age* 10.11.79