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# Former R Haughton James House



Review of B Graded Buildings  
in Kew, Camberwell &  
Hawthorn

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## Location

82 Molesworth Street KEW, Boroondara City

## Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO326

## Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The *R Haughton James House* is of local historical and state architectural significance as a fine example of 1950s postwar residential design in the Melbourne regional style, by noted architect Robin Boyd. The house is a rigorous contrast of rational and organic design which employs an unusual combination of elliptical and box forms. Its configuration in striking geometric shapes, and its bold use of structure, epitomise the Melbourne Regional style, other key examples of which have generally been demolished or altered. The house is a rare

surviving example of Wrightian curvilinear hemicyclic planning. The house is broadly intact externally, though there have been a series of relatively minor alterations.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Review of B Graded Buildings in Kew, Camberwell and Hawthorn, Lovell Chen Architects & Heritage Consultants, 2006; Boroondara - City of Kew Urban Conservation Study, Pru Sanderson Design Pty Ltd, 1988;
Architect/Designer	Boyd, Robin,
Other Names	R Haughton James House,
Hermes Number	14644
Property Number	

## Physical Description 1

The former *R Haughton James House* at 82 Molesworth Street, Kew, is a distinctive architect-designed house in the postwar Melbourne Regional style sited on a steeply sloping river bank bushland site. Constructed over two levels, the ground floor living areas are arranged within an eye-shaped plan which is surmounted by a rectilinear entrance and bedroom wing. The flat roof, originally membrane, is now clad with ribbed galvanised steel decking which extends to form a wide eaves overhang on three side and a carport to the east which is supported by a trussed beam and hardwood posts. The great majority of malthoid-roofed houses have had their roofs replaced in this way in the Melbourne area.

The curved eastern wall of the lower level is built into the hillside with visible sections of overpainted brickwork and brick retaining wall elsewhere, while the western elevation comprises a curved timber-framed window wall. The south and east elevations of the first floor level are clad with overpainted precast foam concrete panels, while the north and west elevations repeat the timber-framed window walls of the ground floor.

Alterations, possibly carried out around 1967, involved the extension of the first floor wing in an easterly direction into the former 'verandah' or carport area.[i] At this time, or later, an original row of timber-framed highlight awning windows in the south elevation appears to have been altered at both ends with the sills of the eastern three bays lowered and replaced with two larger windows and the three western-most bays removed completely. Other minor external alterations appear to have occurred, including minor changes to door and window openings in the ground floor west elevation, the installation of a gas heater at the junction of the east and west curved ground floor elevations and the extension and construction of a new balustrade around the first floor terrace; all these are obscured from the street.

[i] Comparing the approved drawings sourced from the City of Kew Building Index, #598, Grounds, Romberg and Boyd, dated 26 October 1956 with #4909, Allan Powell Pty Ltd Architects, dated 24 November, 1989, indicate that this non-original bay was 'existing' at the time the 1989 proposal was lodged. The drawings for brick veneer additions, City of Kew Building Index, #1075, dated 11 January 1967, however, are not held in the council files. The index suggests that other proposals may have been prepared around the late 1980s.

*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.*

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