

Heritage Citation – Individual Place

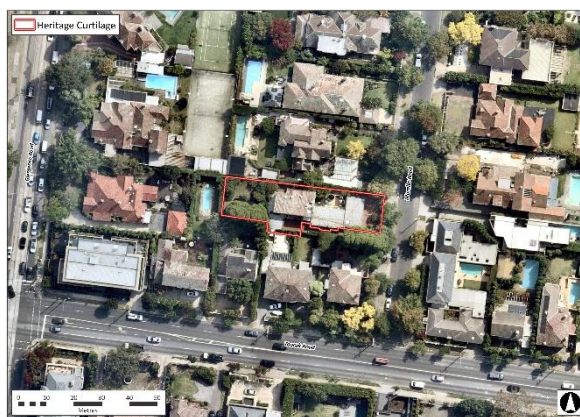
Heritage Place: House and unit
Address: 1-2/5 Moralla Road, Kooyong

HO Reference: HO745
Citation status: Final
Date Updated: 26 October 2023
Year of Construction: c.1942

Designer: Roy Grounds
Builder: Unknown



Photograph of 1/5 Moralla Road, Kooyong (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Location map and extent of 1-2/5 Moralla Road, Kooyong.

Heritage Group: Residential buildings
Heritage Type: Duplex

Key Theme: Building suburbs
Key Sub-theme: Functional, eccentric and theatrical – experimentation and innovation in architecture

Significance Level: Local

Recommendation: Recommended for the Heritage Overlay as an individual place; remove from the curtilage of HO181.

Controls:	<input type="checkbox"/> External paint colours	<input type="checkbox"/> Internal alterations	<input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls
	<input type="checkbox"/> Victorian Heritage Register	<input type="checkbox"/> Incorporated Plans	<input type="checkbox"/> Outbuildings and fences exemptions
	<input type="checkbox"/> Prohibited uses may be permitted	<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal Heritage Place	

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

1-2/5 Moralla Road, Kooyong, is significant. The form, scale, fenestration and materiality of the Modernist house and unit are of local significance, along with the rear courtyard for 2/5 Moralla Road. The landscaping for 1/5 Moralla Road and later alterations to the property are not significant.

How is it significant?

The site is of representative significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

1-2/5 Moralla Road, Kooyong, designed by Roy Grounds, is of representative significance as discernible example of innovative experimentation in geometric form in residential design that typified the beginning of the Modernist movement in Australia. This is most evident in the built form of both structures, particularly the balcony and verandah of 2/5 Moralla Road supported restrained pillars and railing overlooking a paved courtyard, the flat roof of both structures, boxed timber eaves and exposed rafters. The lack of ornamentation, paired with Grounds' window designs, are features that would come to inform future Modernist design touchstones. These features achieve visual boldness while simultaneously remaining lightweight in massing and scale. (Criterion D)

HERCON Criteria Assessment

A	<i>Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
B	<i>Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
C	<i>Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
D	<i>Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments</i>	1-2/5 Moralla Road, Kooyong, designed by Roy Grounds, is of representative significance as discernible example of innovative experimentation in geometric form in residential design that typified the beginning of the Modernist movement in Australia. This is most evident in the built form of both structures, particularly the balcony and verandah of 2/5 Moralla Road supported restrained pillars and railing overlooking a paved courtyard, the flat roof of both structures, boxed timber eaves and exposed rafters. The lack of ornamentation, paired with Grounds' window designs, are features that would come to inform future Modernist design touchstones. These features achieve

		visual boldness while simultaneously remaining lightweight in massing and scale.
E	<i>Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
F	<i>Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
G	<i>Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of the continuing and developing cultural traditions</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
H	<i>Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.</i>	This places does not meet this criterion.

Description

• Physical Analysis

The unit at 1/5 Moralla Road is a single-storey multi-dwelling residence and the house at 2/5 Moralla Road is a two-storey residence. Both structures are representative of the Modernist style movement that was emerging during the 1940s. The modest structures consist of brick construction laid with a painted stretcher bond.

The unit has a flat roof clad with a trim deck metal. The roof overhangs the structure, and the soffit and fascia conceal the box gutter and roof from view. The front façade has very little ornamentation, keeping with the restrained approach of the Modernism style. It includes three banks of windows across the entire façade. Each bank consists of five white aluminium framed sliding windows with internal louvred shutters. The main entrance to the unit is located on the southern elevation. The east elevation includes an enclosed courtyard, another key characteristic of the residential Modernist style. The courtyard is accessed via white timber framed French doors with top light that open onto a patio sheltered by the main roof overhang. The courtyard is laid with a light brown pavers and includes a raised timber patio.

The separate two-storey residence extends west from the unit fronting Moralla Road, and once the primary residence. It reflects similar characteristics to the unit with its modest rectilinear form and functionalistic design. The brick structure is painted white and has a flat roof. On the building's façade above the main entrance are large square yellow-coloured windows, a feature often used in Grounds' early designs as addressed below in the comparative analysis. The entrance for 2/5 Moralla Road is on the southern elevation and the building cannot be seen from the street.

A carport is located at the rear of the property, accessible via a brick paved driveway along the southern boundary. A smaller driveway and open parking area is located along the north side of the front yard at

1/5 Moralla Road, beside the unit. The red face brick pavers along the front yard is laid in a basketweave pattern and a stack bond on the south driveway. The street front boundary is demarcated by a low painted brick wall and single brick pier. The robust square pier includes the two mailboxes and is capped with a thin open face brick top with round light fixture. A low white timber picket fence sits above the brick foundation wall. This boundary fence is to the original design, as indicated by an early photograph included in this citation. A garden bed is located beside the front wall. The south boundary is demarcated by a retaining brick wall supporting mature tree plantings behind.

1-2/5 Moralla Road is located close to the junction with Toorak Road. Both buildings are currently used as private residences. Key design principals of the Modernist idiom characterise the structures, including their functional form, use of brick and aluminium materials, and lack of ornamentation. There have been recent alterations to the landscape around the front residence. The structures at 5 Moralla Road are considered to have high integrity.

- [Alterations and Additions](#)

1/5 Moralla Road:

- Structure repainted to existing colour scheme (after 2015).
- Raised front brick laid yard removed and leveled for parking (after 2015).
- Internal courtyard relandscaped.

No alterations or additions have been identified in relation to 2/5 Moralla Road owing to lower visibility for this building and a lack of available archival records.

[History](#)

- [Historical Context](#)

For thousands of years preceding European colonialism, the area now known as Stonnington was the traditional home of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung people of the Eastern Kulin Nation. This environment would have provided Traditional Owners with access to pre-contact plains, grassy woodland, and floodplains on the banks of the Yarra River (Birrarung), Gardiners Creek (Kooyong Koot), and Hawksburn Creek (now channelised), in a rolling landscape on the northern shore of Port Phillip Bay. It is important to note that the rich cultural heritage of Traditional Owners in Stonnington did not end with colonialism—it has a rich presence to this day.

The suburb of Kooyong was historically associated with the estate of solicitor Peter Ferrie, who purchased land from Crown Portion 21 in June 1840. This portion comprised sixty acres of land bounded by Glenferrie Road, Gardiners Creek, Avenel Road, and Toorak Road. Ferrie lost his property due to financial constraints in 1843, and the property was taken up by many different owners over a period of twenty years. In 1865, it was purchased by James Fergusson. A lithographer by trade, Fergusson constructed a palatial property of fourteen rooms with auxiliary outbuildings and gardens. This building was later demolished in 1854. All sixty acres of the original grounds were subdivided, making way for the streets of Kooyong.

In 1890 the new railway line to Glen Iris cut a swathe through both the Glen Ferrie Estate and land owned by nurseryman William Bailey in present day Elizabeth Street, cutting off the flood-prone river flats. Chinese market gardeners continued to use the land between the railway and the creek well into

the 20th century. Today, Kooyong is characterised by a mixture of Federation/Edwardian and Interwar private residences.

- [Modernism in Toorak](#)

Toorak's wealthy clientele and strong culture of patronage has long provided architects with the space to explore ideas and innovation in design and construction (Context 2009, 138). While this was taking place from as early as the interwar period, this phenomenon soon paved way for Modernist expression in residential design by the 1940s.

Initially explored in Europe between 1905 and 1917, and subsequently disseminated, translated and transformed worldwide over the next fifty years, the Modernist idiom was primarily defined by abstraction in built form, restraint in ornamentation, clean architectural lines, open plans, a connection between indoor spaces and outdoor spaces, and the incorporation of new materials like concrete, steel and glass (Goad and Willis 2012, 464). In Toorak, a combination of patronage, post-war boom time economy and suburban growth enabled leading Australian Modernist architects to adapt this style to the country's specific climate. What emerged was a Modernist aesthetic rooted in experimentation with geometric forms, raised structures and indoor-outdoor spaces. Architects like Robin Boyd and Roy Grounds were creating innovative and experimental Modernist designs to fit with the difficult topography or otherwise constrained nature of sites. For instance, Boyd's Richardson's House at 10 Blackfriars Close (1953) comprises a bridge-like structure suspended above a creek bed, while Grounds' own house at 24 Hill Street (1950s), celebrated as an architectural experimentation in pure geometry, has been noted for its defining circular glass walled courtyard set within a square of solid brick walls.

Bold, innovative and above all experimental, architects practicing within the Modernist idiom established new forms of creative and technical expression, ultimately challenging the formal and decorative assumptions that dominated the architecture of the 19th and early 20th century.

- [Place History](#)

The land encompassing present day Unit 1-2 of 5 Moralla Road formerly comprised the substantial grounds of solicitor Peter Ferrie's Glenferrie Estate. Comprising sixty acres of land on the corner of Toorak Road and Glenferrie Road, the estate included an eight room weatherboard farmhouse that was constructed between 1835 and 1841. Ferrie defaulted on his mortgage and was forced to liquidate his assets in 1843. Following multiple purchases and sales, the property was purchased by renowned lithographer James Ferguson in 1865, who replaced the weatherboard farmhouse with a fourteen room brick mansion. The substantial Glenferrie Estate was later substantially subdivided in 1902, resulting in the creation of key streets in present day Kooyong- Mernda Road, Moralla Road and Monaro Road. Meanwhile, the Glenferrie mansion, then renamed to Zeerust, was retained on a reduced lot (Foster 1992).

The acreage surrounding the property was again subdivided during the interwar period, and the Zeerust mansion sold and demolished in 1954 (Raworth, 2009; The Herald 1914, 4). This pattern of subdivision and residential development was largely an outcome of rising labour costs after World War I, which made the cost of maintaining large Victorian estates prohibitive. Across the City of Stonnington, this precipitated a series of urban character changes during the interwar period that would last well into the post-war years. The property at 5 Moralla Road, Kooyong, was subsequently developed in 1942 for Mr. Clive Ogilvie Ross Fenner and Mrs. Charlotte (Bonnie) Hamlyn Kinnear. Designed by pre-eminent

Modernist architect Roy Grounds, the two house and unit were published in the Australian Home Beautiful in January 1953 and was described as:

The two-storey verandah on this house is in Moralla Road, Malvern, Victoria, catches northern sunshine along the side boundary of a long narrow site. Simple post and rail construction creates an interesting pattern of sunlight and shadow on the pale pink brick walls. Originally designed by Melbourne architect Roy Grounds for Mr. and Mrs. C. O. Ross Fenner, the building includes a bungalow flat which projects towards the street in front of the two-storey house. The flat has an outdoor terrace in the same side as the house with similar verandah treatment. For visual and acoustic privacy, it is recessed several feet and divided from the other by a high brick wall... (The Australian Home Beautiful 1953, 69)

From as early as the interwar period, the strong culture of patronage in both Toorak and its surrounding suburbs provided architects with the space to explore ideas and innovation in design and construction (Context 2009, 138). It should come as no surprise that the ascendancy of the modernist movement by the 1940s would also find expression in this area. A leading Australian architect of the Modernist design mode, Grounds' had experimented with radical regionally responsive house plans that fused living and dining areas from as early as the mid 1920s (Hamann 2007). After World War II, he became known for incorporating geometric forms into his designs, as evident in the triangular Leyser House at 11 Hume Street, Kew (1951), the circular Henty House at 581 Nepean Highway, Frankston (1951-52), and the circular courtyard Roy Grounds House at his own residence in 24 Hill Street, Toorak (1951-52). He later formed what was arguably the most important architectural partnership in Melbourne with other leading architects who practiced in the Modernist idiom, including the Swiss-trained emigre architect Frederick Romberg, and renowned proponent of the International Modern Movement, Robin Boyd (Hamann 2007). Together, the firm was responsible for numerous modern buildings around Australia, including the Australian Academy of Science in Canberra (1956-59) and Boyd House II in South Yarra (1957-58) (Goad 1999, 250-251). Other noted designs by Grounds outside of the partnership include the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne (1968) and Robert Blackwood Hall at Monash University in Clayton (1971) (Lewi & Goad 2019, 144-45, 156, 175).

Meanwhile, the Fenner family were prominent local citizens, with influential connections to South Australian horse racing and dog breeding. Of interest is the continuing associations the Fenner family had with renowned Modernist architects in Melbourne. The Fenner family commissioned Roy Grounds to design Clendon and Clendon Corner respectively in 1940 and 1941 (HO130), prior to the design and construction of the house and unit at Moralla Road, Kooyong. Following this, the Clive and Charlotte Fenner commissioned prominent Modernist architect Neil Clerehan to design the Fenner House (HO6; VHR H2350) in 1964, located at 228 Domain Road, South Yarra.

Both buildings are still in use as private residences.

Comparative Analysis

Roy Grounds' work includes some of the most significant buildings in the State of Victoria, including both the Victorian Arts Centre and National Gallery of Victoria. The buildings below are comparable as residential structures designed solely by Grounds prior to his partnership with Frederick Romberg and Robin Boyd.

Comparative examples include:

- **Quamby, 3 Glover Court, Toorak (HO44, VHR H0603).** A block of six flats and one maisonette designed by Roy Grounds, Quamby (1941) is of architectural significance as one of Roy Grounds' most impressive buildings, an example of the contemporary style at its best and as one of the most influential flat designs of its time. The challenging site required a skillful response, and Grounds' solution was particularly dramatic and represented the culmination of his early flat designs (HERMES No. 1160). Both sites exhibit shared characteristics, including the floor to ceiling glazing with rectangular fanlights that are hinged at the top, coloured square glass windows are used as a decorative feature at both sites, as are flat roofs and painted brick masonry. Both sites are also built with landscape constraints. Quamby is built on an escarpment and 5 Moralla Road is constructed in a long narrow block.
- **Moonbria Flats, 68 Mathoura Road, Toorak (HO81; VHR Nomination accepted).** The Moonbria Flats (1942) were designed by Roy Grounds. A much larger scale example of Grounds' multi-residential work, Moonbria deploys Grounds signature geometrical motifs and window arrangements, both of which are represented at the Moonbria Flats and 5 Moralla Road. Flat roofs, painted brick and floor to ceiling glazing are touchstones of Grounds' design style and are well represented at both sites.
- **Clendon/Clendon Corner 13 and 15 Clendon Road, Armadale (HO130, Individually significant).** Clendon (1940) (and to a lesser extent its neighbour Clendon Corner (1941)) has been described as 'a manifestation of Grounds' fondness for what he called 'a simple idea, carried through simply', with a compact plan of a combined living area/bedroom at one end and small kitchen alcove and bathroom at the other (Sawyer 1982, 72–73). Both sites epitomize Grounds' early rectilinear form and window detailing. They are also historically comparable as both sites were owned by the Fenner family who commissioned Grounds on both occasions.

It is also worth noting that there is another comparable example currently being assessed by this heritage study, being 20-22 Canberra Road, Toorak. The site is also comprised of two structures, with a primary residence and a unit. Both buildings exhibit similar characteristics, utilising the same verandah construction, rectilinear form, flat roof, painted brick masonry, and window glazing with rectangular hinged fanlights. Both sites were developed with geographic constraints, with 5 Moralla Road being a long and narrow block and 20-22 Canberra Road constructed on fill over a historical creek prone to flooding. However, 20-22 Canberra Road has been found to be highly modified.

The above assessment highlights the importance and significance of the structures at 5 Moralla Road, Kooyong, as highly intact and representative examples of Roy Grounds' early designs.

References

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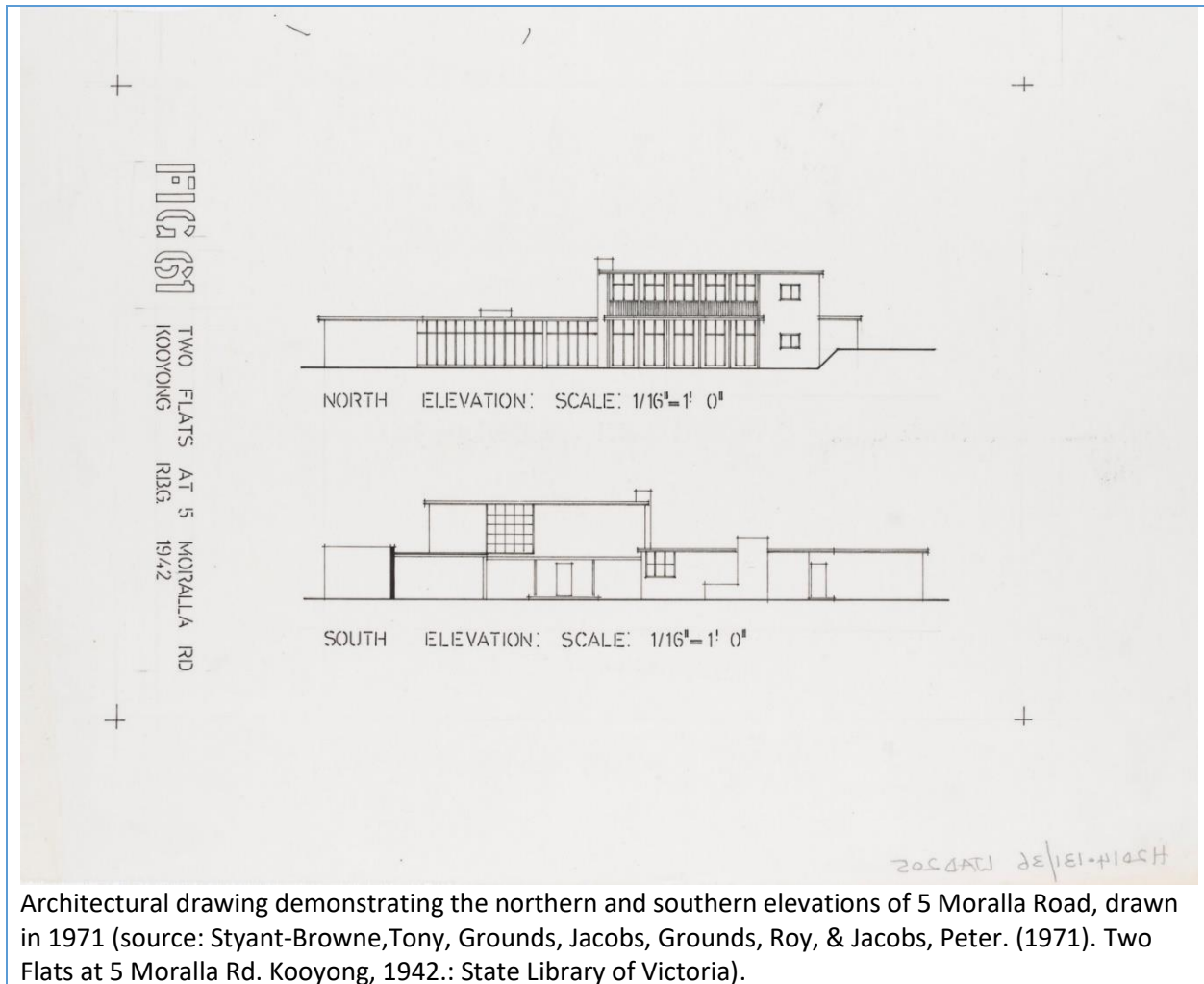
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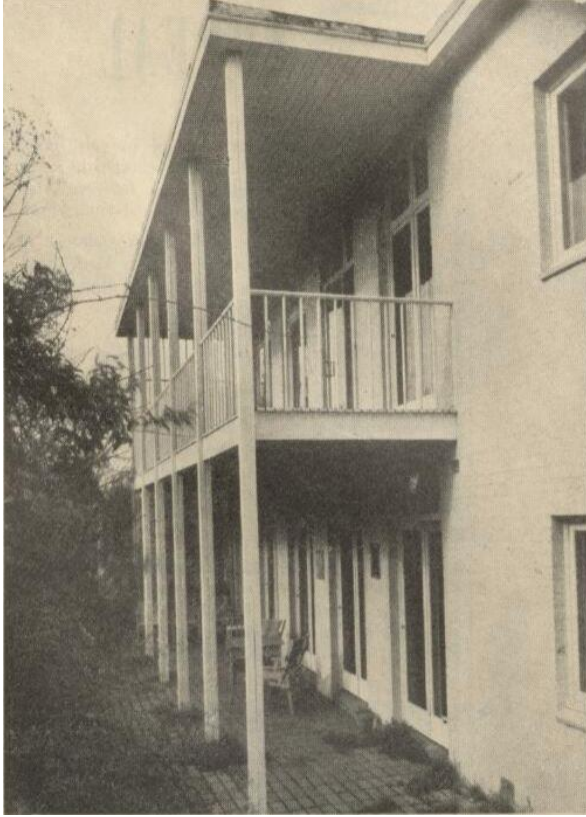
The Herald. (1914, April 30). *The Herald*, 4.

Limitations

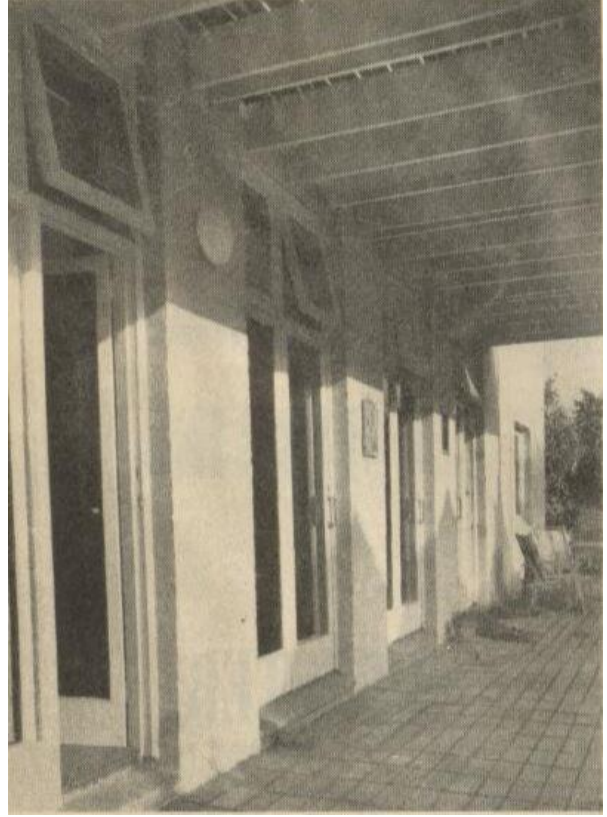
1. Access to all heritage places was limited to a visual inspection from the public domain. The interiors of buildings and inaccessible areas such as rear gardens were not accessed as part of this heritage study.
2. Condition and site modification assessment was limited to a visual inspection undertaken from the public domain.
3. The historical notes provided for this citation are not considered to be an exhaustive history of the site.

Further Images





Northern elevation of the house in 1953 (Source: The Australian Home Beautiful, Jan. 1953).



Northern elevation and verandah of the house in 1953 (Source: The Australian Home Beautiful, Jan. 1953).



Oblique view from the verandah of the house in 2020. (Source: Homely.com)



Oblique view of the western courtyard for 2/5 Moralla Road, 2020. (Source: Homely.com)



Oblique view of the entrance to 2/5 Morall Road on southern elevation (Source: Homely.com, 2020).



View of 1/5 Moralla Road in 1971 (source: Wille, Peter & Grounds, Roy, Sir, 1905-1981 (1971). Flats. 5 Moralla Road, Malvern. Melb. Roy Grounds 1941).



1/5 Moralla Road façade, looking southwest (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of the glazing and 1/5 Moralla Road roof form (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Western view of street front façade (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Boundary fence and driveway access (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).

Authors

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Quality assurance review conducted by: Dr Luke James.