2 HORSBURGH GROVE, Glenunga flats, ARMADALE

Architects: Romberg and Shaw

History

Glenunga flats at 2 Horsburgh Grove were built in 1941 for Carl and Constance Stratman to the design of architects Romberg & Shaw, on the Brocklesby Estate in Crown Portion 2.

1854
Crown Portion 2, which included 6 acres, 2 roods, 24 perches, with a frontage to Kooyong Road, was sold to Matthew Cantlon in 1854. The land was subdivided, with Lyons Terrace planned to run east from Kooyong Road through the allotment. Cantlon sold Crown Portions 1 and 2 to William Bushby Jones in 1885 and Jones brought the land under the Transfer of Land Act the following year.[1]

1886
William B. Jones had owned the adjacent allotment (Portion 3) since 1866, where he built his mansion 'Brocklesby', with its entrance from Malvern Road. In 1886 the subdivision of part of the Brocklesby Estate (Portions 1 & 2) resulted in 50 building allotments in Kooyong Road, Malvern Road and the newly created Erskine Street, Murray Street and Horsburgh Grove.[2] 'Brocklesby' remained east of Huntingtower Road.

1900
By the turn of the century, brick houses lined the south side of Horsburgh Grove, Erskine Street and the main roads. In Horsburgh Grove however, as the 1902 MMBW plan shows, two allotments (lots 47 and 48) remained as vacant land.[3]

Around 1905, solicitor William Fookes purchased 'Wyuna' at 116 Kooyong Road.[4] He also purchased lot 48, the adjacent allotment in Horsburgh Grove. In 1925, Fookes sold the house and adjacent land to Mrs Alice Walker.[5] A few years later the house and land were purchased by Constance Stratmann.[6]

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[1] Rob Bower, 'Malvern 1840-1989: A History of the Subdivision', plan 3, (unpublished manuscript), Malvern Archives.
[2] LP 1271, 12 October 1886; Brocklesby Estate Armadale. SLV Collection.
[3] MMBW plan 1902.
[4] Shire of Malvern rate book, western riding 1905-6, no. 20.
[5] City of Malvern rate book, north ward, 1925-6, no. 32.
[6] City of Malvern rate book, north ward, 1934-5, no. 40; City of Malvern rate book, north ward,1934-5, no. 1458.

1941

In 1941, soon after Carl and Constance Statmann sold the house at 116 Kooyong Road and moved to Talbot Crescent, an engineering drawing was submitted to Malvern Council for 'Proposed flats at 2 Horsburgh Grove Armadale' [by] Romberg and Shaw - Cyril Hudspeth Structural Engineers.[7] According to the MMBW drainage plan, the 4 flats each of 4 rooms, were built the same year, on Constance Stratman's land in Horsburgh Grove.[8] The flats were then occupied by Mrs Sheila Bahlsen, William Gower, architect Edgar Clive Harcourt and Thomas McGinn.[9]

Glenunga Flats were sold to Beddison (1949), Rosenblatt (1951), Berlin (1958), the Melbourne Bible Institute (1967) and Bramich (1977). (In 1962 an unsuccessful application was made to construct a single storey flat at the front of the property).

In 1978 the property was strata tilted and each flat was sold to individual purchasers. Council records indicate that in 1992-3 an application was made to construct additions to the rear ground floor flat.

History prepared by Di Foster of the Malvern Archives

REFERENCES:

Bower, Rob, 'Malvern 1840-1989: A History of the Subdivision', plan 3, (unpublished manuscript), Malvern Archives.
Brocklesby Estate subdivision plan. SLV Collection.
City of Malvern rate books.
Malvern building plan 1,0780,01400.
MMBW plan 1902.
MMBW drainage plan, 2 Horsburgh Grove, 1941.

Description

This two storey block of four flats is based on an 'L shaped' plan form. There are two upper level flats and two ground floor. The upper level is accessed by an open external stairs along the driveway. They are designed with the principal windows facing across a garden to the north and west. This plan form is facetted to reflect the layout of individual units. It has a simple low pitch skillion roof, with expressed rafters for the overhang.

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[7] Malvern building plan 1,0780,01400.
[8] MMBW plan of drainage. Owner C. Stratman, 13 Talbot Cr. Agent Romberg & Shaw, 357 Little Collins Street. 3 May 1941
[9] City of Malvern rate book, north ward, no. 1554.

Walls are painted bagged brickwork with contrasting sections of random rubble sandstone providing large chimney breasts and flues, with a simple metal capping over the entire chimney.

The middle section has a sequence of five angled window bays to provide north sun to west facing units. Apart from the angled windows, the other principal windows are simple timber window walls with transoms and mullions.

Balconies are located at the front and rear. The front balcony has a perforated northern wing wall with six pipe section port hole openings to upper and lower flats, to provide privacy from the street as these face west across the garden. At the rear the balcony faces north across the full length of the garden.

Integrity

Externally these flats are relatively intact, apart from three of the balconies having been glazed in. The only other obvious change is the new driveway in brown slate providing a 1940s-50s character and air conditioning units in windows.

Analysis

This flat block was built in 1941 for C Stratman of Talbot Crescent, Kooyong, to the design of architects Romberg & Shaw. The firm's principal, Frederick Romberg, is recognised as bringing European Modernist architecture to Victoria, in particular its application to flat construction which was very topical in periodicals published during the war period.

Contemporary with Romberg's Keam Street house in Ivanhoe, Glenunga also departs from the International Modern Movement towards *Heimatstil*, the romantic strain of German Expressionism based on, in part, rustic village housing. Expressed eaves rafters, a rough stone chimney and simple skillion roof belied the modern smartness of the earlier Newburn flat designs, in Queens Road South Melbourne. The contrasting materials, rough hewn stone and smooth planes of render, and the porthole windows are all hallmarks of Romberg's designs and his partner and principal design architect, Mary Turner Shaw. Yet the simple massings and layout also reflects the International Style and the Wiener Werkbund co-operative housing projects of Adolf Loos, in particular. The cantilevered concrete balconies, window walls and pipe steel handrails also reflect this modernism. The angled bays have been ascribed to Alvar Aato's Villa Mairea, Finland. [10]It is interesting to compare this project with the use of similar materials by

[10] Philip Goad *Melbourne Architecture*, Watermark Press, 1999, p151

Race Godfrey's 9 Mernda Road Kooyong designed 10 years earlier, but applied to a completely different design idiom.

The design of Glenunga broke new grounds in the manner that compact flat accommodation was arranged. Important innovations were the northern orientation with window walls, and the rational layout with functional balconies. This design must be regarded as one of the milestones in the evolution of residential design in Melbourne. It is one of the earliest example of timber window walls that were later popularised by Stegbar using Robin Boyd's design of the 1950s. The blinds are apparently part of the original design.

The landscaping with the hedged private garden and mature palm provides a perfect context to the design.

The property retains the features that provide the architectural and historic significance.

Statement of Significance

Glenunga flats at 2 Horsburgh Grove were built in 1941 for Carl and Constance Stratman to the design of architects Romberg & Shaw.

Glenunga flats are of state significance as an outstanding pioneering Modernist small flat development by renowned architects Frederick Romberg and Mary Turner Shaw who were responsible for many important Modernist flat projects, including Newburn, and later Romberg's Stanhill.

Glenunga is distinguished by the simple functional plan and building form (arranged around a garden court) with angled window bays providing interest. The contrasting materials, rough hewn stone and smooth planes of render, and the porthole windows are all hallmarks of Romberg and Shaw's designs.

All original physical elements contribute to this significance.

Analysis and statement of significance are largely based on an earlier citation prepared by Graeme Butler, as well as the citation for this building in Philip Goad's Melbourne Architecture.

Criteria

The building easily meets the criteria for local significance as required by state government guidelines. This is defined by the *Local Government Heritage Guidelines,* Department of Planning and Housing, 1991, (p6)

> *Places of local significance are of particular importance to a local community, or part of a community, which is usually defined by a local government area (this was pre amalgamation). The majority of places which are determined to be of cultural value will be of local significance. Relatively fewer places will be determined to be of state or national significance.*
>
> *The normal means of management for places of local significance is inclusion ... in the local planning scheme.*

More recently, the Practice Notes to the Victorian Planning Provisions included *Applying the Heritage Overlay,* Department of Infrastructure, February 1999, confirm the 1991 criteria and also recommend the use of the AHC criteria.

> *Under the Australian Heritage Commission's eight broad criteria, a place may possess significance or other special value for future generations as well as the present community.*

This property has been considered to meet the following AHC criteria:

Criterion A: *its importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history*
A pioneering example of modern functional flat design.

Criterion B: *its possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history*
There are few intact surviving examples of the important and innovative work of Frederick Romberg.

Criterion C: *its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history*
The building fabric may reveal other design innovations

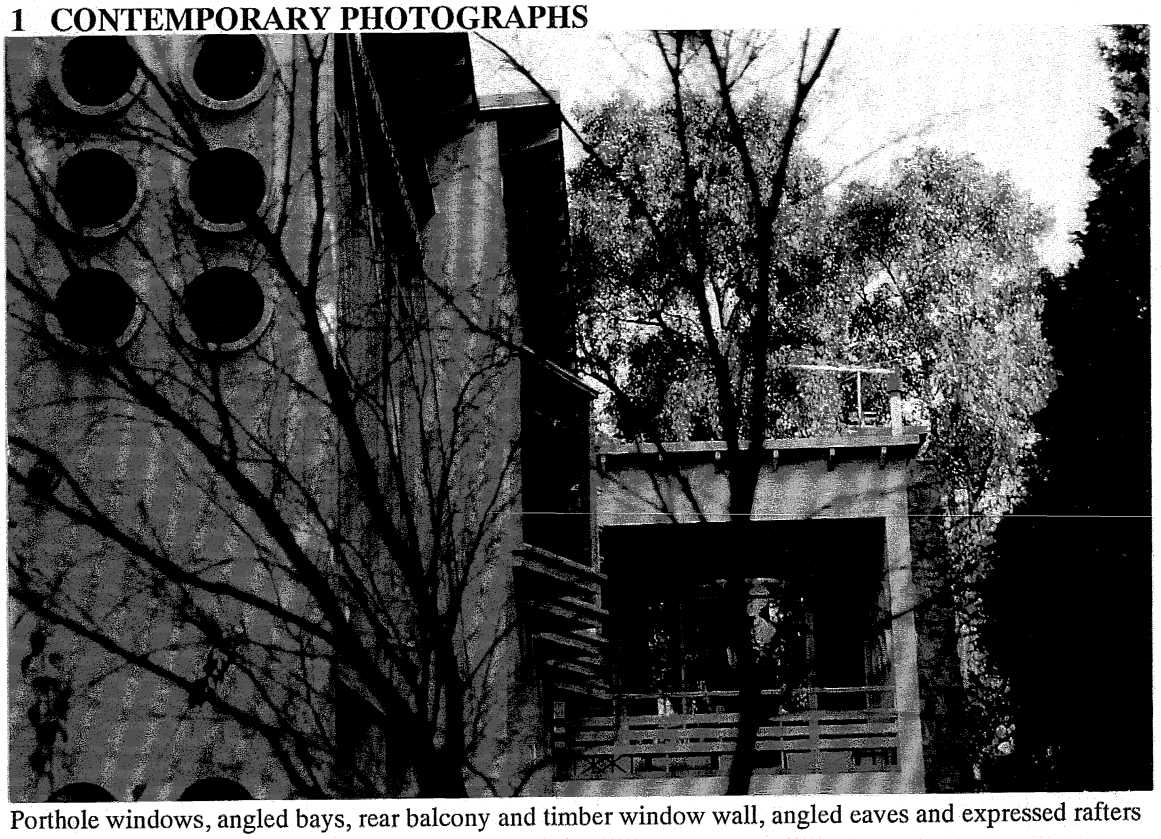
Criterion D: *its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of:*
i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or
ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments
An excellent early example of modern functional flat design

Criterion E: *its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group*
This building has been included in a select group in the first serious guide to architecture in Melbourne

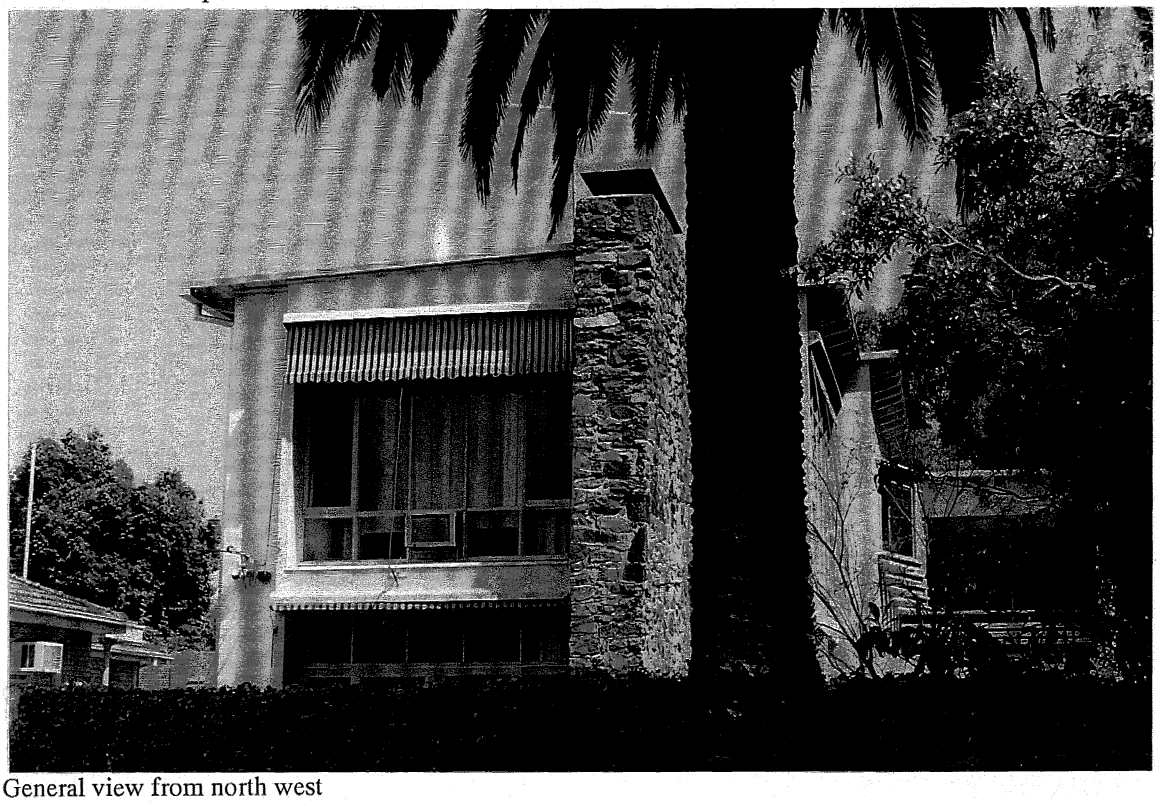
Criterion F: *its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period*
The planning and use of timber window walls are innovative for this period

Criterion H: *its special associations with the life or works of a person, a group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history*
An important works of renowned modernist architect Frederick Romberg

ATTACHMENTS
1 CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHS



Porthole windows, angled bays, rear balcony and timber window wall, angled eaves and expressed rafters are some of the important elements of Glenburn

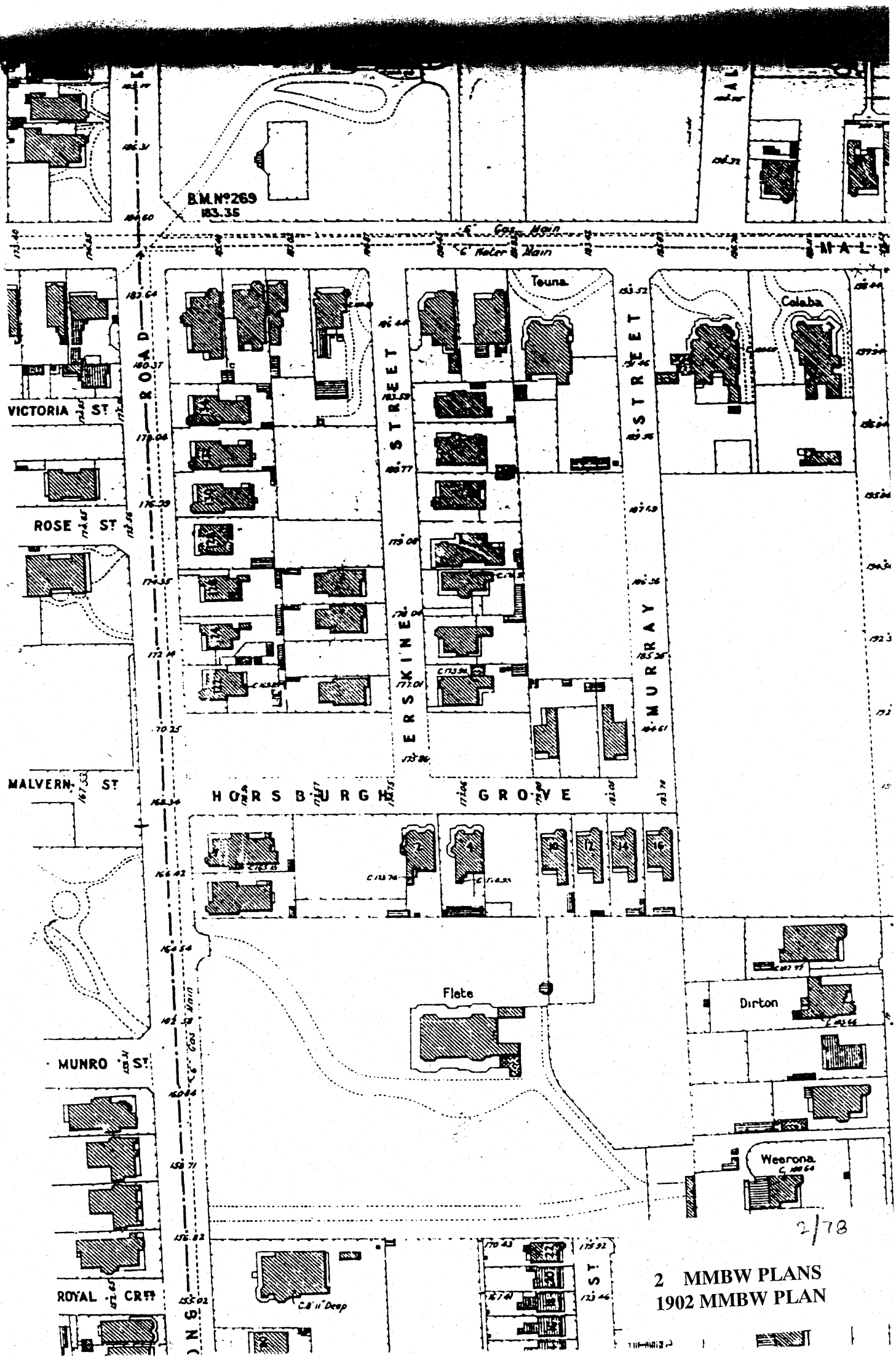


General view from north west

Porthole screens and rustic chimney

Driveway and entrance stairs

2 Horsburgh Grove, Glenunga flats, Armadale



2 MMBW PLANS
1902 MMBW PLAN

PLAN OF DRAINAGE

2 Horsburgh

FOR

M. Owner C. Stratman 13 Talbot Cres Malvern

Agent. Romberg & Shaw 357 Little Collins St Melbourne

MUNICIPALITY: MALVERN

REFERENCE:

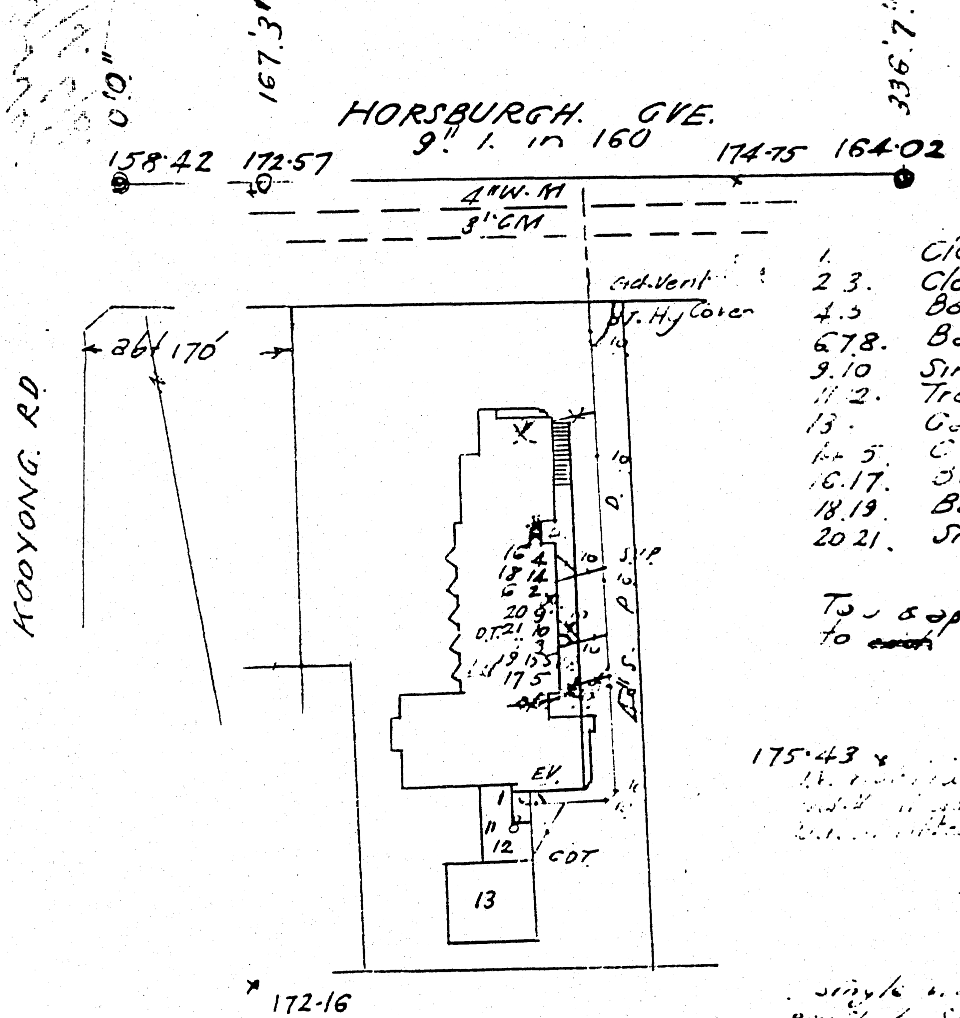
B.T. Boundary Trap	G.I.T. Grease Interceptor Trap	S.P.D. Stoneware Pipe Drain	I.V. Induct Vent
D.T. Disconnector Trap	S.T. Silt Trap	I.C. Inspection Chamber	S.I.V.P. Soil Induct Vent Pipe
G.T. Gully Trap	C.I.P. Cast Iron Pipe	I.O. Inspection Opening	S.V.P. Soil Vent Pipe
G.D.T. Gully Disconnector Trap	G.W.I.P. Galv. Wrought Iron Pipe	E.V. Educt Vent	T.I.T. Triple Interceptor Trap

Scale: 40 feet to 1 inch. *(See By Law No 35)*

The whole of the drainage and/or plumbing work shall be carried out in accordance with the By Laws and requirements of the Board.

This plan is issued subject to the requirements of the local Municipal By-Laws being complied with.

New connection & extension of retic to boundary required I.L 166·75 at Board's expense.
Laid by Board



1.	Closet external	1st Floor
2 3.	Closet internal	"
4.5	Baths	"
6 7 8.	Basins	"
9.10	Sinks	"
11 12.	Troughs	"
13.	Garage	"
14 15.	Closets internal	1st Floor
16.17.	Baths	"
18.19.	Basins	"
20 21.	Sinks	"

Tr. & apron ~~to be~~ provided to ~~each~~ G.D.T.

175·43

Single water service ~~to be~~ provided. Separate branches each controlled by a stop cock ~~to~~ ... for each set of fittings grouped vertically

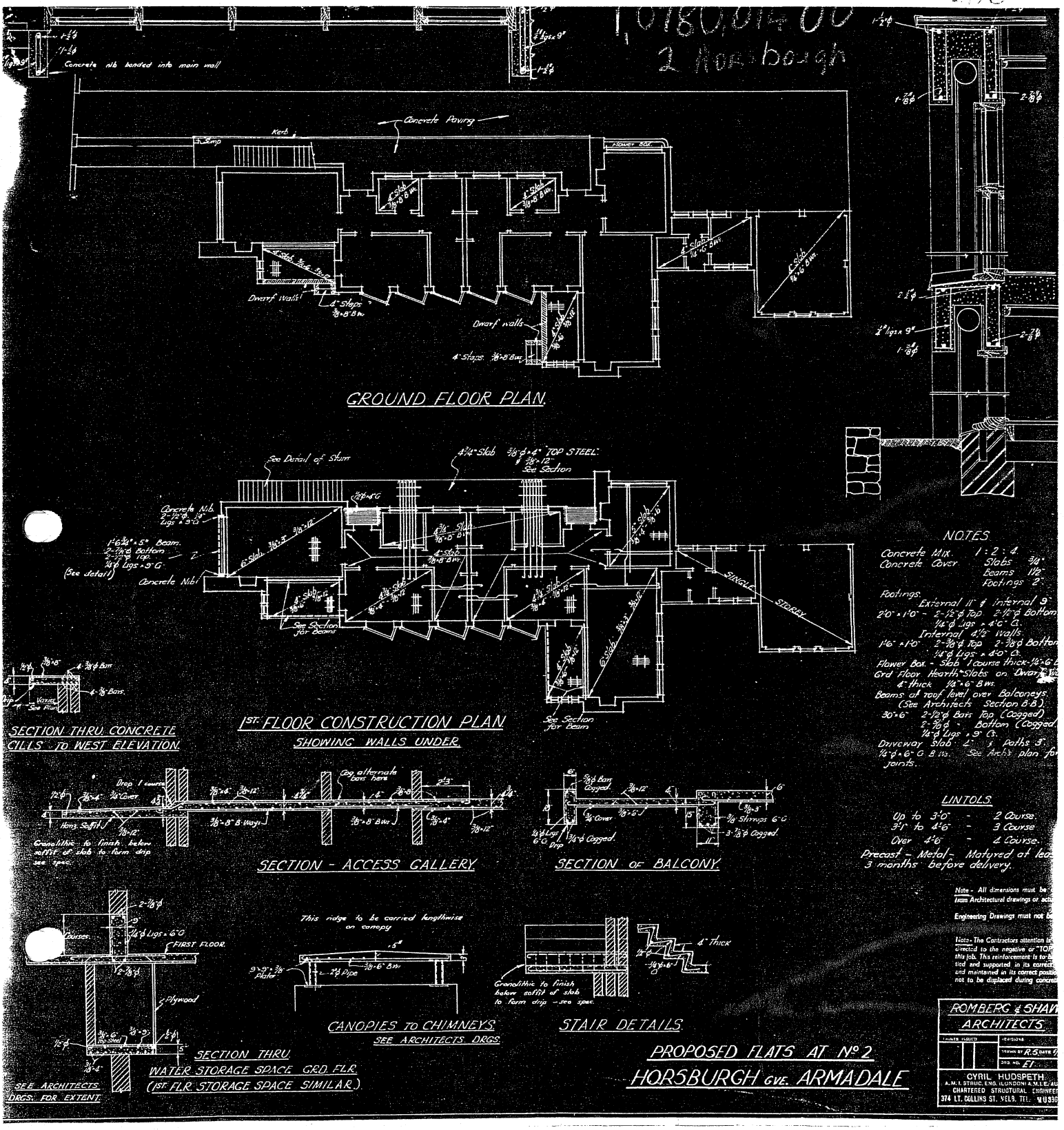
FWP 12 5 41

Examined,

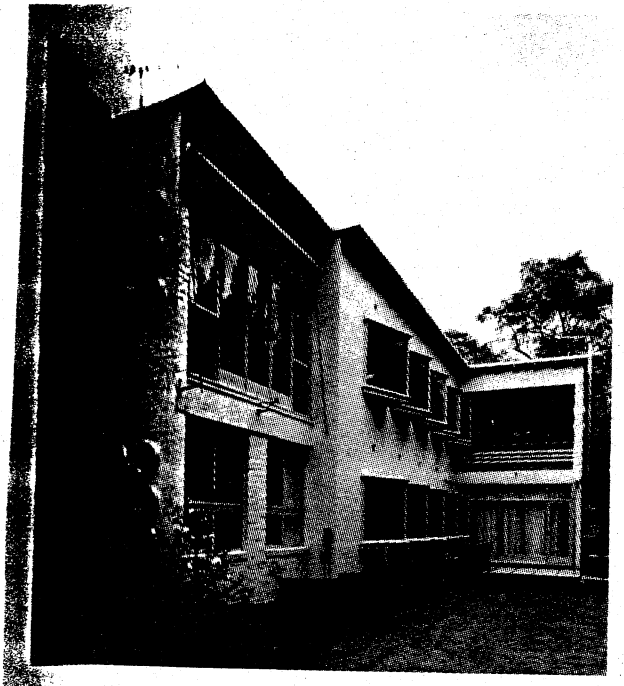
1941 MMBW DRAINAGE PLAN

Engineer.

Melbourne, 13. 5. 1941.


GROUND FLOOR PLAN.
1ST. FLOOR CONSTRUCTION PLAN
SHOWING WALLS UNDER.
SECTION THRU. CONCRETE CILLS TO WEST ELEVATION.
SECTION - ACCESS GALLERY.
SECTION OF BALCONY.
CANOPIES TO CHIMNEYS
SEE ARCHITECTS DRGS.
STAIR DETAILS.
SECTION THRU WATER STORAGE SPACE GRD. FLR.
(1ST FLR STORAGE SPACE SIMILAR.)
SEE ARCHITECTS DRGS. FOR EXTENT.
NOTES
LINTOLS
PROPOSED FLATS AT Nº 2
HORSBURGH Gve. ARMADALE
ROMBERG & SHAW
ARCHITECTS
CYRIL HUDSPETH
CHARTERED STRUCTURAL ENGINEER
374 LT. COLLINS ST. VELB. TEL.

4 EXTRACT FROM *MELBOURNE ARCHITECTURE*



277

59 A7

277 Glenunga Flats
2 Horsburgh Grove, Armadale
1940-41 Romberg and Shaw
GC, V, NA

The design of Glenunga does not conform to commonly held notions of the stripped white abstract forms of the so-called International Style. Instead, it is a complex hybrid of folk-inspired *heimatstil* elements such as the rubble rock chimneys, obvious domestic elements such as window blinds and timber-framed roofs with projecting rafters combined with conventional brick construction and elements of the new functionalist architecture from Europe: cantilevered balconies, pipe steel handrails, porthole windows and generous areas of glass. Of special note at Glenunga are the angled glass bays which echo Romberg's admiration of Alvar Aalto's Villa Mairea, Finland (1937-38).

75A G9

2L A8

279 Newburn Flats
30 Queens Road, Melbourne
1939-42 Romberg and Shaw
GC, V, NA

Designed by Frederick Romberg (1913-1992) and Mary Turner Shaw (1906-1990), Newburn is one of the finest contributions to the emergence of European Modernism in Australian architecture. Built in off-form reinforced concrete (the impression of the square steel forms are visible beneath the paintwork), the north face of this linear block of apartments has a serrated edge to give each apartment a view and a degree of privacy. Each flat has a balcony whose outside edge has been formed using corrugated iron as formwork. At the front of the block, larger apartments are separated from the linear block by a stairwell and a full height steel-framed glazed wall. A former highlight of this wall flanking the stairwell and visible from Queens Road was a giant painted sundial executed by emigre artist Gerhart Selheim. Selheim had also painted aboriginal motifs outside the front doors of each apartment. These have all since been painted over. This north face was further enlivened by gold canvas blinds, balcony soffits painted light blue and vermilion painted steel glazing. A rooftop pergola at the front of Newburn was glazed in by Romberg to become a penthouse apartment and office. On the south face, open cantilevered balconies recall Cairo flats (where Romberg lived while designing Newburn) and at the very rear of the block there is a tiny caretakers' flat, shop (which still operates) and garages for residents. Newburn is one of a series of important prewar buildings designed by Frederick Romberg in association with Mary Turner Shaw, both former employees within the Stephenson and Turner office.

2 Horsburgh Grove, Glenunga flats, Armadale

5 ARCHITECTS' BIOGRAPHIES

ROMBERG AND SHAW

Romberg and Shaw
Grounds, Romberg and Boyd
Robin Boyd
Roy Grounds

Full biographical details are not provided for these well known partnerships, other than the following brief details. A more considered appraisal of their work is found in Conrad Hamann article 'Roy Grounds, Frederick Romberg & Robin Boyd', in Howard Tanner (ed), *Architects of Australia*, Macmillan, Melbourne 1981.

Frederick Romberg (1913-1992), came to Australia in 1938, and formed a partnership with Richard and Mary Turner Shaw in 1939. Mary Turner Shaw (1906-1990) played an important, although not generally recognised, role in this practice. Recognition came early with Newburn Flats, Queens Road South Melbourne, built the same year. He brought the European influences of Le Corbusier and Alvar Aalto to this firm. The innovative use of materials, including off form concrete, was a hallmark of this practice. Stanhill is the undoubted masterpiece of this firm, and is among the most important buildings in Australia of the International style. The later partnership of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd was of major importance in the 1950s. (1)

Robin Boyd was the doyen of Victorian architecture during the 1950s and 60s. His commissions included a wide range of institutional and residential projects. He published widely and was a noted architectural critic. Roy Grounds's early designs used the Spanish Mission mode but quickly adapted to the International Style, via the Georgian Revival. He is best known for his simple design of the post war period using geometric forms.

1 Wilson & Sands, *Building a City*, 1981, p.154.

Glenunga Flats, 2 Horsburgh Grove
Architects: Romberg & Shaw; 1941: for C Stratman
1 Glenbervie Road
Architect: Robin Boyd; 1970: for I J Milne
Kooyong Road (corner Myrnong Crescent)
Architect: Roy Grounds