

PRESHIL JUNIOR SCHOOL



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SOHE 2008



h00072 h00072 preshil
school may 05 tree house



h00072 h00072 preshil
school may 05 home rooms



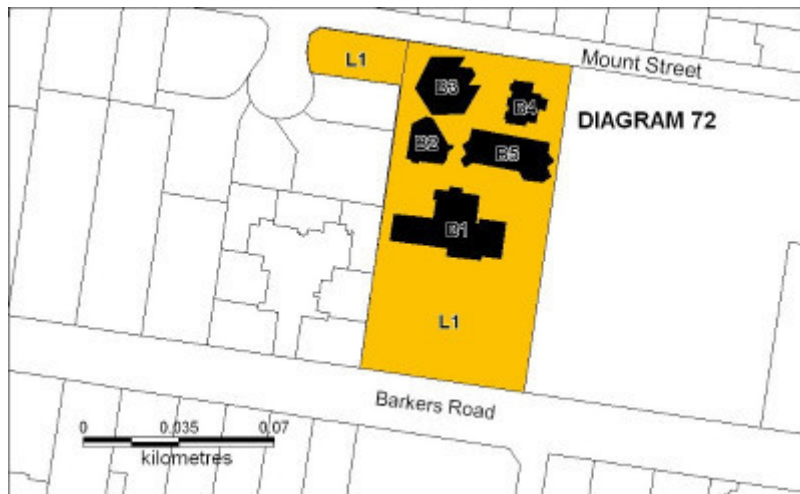
h00072 h00072 preshil
school may 05 library



h00072 h00072 preshil
school may 05 grounds



h00072 h00072 preshil
school may 05 prep room
rear



h00072 h00072 preshil junior school plan

Location

395 BARKERS ROAD KEW, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0072

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO6

VHR Registration

October 13, 2005

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 19, 2005

What is significant?

Preshil Junior School is Australia's longest surviving progressive school. The school was established in the 1930s by Margaret J R Lyttle, and still follows the educational philosophies and practices established by her in opposition to the traditional teaching methods of the time. The school moved to the present site in 1937, and in 1960 Kevin Borland, whose children attended the school, was asked to design the school hall. The pupils were closely involved in the design process. Over the following decade he and others from his office designed five more buildings, which were laid out in an informal and non-hierarchical way on the site, integrating the existing early 1930s stucco cottage, original plantings and new gardens. The buildings were designed to accommodate the school's approach to active learning, embodied in the child-scaled, multi-purpose buildings. In 1972 Borland was awarded an RAIA Victorian chapter Bronze medal for the school buildings. In 2003 the school was included as one of the thirty-seven best projects in Victoria to have been awarded RAIA medals.

The Preshil buildings designed or modified by Kevin Borland and his office from 1962 and 1972 are experimental in design, having irregular forms and angles created with complex, precise joinery that gives a variety of internal and external spaces. The precise form of each building is counteracted by the use of raw timber posts and beams. The rooms are lit via clerestory windows and walls of sliding glass doors and the internal spaces can be divided by folding doors to allow for different uses. There are many small spaces attached to the main spaces, and elevated platforms which the children can reach by ladders. Borland said of the Preshil buildings, "One of the characteristics of Preshil is the infinite variety of cubby houses that the kids build themselves, so I was concerned with the development of the type of building that was scaled to kids, with all the informality they would like". The earliest of the buildings is the school hall constructed in 1962, known as Kevin Borland Hall. It has an innovative octagonal plan with an octagonal roof offset against the alignment of the walls with stage along one side and an intricate timber ceiling with skylights. It was designed for multi-purpose use. New curtains for the stage are painted by the students every two years and the school holds the collection of these from initial construction of the hall. In 1964 Borland designed a classroom for pre-school children, added to the east end of the original house and incorporating a bedroom and sitting room of the house. The 'tree house' constructed in 1965 consists of two elevated classrooms separated by a timber deck through which an Italian Cypress grows. The space beneath is for woodwork classes and sandpit. In 1969 the original 1939 rectangular classroom was modified by

Borland, with Philip Cohen as assistant architect, to create multi-purpose 'tutorial' classrooms that contain a variety of spaces and provide private and community areas with a verandah along the north side. The 'home rooms' were constructed in 1972 with John Kenny as assistant architect, an irregularly planned timber building with a variety of spaces on different levels and a mezzanine retreat for the children.

In 1975 Borland and an associate, Jenny Shannon, designed a second floor addition to the rear of the original house, initially a staff room but subsequently converted to the school library. Again this has an irregular form with multiple levels, constructed of brick, raw timber and glass and offers a view across the site. Other structures at Preshil include 'the Nursery' in the original garage on the site that has been extended and with windows along the western side; the play equipment and climbing frames, some of which date to the 1960s; cubby houses that are constantly constructed by the children. A number of original plantings exist on the site including 2 Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempirens*), one of which grows through the deck of the 'Tree House' and a large number of pepper trees. Other plantings are principally Eucalypts, from the 1960s and to the present, including Argyle Apple (*Eucalyptus cinerea*) and Lemon-Scented Gums (*Eucalyptus citriodora*).

Preshil, and in particular those buildings designed by Borland, continue a relationship began in the early 20th century between experimental teaching techniques, psychoanalysis and experimental architecture. A belief that learning environments are integral to the development of a child was expressed first in Europe in schools such as A. S Neill's Summerhill School and at Dartington Hall where a number of well-known modern architects worked. In Australia the Koornong School at Warrandyte (1939 - 1947) continued these ideas, in 1939 commissioning local architect Best Overend to design the school's vernacular-style timber buildings of which only the headmaster's house survives. Borland was familiar with the Koornong School and his Preshil buildings resemble those at Koornong in their light timber construction, elevation and random placement around the site. This tradition in the design of progressive schools was continued in the 1970s by Borland's earlier associate, Daryl Jackson with Evan Walker in their design for St Pauls School, Baxter in 1979. Here Preshil provided the model for the informal placement of the buildings, the unsophisticated post and beam construction and the active involvement of the students and staff in the design process.

How is it significant?

Preshil Junior School is of architectural, historic and social significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Preshil is architecturally significant as a notable example of the work of the prominent Melbourne architect Kevin Borland. In the 1960s Borland had emerged as a major design force in Melbourne with architecture imbued with a strong social agenda and an informal domestic architectural vocabulary. The buildings at Preshil, designed by Borland and his associates, are experimental in design and materials and reflect the participatory design methods becoming fashionable in architecture in the 1960s and 1970s. At Preshil, school children participated in the design process, evident in the scale and informality of the design. Preshil is an early and outstanding example of the interest of Melbourne architects, led by Borland, in inventive timber architecture, in structural techniques and expressive form, reflecting the exploratory lifestyles of the 1960s and 1970s.

Preshil is historically significant in reflecting the social changes taking place during the 1960s, in particular the emergence of a counterculture and dissatisfaction with traditional middle class values, including the conservatism of traditional schools and their educational methods. Preshil is the only progressive school in Melbourne surviving from the major period of interest in progressive schools in the 1920s and 30s, when the relationship between a child's development and their learning environment began to be explored through experimental architecture.

Preshil School is socially significant as one of the most important progressive schools in Melbourne, where a number of prominent and successful Victorians were educated including Bioethics Professor Peter Singer, photographer Polly Borland, entertainer Gina Riley, and furniture maker Anton Gerner.

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General

exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. **General Conditions:** 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible. **Note:** All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component. **General Conditions:** 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. **Note:** The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. **General Conditions:** 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. **General Conditions:** 5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. **Regular Site Maintenance :** The following site maintenance works are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) regular site maintenance provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features; b) the maintenance of an item to retain its conditions or operation without the removal of or damage to the existing fabric or the introduction of new materials; c) cleaning including the removal of surface deposits, organic growths, or graffiti by the use of low pressure water and natural detergents and mild brushing and scrubbing; d) repairs, conservation and maintenance to plaques, memorials, roads and paths, fences and gates and drainage and irrigation. e) the replacement of existing services such as cabling, plumbing, wiring and fire services that uses existing routes, conduits or voids, and does not involve damage to or the removal of significant fabric. **Note:** Surface patina which has developed on the fabric may be an important part of the item's significance and if so needs to be preserved during maintenance and cleaning. **Note:** Any new materials used for repair must not exacerbate the decay of existing fabric due to chemical incompatibility, obscure existing fabric or limit access to existing fabric for future maintenance. Repair must maximise protection and retention of fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements.

Landscape Maintenance : The process of gardening and maintenance, mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, removal of dead plants, disease and weed control, emergency and safety works to care for existing plants and planting themes.

Removal of vegetation that is not significant to maintain fire safety and to conserve significant buildings and structures.

The replanting of plant species to conserve the landscape character and plant collections and themes.

Repairs, conservation and maintenance to hard landscape elements, buildings, structures, ornaments, roads and paths, drainage and irrigation system.

Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Pruning of amenity trees AS4373.

Removal of plants listed as noxious weeds in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.

Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering and drainage systems.

Non-structural works that occur at a distance greater than 5 metres from the canopy edge of a significant tree, plant or hedge, (structural works may require a permit if still on the registered land).

Non-commercial signage, lighting, security fire safety and other safety requirements, provided no structural building occurs.

Plant labelling and interpretative signage.

Resurfacing of existing paths and driveways.

Maintenance and replacement of play equipment to meet Australian Standards: Playground equipment for parks, schools and domestic use AS1924; Playgrounds – Guide to siting and to installation and maintenance of equipment AS2155; and Playground surfacing – Specifications, requirements and test method AS4422

Public Safety and Security : The following public safety and security activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) public safety and security activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures; b) the erection of temporary security fencing, scaffolding, hoardings or surveillance systems to prevent unauthorised access or secure public safety which will not adversely affect significant fabric of the place; c) development including emergency stabilisation necessary to secure safety where a site feature has been irreparably damaged or destabilised and represents a safety risk to its users or the public. Note: Urgent or emergency site works are to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified specialist such as a structural engineer, or other heritage professional. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Construction dates	1962,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	13627
Property Number	

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 72 in the category described as a Heritage place:

Preshil Junior School, 395 Barkers Road, Kew, Boroondara City Council.

EXTENT:

General: The landscape setting and original plantings including Italian Cyprus (*Cupressus sempirens*).

1. All of the buildings marked as follows on Diagram 0072 held by the Executive Director:

B1 House, prep room and library

B2 The 'home-rooms'

B3 Kevin Borland Hall

B4 The 'tree house'

B5 Multi-purpose tutorial rooms

2. All of the Land marked L1 on Diagram 0072 held by the Executive Director.

Dated 13 October 2005

RAY OSBORNE
Acting Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 41 13 October 2005 2281]

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>