

National Trust
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5.2.91

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CITY OF MALVERN
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Dear MR AKERS

CITY OF MALVERN	
Rec'd	7 FEB 91
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REPORT	



PR. HO 41 MAP 3
(REFER TO HERITAGE VIC
REF NO H935)

NATIONAL TRUST

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Melbourne
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Telephone: (03) 654 4711
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FN 6195

RE: 372 GLENFERRIE RD, MALVERN (INCE HOUSE)

I write to advise you that the above place has been included in the National Trust's Register. The Register lists those places which, in the Trust's opinion, are important parts of Australia's heritage and which therefore require special care.

The above place has been Classified in the Register. The Trust believes that Classified places are essential part of Australia's heritage and must preserved.

A citation in support of this Classification is attached.

The inclusion of a place in the National Trust Register does not impose any legal obligations on property owners or occupiers. The objective of including a place in the Register is to draw community attention to the special importance of that place as a component of the nation's heritage.

May I also draw your attention to the contents of Section 4(1) (d) and Section 6 of the Planning & Environment Act 1987. It is recommended that the City/Shire ofMALVERN..... as part of any future planning scheme review, utilise the powers conferred under the Planning & Environment Act to conserve and enhance this place, together with other places of special cultural value.

Should you have any queries regarding this Classification, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Tania Chandler of this office.

Yours sincerely

IAN WIGHT

Assistant Administrator (Conservation)

enc

cc

MALVERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 184
MALVERN 3144.

NATIONAL TRUST OF VICTORIA

CLASSIFICATION REPORT

1. NAME OF PLACE

Ince House

2. OTHER/CURRENT NAME

As above

3. LOCATION

372 Glenferrie Road, Malvern

4. DATE

1933 (completion date)

5. TYPE OF PLACE

Residence

6. LISTING DETAILS

Recommended for Classification
(House and Garden)

Of National importance.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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 ancilliary 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)

The Ince 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 a 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.

8. HISTORY

372 Glenferrie Road was designed by Harold Desbrowe Annear for Wesley Ince and his wife between 1931 and 1933. Annear had been recommended to Ince by both Gerald Robinson for whom Annear had designed 4 Heyington Place, and who was a brother of Arthur Robinson in whose legal firm Ince was a partner, and M.H. Baillieu for whom he designed 729 Orrong Road, Toorak.(4) The existing drawings for the house show the development of the plans and elevations over a period of eighteen months. Client consultation was close and Mrs Ince had quite a lot of input concerning fittings; the large sumptuous marble bathroom, for example, was her design. Annear was responsible for the predominantly late 18th century Adamesque detailing in the reception rooms which develops a theme discernible in his work from 1920 onwards. The dining room furniture built to Annear's Heppelwhite-inspired designs is complete, and the garden, also planned by the architect in a rather formal manner but also quite intact is the final element in this totally designed ensemble.

The preservation of this house and garden in their "remarkably intact state... is due in the main to the owners strong identification with the 1930s, a time when they were able to realize their aspirations and reflect their various interests in the building of this house.

The interiors provided a setting for the lifestyle that owed perhaps more to the social conventions of professional upper middle class Melbourne society than personal interests - a lifestyle that acknowledged success and staunchly defended and encompassed traditional values.

Their meticulous care for their home and their undiminished respect for the architecture of the house and its interiors reflect great admiration for Annear, reinforced by the memory of the good working relationship that had existed."(5) When the client moved into the house, the architect presented them with a small painting by W.B. McInnes which had belonged in the J.F. Archibald collection.

9. DESCRIPTION

9.1 Physical Description

372 Glenferrie Road is a two storeyed stuccoed house with a central porte cochere, "set before a pedimented breakfront; an interpretation of a Georgian device. On either side an assortment of windows are displayed; large six-paned sashes, arched windows and circular oeils-de-boeuf, the latter strung with moulded stucco garlands".(6) The entry is in Hamilton Avenue and a curved driveway leads through the porte-cochere with parking space off to one side and a wrought iron gate enclosing the entrance. Originally it was of timber, executed to Annear's design.

A grand curved staircase leads from the entrance foyer to the first floor. Theatrical in tone and intent, it was, according to Mr Ince, based on a staircase Annear had seen in a Hollywood film showing in an Arnadale cinema, and it is radically different from the staircase originally designed for the space. Its intervention at a late stage of design had meant a curious intrusion into the library, adjacent, which the architect attempted to modify by creating a small nook under the curving staircase element.

"On the ground floor, the sitting room is situated to the west, the dining room and study, separated by a passage, to the east. This passage leads to the east wing past the servery adjacent to the dining room and then past the kitchen all facing south, and to the maid's bedroom and housekeeper's quarters including a bathroom and housekeeper's sitting room to the north."

" The master bedroom and bathroom/dressing room and two bedrooms separated by another bathroom are located upstairs off a spacious landing".(6)

A sliding door characteristic of the architect separates the entry hall from the sitting room while other doors leading off the hall are curious round headed doors reminiscent of those found in Renaissance cloisters. The sitting room is a long, generously proportioned room saved from rectangular nicety by a garden pronounced curve on the exterior wall where it swells out towards the garden and throws all the spaces above it out of alignment. Clearly here the architect is interested in creating an illusion of spaciousness regardless of unorthodox means.

The rooms display a curious mixture of twentieth century functionalism and comfort with 18th century

detail. "Fixed interior architectural decoration displays Adam style detailing, mantle pieces, joinery, hardware and some light fittings include garlands, festoons, urns, laurel leaf wreaths and ribbons. Enriched mouldings, such bead and reel and rope twists are included in ceiling cornices as well as dentils." (7) As Uta White has observed in her study of the interiors of the Ince House, each room was designed in order to create a setting in which each item of furniture could be shown too optimum effect. In this the interiors "may in part be seen in the realization of the 20th century design objective of accenting rather than harmonizing and deliberately creating desirable, often theatrical, settings." (8)

9.2 Context

During the 1920s and 1930s, large areas of the desirable and expensive suburbs of Toorak (in which suburb the Ince House was a part) were redeveloped by the wealthy bourgeoisie. Fashionable architects such as Marcus Martin, Robert Hamilton and Desbrowe Annear were responsible for a number of these new houses; Georgian revival styles were responsible for a number of these new houses; Georgian revival styles were popular and Annear's work in Toorak and Malvern adopted variations on this idiom. The Ince House is his final work and is more overwrought and florid than most. Many of the elements on the facade have parallels in Annear's other work - the porte-cochere for example can be compared with the four porte-cocheres in Domain Road; the treatment of the door with the Baillieu House, the windows including the oeils-de-boeuf with the Baillieu House. There is a certain Baroque flavour in the handling of details observable also in the Church Street Bridge which marks Annear's treatment of Georgian style from that of his contemporaries like Martin and Hardy Wilson, whose Old Colonial Architecture Annear had on occasion used as a source. The house itself occupies a corner site, but has been protected by the garden wall, designed by the architect.

9.3 Present Use

Until his very recent death, the Ince House was occupied by one of the original owners, Mr Wesley Ince and a housekeeper. Presumably it will now be placed on the market for sale. The Malvern Council has not (to my knowledge) recorded it as a significant local, and Australian building.

9.4 Present Condition

The house, garden and interiors are still just as they were when Mrs Ince died two decades ago. Most elements are largely unchanged since the time the

house and its furnishings were completed. A sunroom was added to the north of the sitting room in the 1950s and a motorized chair was installed in the staircase for Mrs Ince, who had become an invalid. Some walls on the stair have never been repainted. It is also worth noting that a study by two students of the Interior Design Department at RMIT exists which has documented most aspects of the interior of the house with drawings, colour swatches, photographs and text.

10. EVALUATION AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Ince House with its garden, ancillary buildings and interior, is an important, last work of one of Australia's leading architects. Having changed very little since 1933 it represents an extraordinary document in the architectural and social history of this country. It is similar perhaps to Calthorpe's House in Canberra, now preserved in totum as a museum, although designed for clients whose self-image was haute-bourgeois by an architect whose ability to provide suitable setting for such people was exemplary.

11. REFERENCES

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
4. Interview with Mr Wesley Ince, July 1990
5. Report on the Interior of the Ince House by Uta White, drawing on the material compiled by students Cathy Rawlings and Miriam Mahemooff of the Interior Design Department, RMIT, 1984.
6. The Australian House, p128
7. Uta White, op cit.
8. ibid
9. ibid