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# CARINGAL FLATS



CARINGAL FLATS SOHE  
2008



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1 caringal flats tahara road  
toorak front view curved  
windows oct1978

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## Location

3 TAHARA ROAD TOORAK, STONNINGTON CITY

## Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0579

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO104

## VHR Registration

August 29, 1984

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 31, 1999

What is significant?

Caringal Flats were designed in 1948 by the architect John William Rivett and constructed in 1951. They were built for the James Family Agency. The flats are in two parts. One block is long, curved and three storeys high with twelve flats. It faces walled courtyard gardens to the west. The other is a six storey tower block with six flats which enjoy extensive views of the city. Both blocks are built in off form concrete, with flat roofs. They have large glazed areas, cantilevered balconies and stairways. A bridge links the roof garden to the tower block. The timber windows of the tower block have been replaced with metal in recent years. Handrails and balustrading are tubular steel.

How is it significant?

Caringal Flats are of architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Caringal Flats are of architectural significance as innovative examples of the evolution of flat design in Melbourne. While Caringal was influenced by the designs of 1930s European and British architects such as Mendelsohn and Chermayeff and the English architects, E. Maxwell Fry and Connell, Ward and Lucas, its form and siting set it apart from its Melbourne precursors. Early versions of these European designs to be built in Melbourne included Frederick Romberg and Molly Turner's Newburn Flats of 1940, Yarabee Flats of 1940-41 (Romberg and Shaw) and Stanhill Flats 1948-49. These buildings tended to be rather monolithic, however, lacking Caringal's dramatic juxtaposition of plastic forms to create a dynamic spatial relationship between the blocks. The extensive use of glass, steel and concrete reflect Rivett's interest in technological developments, and, together with the unusual form and siting, mark Caringal as one of the more interesting statements of early Modernism in Australia.

Caringal Flats are of architectural significance for the innovative techniques employed in their construction. The flats demonstrated one of the earliest uses of off-form concrete, especially in a residential building. It is thought that the method of testing the strength of the concrete with a penetration gun was first used here. Similarly the experimental use of the steel concrete reinforcing rods as heating and cooling coils was one of the first times such a technique had been employed.

### Permit Exemptions

#### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Construction dates	1948,
Architect/Designer	Rivett, John William,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	TAHARA FLATS,
Hermes Number	1168
Property Number	

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## History

Contextual History:History of Place:

The International Style only lightly touched Victoria before World War 2 and thereafter did not really take off until the mid-1950s once materials shortages had been overcome. The English Modernists led by Edwin Maxwell Fry and Russian emigre Lubetkin and German emigre Erich Mendelsohn (en route to the US) developed a distinctive oeuvre in their use of reinforced concrete and extensive planes of glass.

The International Style of Romberg's flat designs and Rivett's Caringal Flats stands in stark contrast to the prevailing preference for the Moderne in all its manifestations in Melbourne.

Associated People: Sydney R Elliott, (Managing Director of the Argus and Australasian Ltd. One of the first tenants)

## Extent of Registration

AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 579 Caringal Flats, 3 Tahara Road, Toorak (to the extent of the exterior of the buildings including any interior public access areas and the whole of the land contained in Certificate of Title Volume 7083 Folio 443).

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. 91 29 August 1984 pp. 2985]

*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/>*