
Popper House and Gordonlea Flats



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Location

61-63 GORDON STREET ELSTERNWICK, GLEN EIRA CITY

Municipality

GLEN EIRA CITY

Level of significance

Incl in HO area indiv sig

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO227

Heritage Listing

Glen Eira City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 6, 2023

What is significant?

The residential complex at 61-63 Gordon Street, Elsternwick, comprises a two-storey dwelling (No 63) and an adjacent two-storey L-shaped block of flats (No 61), consistently expressed with stepped facades, plain cream brickwork, low skillion roofs and large window bays. It was designed in 1956 by Austrian emigre architect Kurt Popper to provide a residence for his own family, with the adjacent flats as an investment.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of both buildings and the brick boundary wall.

How is it significant?

The complex satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Glen Eira planning scheme:

- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.
- Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or groups of persons, of importance in our history.

Why is it significant?

The house and flats are aesthetically significant as a distinctive example of post-WW2 modernism. Considered as a cohesive single development, the two components display a consistent modernist expression of stark volumetric massing, planar walls, wide window bays and low skillion roofs with broad timber-lined eaves. At the same time, undue repetition is avoided, so that the house and the flats remain readily interpreted as two related but separate buildings. While the entire complex is characterised by a minimalism that hints at the architect's European background, the single dwelling to the north, which was his own residence, is granted emphasis with eye-catching feature walls of random stonework and dark-coloured brick. (Criterion E)

The house and flats are historically significant for associations with Austrian emigre architect, who conceived them as a residence for his own family with a lettable investment property alongside. Popper, who began private practice in Melbourne in 1946, became sought-after as a designer of residential projects for fellow European emigre clients, and is acknowledged as a leading exponent of higher-density living in Melbourne (ultimately designing some of the first highrise apartment blocks in the CBD and inner suburbs). His own house in Gordon Street, where he lived for more than four decades before his death in 2000, provides evidence of the significant local presence of a resident architect who undertook a notable amount of work in what is now the City of Glen Eira (and especially Caulfield and Elsternwick), while the adjacent Gordonlea flats represents one of Popper's earliest (of many) multi-unit projects in the municipality. (Criterion H)

Theme

6. Building towns cities and the garden state

Heritage Study/Consultant	City of Glen Eira Post-war and Hidden Gems Heritage Review, Built Heritage Pty Ltd, 2020;
Hermes Number	210177
Property Number	

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/>