
Grant House



B7163 Grant House

Location

26 Whiteside Road,, OFFICER VIC 3809 - Property No B7163

Municipality

CARDINIA SHIRE

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 9, 2007

What is significant? The Grant House, by noted architect Guilford Bell, was built for Robert Grant and his partner, who ran the popular 'City Gardener' garden supplies business in Melbourne for many years. It was completed in 1986.

Guilford Bell holds a unique position in architectural history in Australia, and this house is considered one of his most important works. His distinctive oeuvre combines modernist minimalism with traditional symmetrical and axial arrangements, and often middle-eastern inspired courtyard planning. He has been the subject of two monographs.

The house is really a complex of buildings and landscape, arranged on formal, axial lines. The house itself is relatively modest in scale, and typically for Bell, is extremely restrained, rectangular and axially planned. It features a central fireplace with dining room on one side and lounge on the other, window walls for the central section of each side wall, and solid corners. The house is topped by a striking tent-like curved pyramidal roof, which occupies the centre of an axial composition of lake, patio, house, garage and drive, steeping up a hillside.

All the elements are connected by a carpet of red brick paving from the lake to the garage which continues uninterrupted to form the floor of interior of the house. There is a sunken parterre garden requested by the owners to one side of the house.

How is it Significant? The Grant House is significant for aesthetic and architectural reasons to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant? Architecturally and aesthetically, the Grant House is an extraordinary work. It incorporates a series of contradictions to create its architectural effects, particularly that of grand traditional formal arrangements contrasted with modernist aesthetics and details. The house, garage and landscaping are integrated into a very grand and sweeping composition, cascading down a hillside, yet the central feature- the house itself- is a relatively small scale pavilion, resting lightly on a carpet of brick paving that forms an external as well as an internal floor. The pavilion quality of the house is emphasised by the most unusual tent-like roof, which is the dominant feature of the site. The house features an almost obsessive level of detailing, such as the doors sliding into cavities, ensuring that the clean simple lines are preserved.

The Grant House is one of the most extraordinary works of noted architect Guilford Bell. Designed at the age of 74, this is his last major residential work, and apart from the use of painted corrugated iron, owes little to architectural practice of the 1980's. Instead, it is one of the most developed and multi-layered examples of his distinctive oeuvre, established at the beginning of his career thirty years earlier.

Classified: 04/02/2002

Hermes Number 65311

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/>