

Heritage Citation – Individual Place

Heritage Place: Risdon
Address: 11 Russell Street, Toorak

HO Reference: HO333
Citation status: Final
Date Updated: 17 March 2022
Year of Construction: 1929-30

Designer: Oakley & Parkes
Builder: Unknown



Photograph of Risdon (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Location map and extent of HO333.

Heritage Group: Residential buildings
Heritage Type: House

Key Theme: Buildings suburbs
Key Sub-theme: Creating Australia's most 'designed' suburbs – houses as a symbol of wealth, status and fashion

Significance Level: Local

Recommendation: Retain as an individually significant place on the HO

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?

The property at 11 Russell Street, Toorak (otherwise known as Risdon) is significant. The scale, form and detailing of the substantial interwar Georgian Revival residence is of local significance. The landscaping and front fence are not significant.

How is it significant?

Risdon is of local aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington, and is associated with the famed Australian architectural firm, Oakley & Parkes.

Why is it significant?

Risdon is aesthetically significant as a restrained, yet intact and well-presented interwar Georgian Revival residence. Key characteristics of aesthetic value include the rectilinear two-storey built form, double-fronted façade, shallow-pitched hipped roof, decorative floral plasterwork, pillared portico, rising sun motif and multi-pane windows with timber shutters. (Criterion E)

Risdon has associative significance as a house designed by the famed Australian architectural firm, Oakley & Parkes, who were responsible for designing the Prime Minister's Lodge in Canberra in 1926-7 for which this house shares many design qualities. (Criterion H)

HERCON Criteria Assessment

<i>A</i>	<i>Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
<i>B</i>	<i>Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
<i>C</i>	<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.
<i>D</i>	<i>Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
<i>E</i>	<i>Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics</i>	Risdon is aesthetically significant as a restrained, yet intact and well-presented interwar Georgian Revival residence. Key characteristics of aesthetic value include the rectilinear two-storey built form, double-fronted façade, shallow-pitched hipped roof, decorative floral plasterwork, pillared portico, rising sun motif and multi-pane windows with timber shutters.

<i>F</i>	<i>Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
<i>G</i>	<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.
<i>H</i>	<i>Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.</i>	Risdon has associative significance as a house designed by the famed Australian architectural firm, Oakley & Parkes, who were responsible for designing the Prime Minister's Lodge in Canberra in 1926-7 for which this house shares many design qualities.

Description

• Physical Analysis

Risdon is a two-storey residence building in an Interwar Georgian Revival style. The masonry structure is rendered in an off-white roughcast stucco. The central wing of the main structure has a large street front north projection, forming the street front façade. It has an extensive double storey south projection extension with a double hipped roof. The double hipped roof is separated by a section of flat roof clad in corrugated galvanised iron. The meeting point of the hipped roofs are connected by a small monitor roof extension with a hipped roof. The extension leads to a single storey projection with a single hipped roof to the west with the rest of the flat roof clad in corrugated galvanised iron. The flat portion of the single storey projection roof includes a centered square monitor window. The hipped roofs of the main structure, north and south projections are clad in terracotta tiles with terracotta hip capping. There are five tall, rendered masonry chimneys with a simple single corbelled form extending from the roof of the residence.

The double fronted front façade presents asymmetrically. The projecting north wing features a set of three double hung sash windows. The centre window is wider than the flanking windows which feature eight pane glass inserts. The windows are expressed with pier formed outer frames and flanked by two louvred timber shutters. The window is capped by a recessed arch with an expressed moulded form and rising sun motif. The upper level of the north projection features a centred pair of twenty-four pane double hung sash windows with external louvred shutters.

The main entrance is located beside the north projection. It is raised up two steps to a covered porch. The porch is supported by four round Tuscan columns with a smooth render finish on the porch front. The grey timber six panel door is flanked by two sidelights and a wide arched fanlight with a rising sun motif. The front door, gate and sidelights feature a detailed wrought iron gate and glazing bars in a similar oval design. The front portico forms an open balcony on the upper level with a simple low black

wrought iron balustrade. The balcony does not appear to be accessible. The ground level and upper-level windows match the form and design of the windows on the north projecting wing.

The base of the structure is expressed by a foundation base rendered in a smooth stucco. There is a string course running along the façade under the base of the upper-level windows. The upper level terminates under the sheet clad boxed eaves. The south elevation lacks detailing. The north elevation features two projecting chimney breasts with flanking cavetto curves. The south elevation features full length windows and French doors that open onto a paved courtyard area in the backyard. There is a single storey garage with a flat roof parallel and connected to the single storey south extension.

The grounds of Risdon are landscaped. The street front boundary is demarcated by a tall timber panel fence with a palisade gate entrance. There is a vehicle gate in a similar panel style located on the east side of the fence leading to the driveway that terminates at the garage. The front lawn includes a stone paved walkway leading to the entrance portico. The front garden includes mature trees and plantings including a pomegranate tree (*Punica granatum*) underplanted with Lily of the Nile (*Agapanthus*) along the garden bed by the main structure. The rear courtyard area is demarcated by a boxwood (*Buxus*) hedge that is broken up in the centre by a set of sweeping steps leading up to a raised paved area with a swimming pool. Beyond the swimming pool is a large lawn with mature trees along the perimeter of the property and a small formal garden by the east boundary wall.

Risdon is located between the junctions with Hopetoun Road and Glenferrie Road. The property is currently used as a private residence. The property is considered to be in good condition. The landscape has been altered with the addition of a swimming pool. The main structure has also been altered with a garage and areas at the rear between the gable projections likely infilled and capped with the flat roof. The property would be considered to be of moderate integrity.

• Alterations and Additions

- New downpipes added.
- Vent added to the northern elevation.
- Antenna added to the roof.
- Flat roof clad in corrugated galvanised iron.
- Monitor window with a square flat roof added to the single storey extension.
- Garage extension with a flat roof.
- Solar panels added to the garage roof.
- Swimming pool added.
- Possible original timber front fence removed (after 1992).

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.

Following the establishment of Melbourne in 1835, squatter John Gardiner and many others like him sought out land in what would become present day Toorak and surrounds on account of its densely timbered landscape, undulating terrain and proximity to water. By 1840, crown land sales marked the area's transition to pastoral settlement, and later in 1851, with the purchase of land in Hawthorn by Thomas Herbert Power, the surrounding environments gradually became a place where the early merchant and squatter elite of Melbourne built their homesteads. In Toorak, this is best represented by the purchase of lot 26 by James Jackson, associate in Jackson, Rae & Co. soap and candle merchants. Jackson was described by politician William Westgarth as 'Melbourne's greatest merchant of this early time' (Forster 1999, 10). It is only fitting that his house, called Toorak House, would be the namesake of what would become arguably the most affluent suburb in Melbourne. Following the discovery of gold in the 1850s and the wealth this produced for ancillary trades, the Toorak area drew in Melbourne's newly wealthy. Today, over a century later, Toorak still has connotations of wealth and prestige as best represented in its history and built environment (Forster 1999, 5–26).

- **Place History**

The residence at 11 Russell Street was erected in 1929-30 for T. H. Roberts to designs prepared by prominent architectural firm Oakley & Parkes (Oakley & Parkes 1929). A partnership between Melbourne born architects Percy Oakley and Stanley Parkes between 1926 and 1955, the firm completed over 370 known works that included houses, factories, office buildings, banks, churches, shops and pubs (Goad & Willis eds. 2012). Prolific designs include the official Prime Minister's residence The Lodge at 5 Adelaide Avenue, Canberra (1926-27), the Renaissance Revival ANZAC House at 4 Collins Street, Melbourne (1938-39), and the Moderne style Yule House at 309-311 Little Collins Street Melbourne (1932).

As illustrated in the 1929 architectural plans, the dwelling was a two-storey brick house that featured a garage at the rear (Oakley & Parkes 1929). The ground floor comprised two outdoor porches, kitchen, laundry, lobby, maids room, dining room, stair hall, den and living room, while the first floor consisted of two bedrooms with built in cupboards and a bathroom (Oakley & Parkes 1929). Illustrations of the house upon its completion are also documented in a feature article in a 1930 issue of *The Australian Home Beautiful* (Shields 1930, 9-12). Praised as an 'artistic Georgian House', the residence is described as:

...a small house of character and dignity...balanced and pleasing...[comprising] a pillared porch...the sand finished walls are warm cream, with green wood work and shutters. The interior conveys to the visitor no feeling of being in a small house. Excellent use has been made of every good of space with no sense of crowding... (Shields 1939, 9).

The initial occupants were couple Mr and Mrs T. H. Roberts. A search through various historical databases have not yielded any information on the Roberts, making their identities difficult to determine. They occupied the dwelling for almost two decades, before it was purchased by couple Colin Pearce and Gwenneth Flockart in c. 1947 (Sands & McDougall 1947; *The Herald* 1951, 6).

Listed as the occupier of 11 Russell Street in directories between 1947 and 1959, Colin Pearce Flockart resided at the dwelling with his wife Gwenneth (née Pleasance) (Sands & McDougall 1947-1959; *The Herald* 1951, 6). When Gwenneth passed away in 1951, Colin continued to occupy the house for several more years, before a transfer of ownership in 1959. Upon her passing, notice of Gweneth Flockart's passing was published in *The Age*, which stated Flockart had passed 'at her home, "RISDON", 11 Russell Street, Toorak' (*The Age* 1951, 2). From c. 1960 until at least 1974, J. A. Forrest is listed in directories as the official owner and occupier (Sands & McDougall 1960-1974). Due to a lack of historical material, the duration of Forrest's occupancy at the dwelling remains unknown. The house has undergone several alterations in recent years, and property records indicate that it was put up for auction in 1994 and again in 2001.

Comparative Analysis

Designed by notable architectural firm Oakley & Parkes, Risdon is representative of the popularisation of Georgian Revival design in the wealthy suburbs Toorak, Armadale and South Yarra during the interwar period. While it is a fine example of the Georgian idiom, its architects did not specialise purely in this style. Rather, Oakley & Parkes' body of work is diverse, and their notable designs ranged from Romanesque and Moderne style commercial buildings to Functionalist public buildings; see Yule House at 309-311 Little Collins Street, Melbourne (HO703), Equity Chambers at 472-478 Bourke Street, Melbourne (HO547), Kodak House at 252 Collins Street, Melbourne (HO502) and Elizabeth Bleazby Baby Health Centre at 583 Nepean Highway, Brighton East (HO559). With the exception of the nationally significant Prime Minister's Lodge located in Canberra, there are no other comparable examples of their Georgian Revival work that have been afforded heritage protection. As a result, the follow comparative analysis draws from similar Georgian Revival style houses in the municipality.

Comparative examples include:

- **35-39 Albany Road, Toorak (HO488).** Designed by architect Geoffrey Sommers in 1940, this residence at 35-39 Albany Road is grander in scale and setting than Risdon. With its rigid symmetry, gabled slate roof and central entry bay, the house is a more discernible example of the Georgian Revival style. It is distinct from similar style dwellings in its application of classical ornament. The dwelling is also setback from the generous front garden and curved gravel driveway, and thus maintains a greater sense of formality than Risdon.
- **1 Towers Road, Toorak (HO520).** Erected in 1937 to designs prepared by architect Bernard Sutton, 1 Towers Road is a fully realised example of the Interwar Georgian Revival in terms of style, formality and detailing. It comprises a hipped roof, rendered dressings and a symmetrical façade. A sense of formality is evoked from the entrance portico and the ornamental central triangular pediment that sits above it, as well as the circular driveway that fronts the dwelling. It is a grander iteration of the Georgian mansion compared to 11 Russell Street, and is considered a more quintessential example of the style.
- **Banchory (8 Glyndebourne Avenue) (HO265).** Designed by Marcus Martin in 1929, Banchory is comparable to Risdon as a modernist interpretation of the Georgian Revival style. Its asymmetrical main elevation comprising a projecting garage, a pair of smaller windows, offset entry steps and terrace is combined with the fall in the land to create a modern balance of forms. This modernist tendency can similarly be observed in the asymmetrical double fronted façade at Risdon. However, unlike the Tuscan columns and classical detailing at the entrance portico at Risdon, Banchory's main

entrance lacks ornamentation. Banchory is thus considered a more restrained version of the Georgian idiom.

Overall, Risdon is a distinct yet restrained example of the Interwar Georgian Revival in its asymmetrical form, visually imposing entry porch and iron materials. While comparable dwellings are more fully realised examples in a traditional sense, Risdon offers important insight into the varied design interpretations of the style during the interwar period.

References

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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



Front façade (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



View from Russell Street, illustrating poor visibility (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of façade showing the windows and portico (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



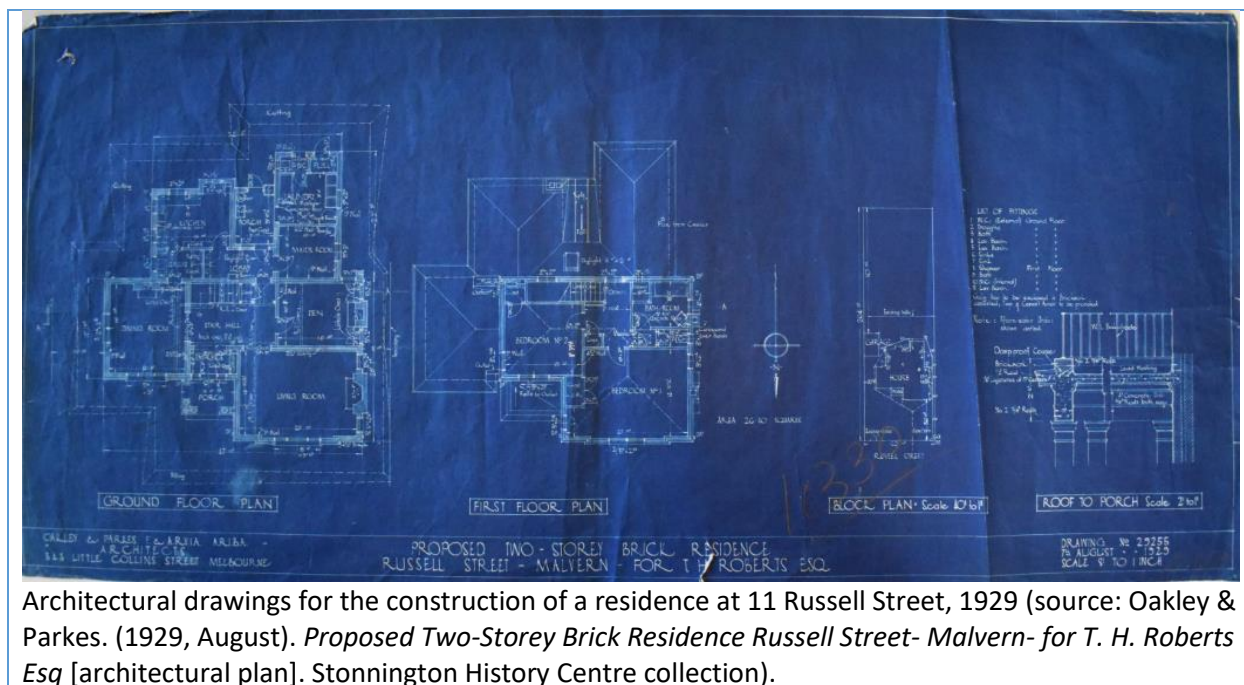
Detail view of façade showing the windows and portico (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Western elevation (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Western elevation detailing the chimneys (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Authors

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