

DAVID GODSELL HOUSE



2017 view from nth east.jpg



2017 east wall.jpg



2017 entry.jpg



2017 roof above entry.jpg



2017 exterior, kitchen.jpg



2017 from south.jpg



2017, north side.jpg



2017, street boundary.jpg



2017, living room.jpg



2017, living room (2).jpg



2017 living room.jpg



2017, looking south.jpg



2017, kitchen.jpg



c2016, bedroom.jpg



1963 plan.jpg



c1961.jpg



c1961 (2).jpg



c1961 (3).jpg



c1961 (4).jpg



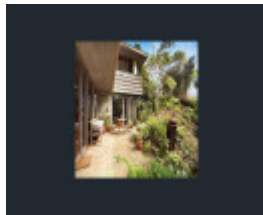
c1961 (5).jpg



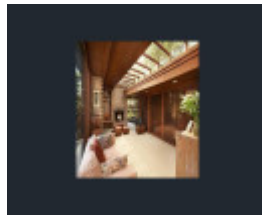
c1961 (6).jpg



c1961 (7).jpg



2008.jpg



2008 (2).jpg



2017 carport with studio above.jpg



2017 eaves outside living room.jpg



2017, bedrooms, north west corner.jpg

Location

491 BALCOMBE ROAD BEAUMARIS, BAYSIDE CITY

Municipality

BAYSIDE CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2379

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO412

VHR Registration

May 24, 2018

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 12, 2022

What is significant?

The David Godsell House, including the exterior and interiors of the residence including the 1966 studio and the 1972 upper storey addition; the street boundary brick walls and other exterior brick walls; landscape elements and other features; and fixtures attached to the building including the wall and ceiling linings, light fittings, copper rainwater head, built-in furniture, cupboards, cabinets and shelves. The cylindrical concrete pool, associated timber steps, decking, battened safety fence and gate at the central courtyard's western edge have no cultural heritage significance.

History Summary

David Godsell and his wife Ursula ('Terry') Godsell purchased the 491 Balcombe Road site in November 1956. The David Godsell House is the realisation of a design for himself and his family upon this site and was documented by Godsell during the first half of 1960. The majority of the present-day house was constructed between mid-1960 and the early months of 1961. Small spaces also designed by David Godsell were added to the house during the Godsell family's occupation of the house in subsequent years - a home-office (studio) in c.1966, laundry adjacent to the kitchen in c.1970, and an additional upper-storey bathroom and bedroom in c.1972. Prior to his death in 1986, David Godsell conducted his architectural practice from the studio at 491 Balcombe Road. Terry Godsell continued to live in the house until its 2008 sale to the current owners. Very little change has occurred to the house since that time, apart from the addition of an outdoor timber decking area to the north of the living room, and a cylindrical concrete plunge pool and associated timber steps, decking, safety fence and gate to the central courtyard's western edge.

Description Summary

The David Godsell House is a freestanding single-family dwelling sited centrally within a roughly rectangular 935 sq.m (0.23 acre) block of land. Its external walls are predominantly of Californian Redwood cladding boards and fawn-coloured face brickwork. The house is a careful composition of rectilinear flat-roofed wings, three of which face inwards towards a sheltered courtyard. The 12-inch Californian Redwood boards which clad the house also feature prominently in its interiors. The living room features a large linear skylight of timber-framed topaz panes of glass, the western end of which terminates in a junction with the house's face brick chimney. The corners and edges of this chimney - and of other panels of brickwork in the house - feature toothed and recessed bricks in alternate courses, creating richly textured surfaces. Joints between panes of window glass at the external corners of rooms, and between the horizontal and vertical glass along the living room skylight's northern edge, have been mitred and glued with great care. Soffits of the carport and entry roofs - and the wide eaves of other roofs - are lined with the same 12-inch Californian Redwood boards used on the house's external and internal wall surfaces, subtly vertically stepped and also mitred at the corner junctions. Much of the house's interior materials and finishes remain in their original state, including the unpainted face brickwork; timber wall and ceiling lining boards; internal doors; built-in furniture and open shelves; storage cupboards; kitchen cabinetry and shelves; and some of the fixtures within the bathrooms. The house's original and carefully concealed ceiling-mounted fluorescent tube lighting also appears intact. Free-standing external brick walls, including the wall along the Balcombe Road street boundary, feature courses of toothed and recessed bricks detailed similarly to those deployed within the house.

Traditional owners/Registered Aboriginal Parties

The David Godsell House is located on the traditional lands of the Bunurong people.

How is it significant?

The David Godsell House is of architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

Why is it significant?

The David Godsell House is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The David Godsell House is architecturally significant as a notable example of postwar Modern residential architecture in Victoria. It is a fine example of a Modern house designed and built in the 1960s - displaying a large range of design characteristics that are of higher quality than are typical of places in this class - and it displays these in a way that allows the class to be understood and appreciated. It is also highly intact, remaining largely unchanged from the periods of its conception and construction. It is thoughtfully designed and detailed, containing a skilful interplay of stepping horizontal roof and floor planes which integrate harmoniously with its sloping site. Simultaneously spatially rich and technologically lean, the house also exhibits a striking humility of scale. The David Godsell House has received critical recognition within many design and architectural print and online publications. [Criterion D]

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:

PERMIT EXEMPTIONS (under section 42 of the Heritage Act)

It should be noted that Permit Exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.42(4) of the Heritage Act). Permit Exemptions can also be applied for and granted after registration (under s.66 of the Heritage Act).

General Condition 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 Condition 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 Condition 3

All works should ideally be informed by Conservation Management Plans prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan, and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

General Condition 4

Nothing in this determination prevents the Heritage Council from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

General Condition 5

Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the relevant responsible authority, where applicable.

Specific Permit Exemptions

Landscape Exemptions:

- . The process of gardening, including mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, disease and weed control, and maintenance to care for existing plants.
- . Subsurface works involving the installation, removal or replacement of watering and drainage systems or services.
- . Works associated with the management of possums and vermin.
- . Removal or lopping of trees where there is a risk of personal injury or damage to property.
- . Removal, or maintenance and repair of existing paving and other hard landscaping elements, like for like.
- . Removal, or maintenance, repair and replacement of existing fences and gates, like for like.

Specific Exemptions:

Building Exteriors

- . Repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- . Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae and aerials.
- . Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.
- . Painting of previously painted surfaces provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.

Building 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 (no stained timberwork is to be painted).
- . Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping by non-abrasive methods.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of non-original carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of non-original 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.

- . Refurbishment of existing bathrooms including removal or replacement of non-original sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
- . Removal of tiling in wet areas provided there is no damage to or alteration of original structure or fabric.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ.

Theme

6. Building towns cities and the garden state 9. Shaping cultural and creative life

Construction dates	1960,
Architect/Designer	Godsell, David,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	Godsell House,
Hermes Number	55876
Property Number	

History

HISTORY *David Godsell and his work*

David Brymer Godsell (1930-86) was born in Portsmouth, England. His father, Thomas Anthony Godsell, was born in Coventry in 1903, migrated to Australia as a boy, grew up in South Melbourne, joined the Royal Australian Navy as a 14 year old and during his subsequent service in the UK met and married Kathleen ('Kay') Brymer. In c.1939 Thomas and Kay Godsell left England with their family and settled in Melbourne. David Godsell gained his architectural qualifications through part-time study in engineering at the Melbourne Technical College (later RMIT) and also through the Atelier course at the University of Melbourne. He complemented this training with practical experience at ICI, Shell, the State Rivers & Water Supply Commission, and Arnold Bridge & Associates where he developed an understanding of industrial architecture. Although Godsell did not complete his University degree (having failed its perspective drawing component) he subsequently undertook and passed the Architects Registration Board's exams, qualifying him to practice as an architect in the State of Victoria.

While still an architecture student Godsell first joined the office of architect Marcus Martin, and then later in 1953 when a senior student he was offered work by Guildford Bell, who at the time was a guest lecturer and reviewer at the University of Melbourne. Godsell documented important domestic commissions within Bell's practice during his approximately seven years there. In 1960, after the successful completion of Godsell's own house in the Melbourne suburb of Beaumaris, he departed Bell's office and commenced his own private practice.

Like many other Australian architects of the 1950s and 1960s, and fellow Melbourne architects Charles Duncan and Geoffrey Woodfall in particular, David Godsell was keenly interested in the ideas of the American master architect, interior designer, writer and educator, Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright was a vigorous advocate of 'organic architecture' and he held that a truly organic methodology - to be achieved through design sympathetic and well-integrated with a building's site - was obtained when buildings, their furnishings and surroundings were all designed to form unified interrelated compositions. Godsell's own and arguably also organic approach to design was influenced by traditional Japanese architecture - in particular its incorporation of asymmetry and of the module of the tatami mat - as well as by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy's *The Transformation of Nature in Art* (1956), an examination of the ways in which patterns of nature are used in art. The quality of the drawings that David Godsell prepared to depict and document his designs also bears witness to his highly-developed mind's eye and its contribution to the richness of his architectural work. Godsell's own house at 491 Balcombe Road in Beaumaris is an excellent representative example of the realisation of the architectural principles that informed his years of practice.

For some twenty five years up until his death in 1986 David Godsell worked as a sole practitioner, mainly on domestic commissions and via personal contacts. As well as several dozens of residential projects his completed designs included a combined optical lens factory and flat (1961) in Hawthorn East, the Olive Phillips Kindergarten (1974) at Beaumaris - comprising two concrete-block pavilions with pyramid roofs and a linking breezeway - and post offices at Mordialloc (1970) and Bentleigh (1972).

Design and construction of the David Godsell House

David Godsell and his wife Ursula ('Terry') Godsell purchased the land at 491 Balcombe Road in November 1956, intending to build a house on this site for themselves and their future family.

The majority of the present-day house is the realisation of the third of three different schematic designs that Godsell prepared for this site during the first half of 1960. The earliest of these designs featured lower and upper floor plans generated by triangular and diamond-shaped geometries. A second unrealised scheme was much closer in its rectilinear planning, massing and tectonic expression to the third and final scheme, upon which construction then commenced in mid-1960 and was completed in early 1961.

The earliest and most substantial construction stage of the David Godsell House comprised an assembly of an L-shaped plan arrangement of two single-storey wings which contained the living room, dining, kitchen and bathroom areas; a two-storey wing - adjoining the L's south end - containing three bedrooms, a utility room and a stair; a single-car carport to the north of the dining room; and lawn terraces and a partially paved courtyard space. This courtyard, nestled within the three principal wings, also preserved an existing landform 'shoulder' around which Godsell carefully configured the house's footprint.

Beside the carport, a stairway of square-shaped concrete stepping stones linked the driveway to a covered path - comprising identical stepping stones, here set within pebbles - leading to the living room entry door. The house's flat roofs were originally finished with gravel over 'Malthoid' bituminous felt, insulated with Styrene foam. The roof planes were designed to drain rainwater from the upper-storey roof by stages all the way to the eastern end of the entry path's roof, at which point the water discharged through an ornamental rainwater head of copper into a pond crossed by the stepping stones.

The house's ground floor concrete slabs are a chocolate-brown colour, which was achieved by the addition of a pigmented topping. This colour is currently concealed by carpet and cork floor finishes which have been laid over the slabs at different times during the years following the house's original construction.

In 1966 Godsell received a building permit for the addition of a new flat-roofed rectilinear volume adjoining the west side of the house's existing carport. This contained a single 3.0 by 5.2m (10 by 17 foot) room - with a separate entry path and door, and internally unconnected to the rest of the house - that on its completion became the studio from which Godsell conducted his architectural practice for the next 20 years.

Some years after this Godsell also documented a compact addition to the house's existing kitchen and bathroom, which created a new walk-through laundry that linked these spaces. Another building permit was then granted in 1972 for an upper-storey addition above the house's dining, kitchen and bathroom areas. This addition contained a new bedroom with a cantilevering balcony in its northeast corner, and a compact second bathroom. The present-day arrangement of the house contains all of these completed works.

Godsell himself constructed many of the house's components, including the stepped and tapering brick finial atop the carport's western pylon, the original entry path pond, wall and ceiling interior linings, Living Room bookshelves, and some of the joinery. A handful of other adjustments to elements of the house took place over a span of some 18 years, commencing at around 1972 - including:

- . c.1972 - with the exception of the carport roof, the 1960-61 gravel on Malthoid roof surfaces were clad with clip-fixed aluminium roof sheeting, and painted aluminium guttering was fixed to some portions of those roofs' eaves;
- . c.1972 - re-tiling of the downstairs bathroom;
- . c.1974 - partial filling-in of the entry pond (each of these three also undertaken by Godsell); and
- . c.1990 - a re-build of the carport, matching its original design and form.

Some further minor changes have occurred to the original fabric at the David Godsell House since these periods of construction. The entry stepping stones, pond and pebbles have been replaced with timber railway sleeper

steps and brick paving. Small areas of the originally unfinished timber board cladding on the house's exterior have also been painted.

Following David Godsell's death in 1986, Terry Godsell continued to live in the house until its sale to new owners in 2008.

KEY REFERENCES USED TO PREPARE ASSESSMENT

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Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 2017**, I give notice under section 53 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the following place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H2379

Category: Heritage Place

Place: David Godsell House

Location: 491 Balcombe Road, Beaumaris

Municipality: Bayside City

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2379 encompassing all of Lot 1 on Title Plan 710912.

Dated 24 May 2018

STEVEN AVERY

Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 21 24 May 2018 1120]

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/>