

Statement of Significance: Toorak Post-war Modern Group, Toorak (March 2022)

Heritage Place: Toorak Post-war Modern Group, Toorak

PS ref no: HO747



Photograph of 2 Tyalla Crescent (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Photograph of 39 Lansell Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Photograph of 4 Nola Court (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Photograph of 1 Lansell Court (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).

What is significant?

The Toorak Post-war Modern Group, comprising properties at 2 Tyalla Crescent, Toorak, 39 Lansell Road, Toorak, 4 Nola Court, Toorak and 1 Lansell Court, Toorak, is locally significant. Specifically, the overall form, scale, fenestration, detailing and materiality of the four post-war modern residences are of local significance, along with the slate retaining wall at 39 Lansell Road, Toorak.

The group is wholly characterised by contributory buildings.

Particular characteristics across the properties that contribute to the significance of the group include:

- Projecting and recessed rectilinear forms;
- Flat roofs;
- Street-front facing floor to ceiling windows;
- External elements that demonstrate the integration between interior and exterior spaces;
- Bespoke ornamental fittings including stonework and decorative metal detailing; and
- Siting and setbacks that demonstrate a responsiveness to site topography.

Later alterations and additions to the property, including the front boundary wall at 1 Lansell Court, are not significant.

How is it significant?

The Toorak Post-war Modern Group is of local historic, and representative significance to the City of Stonnington. It also has associative significance, comprising of designs by several noted European émigré architects, including Ernest Fooks, John and Helen Holgar of Holgar & Holgar, and Bernard Slawik and/or designed for noted European émigré clients.

Why is it significant?

The Toorak Post-war Modern Group is historically significant as a collection of post-war modern residences that were erected during and after the post-war development of residential enclaves in Toorak, seeing the creation of cul-de-sacs along generous residential roads, and thus forms a tangible link to this period of planning and development in Toorak. As houses designed by European émigré architects for European émigré clients the post-war period, the group is also historically significant in demonstrating the significant design contributions these architects and their progressively-minded clients made to residential development within the municipality. Together, they not only exemplify the innovative residential design trends taking place in Toorak by the 1960s, but also provide insight into the ways these trends were shaped by both architects and clients of the European diaspora. (Criterion A)

The Toorak Post-war Modern Group is of representative significance as a collection of substantially intact and clearly discernible post-war modern residences that exhibit the key European modernist design principles that were popularised by architects and clients of the European diaspora during the post-war period. Influenced by International Style modernism, key characteristics shared across the properties that demonstrate this representative value include rectilinear massing—often floating on pilasters to create an open undercroft—emphasised by strong horizontal and vertical lines, flat roofs, and street front facing floor to ceiling windows which provide a visual connection between the interior and exterior spaces. (Criterion D)

The Toorak Post-war Modern Group is of associative significance as a group of houses either designed by influential European émigré architects, including Ernest Fooks, John and Helen Holgar of Holgar & Holgar, and Bernard Slawik, and/or for noted European émigré clients including Robert Fetter of the noted industrialist Fetter family, and influential and philanthropic couple Moshe Mordechai Bursztyn and Esther Bursztyn. As embodied in this group, this wave of émigré architects and progressively-minded clients pioneered new approaches to residential Modernism that fundamentally enriched and transformed the Anglocentric Modernism that was being practiced within the municipality. (Criterion H)

Primary source

Toorak Post-war Modern Group, Toorak, Citation Report, Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, April 2022.