

Katanga, 372 Glenferrie Road

Architect: Harold Desbrowe Annear

1931 and 33: Plans prepared for Wesley Ince and his wife (National Trust Classification Report, 12 December 1990)

1947: Ince, Wesley Armstrong, Solicitor. (Who's Who)

Externally this house is a relatively plain two storey Georgian derived design, finished in an unpainted, sand coloured stucco. It has a simple terracotta hipped roof, tall chimneys and the entry, which faces Hamilton Avenue, has a pedimented break front which is further extended by a porte cochere, simply arched. The windows are arranged symmetrically and are unusual large six pane sashes which are triple hung. Decoration is limited to the circular motifs abutting the entry and on the pediment. The fence steps down around the curved driveway and garage entrance. This is enclosed by a wrought iron gate. Along Glenferrie Road the fence is raised to give privacy to what becomes in effect a side garden. The garage and single storey kitchen wing relieve the simple symmetrical character of the entry facade as does the unusual shallow angled bay of the west facing wall. This predelection for unusual geometry is also seen in the stair design, which projects from the main building. The building was totally intact both internally and externally, until its recent sale, other than the enclosure of the sunroom on the ground floor. Externally it has remained totally unchanged. This important building is best summarised by the Statement of Significance prepared by the National Trust prior to its sale.

'One of Harold Desbrowe Annear's last works, 372 Glenferrie Road was designed for Mr Wesley Ince and his wife and completed early in 1933 a few months prior to the architect's death in June of that year. Recently, the house was described as 'an austere dignified representative of the Georgian revival' but that description was immediately modified with the concession that the house was 'a romantic interpretation that only faintly echoed a true Georgian character'. (1) In fact, the Ince House is a fascinating example of Desbrowe Annear's final manner - functional, somewhat eccentric and essentially theatrical in its combination and use of elements. Most importantly however, the house is the core of a total environment designed by the architect, which includes the garden and garden wall, garage and



ancillary outdoor spaces and buildings, the interior decoration, built-in furniture and a complete suite of dining-room furniture.

Harold Desbrowe Annear has long been recognised as one of Australia's most important domestic architects and in Robin Boyd's view he was one of the 'pioneer moderns' of the twentieth century. (2) Refer to Appendix One for biographical details of architect.

Katanga is of state significance as characteristic work of the noted architect Harold Desbrowe Annear. The house displays all of the characteristics for which the architect is best known, and many of the features that he himself advocated in his 1922 publication 'For Every Man His Home' (3). But as well it stands as a witness to the relationship between the client and the architect and as the physical embodiment of the clients' social and cultural aspirations. So successful was the house in doing this, that it has been left virtually unchanged since it was completed in 1933, and until his recent death, occupied by Mr Wesley Ince.

1 *The History and Design of the Australian House*, ed. Robert Irving, Oxford 1985 p.128

2 Robin Boyd, *Victorian Modern*, Melbourne, 1947.

3 *For Every Man His Home*, ed. Harold Desbrowe Annear, Melbourne, 1922.

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THE AUSTRALIAN HOME BEAUTIFUL

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A Residence of Dignity and Charm

The Last Work of a Noted Australian Architect

By "OBSERVER"

THE work of the late Desbrowe Annear is destined to become a classic in the annals of Melbourne architecture; indeed, it is already being recognised as such, for he was an artist as well as an architect, an artist who followed his ideas along original lines and who, although

principal living and sleeping rooms with accompanying bathrooms are contained in the main building, while kitchen, service and maid's quarters are housed in a single storey wing built out at the rear. The square Georgian facade is broken by a shallow projecting central gable and porte-cochere. The