

# RICE HOUSE



RICE HOUSE SOHE 2008



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14272 Rice House Eltham  
May 06 main house



14272 Rice House Eltham  
May 06 childrens house



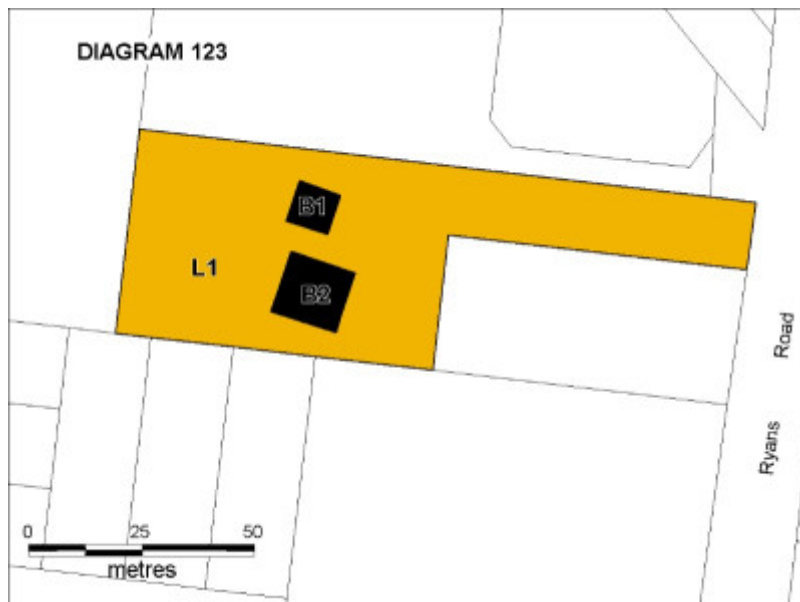
14272 Rice House Eltham  
May 06 Main house detail



14272 Rice House Eltham  
May 06 main house side view



14272 Rice House Eltham  
May 06 carport



H0123 plan

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### **Location**

69 RYANS ROAD ELTHAM, NILLUMBIK SHIRE

### **Municipality**

NILLUMBIK SHIRE

### **Level of significance**

Registered

### **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H0123

### **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO254

### **VHR Registration**

September 14, 2006

### **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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### **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - September 18, 2006

What is significant?

Rice House, Eltham, consists of two monolithic concrete structures, the main house and the children's house, designed by noted Melbourne architect Kevin Borland in 1951 (constructed in 1953-4). The house was commissioned by Harrie and Lorna Rice who met Borland at the *Age Small Homes Service* for which Borland was then Assistant Director. Rice House is Borland's first commissioned house design.

The two structures, set on a hilltop in garden and regenerated native bush, consist of a series of catenary arches that form the outer walls and roof of each structure as one self supporting unit. The arches were constructed using the ctesiphon system in which cement containing a non-porite waterproofing agent is applied in layers to a form of regularly spaced catenary timber arches tightly covered by hessian. The ctesiphon system was developed and patented in the United Kingdom by engineer JH de Waller in 1947. The Australian patent was held by builders McDougall and Ireland who built the catenary arch ctesiphon structures at three locations, the first being Rice House followed by the Wood House and Supermarket designed by Robin Boyd in 1952 (H1377) and Bellfield Community Centre designed by Kevin Borland and Peter McIntyre in 1953 (demolished).

The main house consists of four arches supported by brick and concrete walls that create a series of interconnected rooms. The second structure of two arches was designed as a garage and studio but in the mid-1950s was converted by Borland to children's bedrooms. The two structures were originally linked by a covered way of suspended 'draped' concrete, designed by Borland in association with engineer Bill Irwin. This collapsed in the 1980s. In 1973 Borland designed the carport and extension of the kitchen area at the rear southern side of the main structure which is sympathetic to the design and siting of the original house. Both structures retain original fittings and built in furniture designed by Borland.

The regenerated bush land to the rear of the property, known as 'wildwood', provides a complementary setting for the organic shape of the structures which appear to emerge from the ground on the hill top site.

How is it significant?

Rice house is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria

Why is it significant?

Rice house is of architectural significance as the first and most intact example of the use of the ctesiphon system of construction in Victoria. Only three properties were built in Victoria using this system and of these only one other survives, the Wood House and Supermarket, designed by Robin Boyd in 1952 (H1377) which has been substantially altered.

Rice house is of architectural significance for Kevin Borland's innovative and experimental design. It is an outstanding example of the post-war period of experimentation in domestic architecture in Melbourne that was an outcome of late-Modernism coupled with the post-war shortage of regular building materials that saw the development of a recognisable Melbourne regional style of architecture. This experimentation was characterised by the designs of Robin Boyd, Peter McIntyre, Neil Clerehan, Kevin Borland and others for the *Age Small Homes Service* (1947-1953).

Rice house is of historical significance for its association with architect Kevin Borland whose innovative designs in both domestic and public architecture make him notable amongst the Melbourne architects of the second half of the twentieth century. Rice House is Borland's first commissioned house design. He was subsequently a member of the design team for the Olympic Swimming Pool (1952, H1977) and, with Daryl Jackson, designer of the Harold Holt Memorial Swim Centre (1968, H0069). Along with Borland's buildings at Preshil Junior School (1968-73, H0072), Rice House is one of the most intact examples of his domestic-scale designs.

## 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 Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. **General Conditions:** 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed 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 the Executive Director, 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 determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. **General Conditions:** 5. Nothing in this determination 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 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.** **Fire Suppression Duties :** The following fire suppression duties are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) Fire suppression and fire fighting duties provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant features b) Fire suppression activities such as fuel reduction burns, and fire control line construction, provided all significant historical features are appropriately recognised and protected; **Note:** Fire management authorities should be aware of the location, extent and significance of historical places when developing fire suppression and fire fighting strategies. The importance of places listed in the Heritage Register must be considered when strategies for fire suppression and management are being developed. **Weed and Vermin Control :** The following weed and vermin control activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) Weed and vermin control activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant features;

Note: Particular care must be taken with weed and vermin control works where such activities may have a detrimental affect on the significant fabric of a place. Landscape Maintenance : The following landscape maintenance works are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) landscape maintenance works provided the activities do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant features b) watering, mowing, top-dressing and fertilising necessary for the continued health of plants, without damage or major alterations to layout, contours, plant species; c) pruning to control size, improve shape, flowering or fruiting and the removal of diseased, dead or dangerous material

Interiors: Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of any original paint or other decorative scheme.

Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.

Installation, removal or replacement of curtain tracks, rods and blinds.

Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted art or religious works or icons.

Demolition or removal of non-original stud/partition walls, suspended ceilings or non-original wall linings (including plasterboard, laminate and Masonite), bathroom partitions and tiling, sanitary fixtures and fittings, kitchen wall tiling and equipment, lights, built-in cupboards, cubicle partitions, computer and office fitout and the like.

Removal or replacement of non-original door and window furniture including, hinges, locks, knobsets and sash lifts.

Installation of stud walls, which are removable.

Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring.

Installation, removal or replacement of electric clocks, detectors, alarms, emergency lights, and the like on plaster surfaces.

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	1953,
Architect/Designer	Borland, Kevin,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	14272
Property Number	

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## Plaque Citation

Rice House consists of two catenary arch concrete structures - the main house and the children's house - designed by noted and innovative architect Kevin Borland in 1951 utilising Ctesiphon system of construction.

## Extent of Registration

General: All the buildings known as Rice House and the landscape setting at 69 Ryans Road, Eltham

1. All of the buildings marked as follows on Diagram 123 held by the Executive Director:

B1 Childrens house

B2 Main House

2. All of the Land marked L1 on Diagram 123 held by the Executive Director.

*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/>*