

EDITH INGPEN HOUSE



View 2023



Edith Ingpen House north side



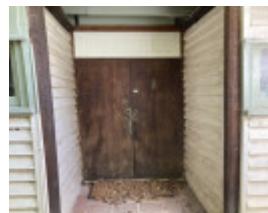
Edith Ingpen House south-east side



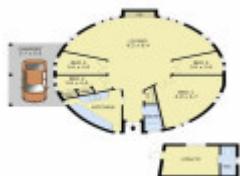
Edith Ingpen House View from Road Entrance



El House 2022



Edith Ingpen House Front Door



Floorplan 2023



Edith Ingpen House 1930s



Edith Ingpen House Weekly Times 16 July 1938



Bathroom 2023



Interior 2023



Kitchen 2023

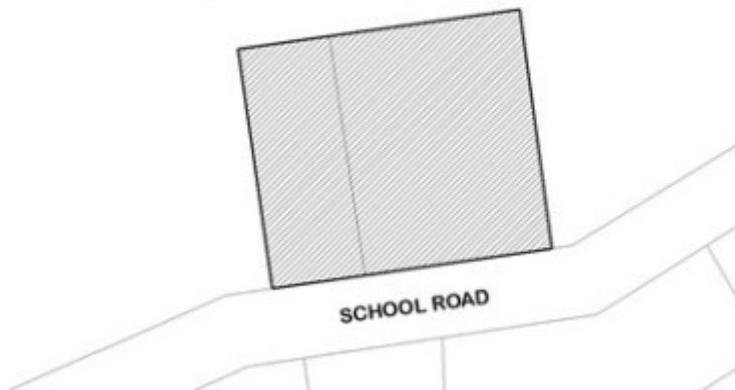


Bedroom 2023



Interior Room 2023

DIAGRAM 2416



Edith Ingpen VHR Extent June 2022

Location

65 SCHOOL ROAD CROSSOVER, BAW BAW SHIRE

Municipality

BAW BAW SHIRE

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2416

VHR Registration

June 23, 2022

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 8, 2025

What is significant?

The Edith Ingpen House, Crossover, designed and built by Edith Ingpen from around 1933 to 1937 as her own weekend retreat, as well as the mature oak trees to the west of the house.

How is it significant?

The Edith Ingpen House is of architectural significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion B

Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

Criterion H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

Why is it significant?

The Edith Ingpen House is rare in Victoria for its thirteen-sided circular form, which was uncommon in interwar buildings, particularly in domestic architecture. It foreshadows the later championing of geometric forms by Modernists such as Roy Grounds from the 1950s.

(Criterion B)

The Edith Ingpen House is architecturally significant as a notable example of an interwar experimental building. Unconstrained by a client's brief and concealed in an isolated location, Ingpen drew on emerging Modernist design principles, including a flat roof, simple circular form and minimal ornamentation, and realised her modest rural retreat using vernacular construction techniques and local natural materials. It is one of only three known surviving examples of Ingpen's independent architectural work.

(Criterion D)

The Edith Ingpen House is historically significant for its association with Edith Ingpen, the first woman graduate in architecture at the University of Melbourne (1933). Ingpen started her career at a time when only 2% of registered architects in Victoria were women, and became a vocal champion of women in the profession. In the early 1930s she was a valued associate in Harold Desbrowe-Annear's firm, and then established her own practice becoming one of the best-known women architects practising solo in Melbourne. During World War II, Ingpen took up a post with the Victorian Public Works Department, the first professional woman architect to be employed there. (Criterion H)

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](#).

Specific Exemptions:

The following permit exemptions are not considered to cause harm to the cultural heritage significance of the Edith Ingpen House.

General

- Minor repairs and maintenance which replaces like with like. Repairs and maintenance must maximise protection and retention of significant fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements. Any repairs and maintenance must not exacerbate the decay of fabric due to chemical incompatibility of new materials, obscure fabric or limit access to such fabric for future maintenance.
- Maintenance, repair and replacement of existing external services such as plumbing, electrical cabling, surveillance systems, pipes or fire services which does not involve changes in location or scale, or additional trenching.
- Repair to, or removal of items such as antennae; aerials; and air conditioners and associated pipe work, ducting and wiring.
- Works or activities, including emergency stabilisation, necessary to secure safety in an emergency where a structure or part of a structure has been irreparably damaged or destabilised and poses a safety risk to its users or the public. The Executive Director must be notified within seven days of the commencement of these works or activities.
- Painting of previously painted external and internal surfaces in the same colour, finish and product type provided that preparation or painting does not remove all evidence of earlier paint finishes or schemes. This exemption does not apply to areas where there are specialist paint techniques such as graining, marbling, stencilling, hand-painting, murals or signwriting, or to wallpapered surfaces, or to unpainted, oiled or varnished

surfaces.

- Cleaning including the removal of surface deposits by the use of low-pressure water (to maximum of 300 psi at the surface being cleaned) and neutral detergents and mild brushing and scrubbing with plastic (not wire) brushes.

Interiors

- Removal or replacement of post-1940s carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- Removal or replacement of post-1940s window furnishings (curtains, blinds etc).
- Removal or replacement of existing hooks, brackets and the like for hanging wall mounted artworks.
- Installation, removal or replacement of existing electrical wiring. If wiring is currently exposed, it should remain exposed. If it is fully concealed it should remain fully concealed.
- Removal or replacement of post-1940s light switches or power outlets. Removal or replacement of smoke and fire detectors, alarms and the like, of the same size and in existing locations.
- Repair, removal or replacement of existing ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the central plant is concealed, and that the work is done in a manner which does not alter building fabric.

Landscape/ outdoor areas

Hard landscaping and services

- Subsurface works to existing watering and drainage systems. Existing lawns, gardens and hard landscaping, including paving, paths and roadways are to be returned to the original configuration and appearance on completion of works.
- Like for like repair and maintenance of existing hard landscaping including carparks, paving, footpaths and driveways where the materials, scale, form and design is unchanged.
- Installation of physical barriers or traps to enable vegetation protection and management of vermin such as rats, mice and possums.

Gardening, plants and trees

- The processes of gardening including mowing, pruning, mulching, fertilising, removal of dead or diseased plants, replanting of existing garden beds, disease and weed control and maintenance to care for existing plants.
- Management and maintenance of trees including formative and remedial pruning, removal of deadwood and pest and disease control.
- Emergency tree works where necessary to prevent an immediate risk of personal injury or damage to property.

Removal of environmental and noxious weeds.

Theme

6. Building towns cities and the garden state 9. Shaping cultural and creative life

Construction dates 1930,

Architect/Designer Ingpen, Edith,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

Hermes Number 208370

Property Number

History

Crossover

The town of Crossover is eighteen kilometres north of Warragul and was established after gold was discovered in 1864. A post office was built in 1866, the Noojee railway line reached the town in 1892, and a primary school was built in 1900. Despite this early growth, by the 1920s Crossover had become a secluded destination for

Melbournians seeking to spend quiet weekends in the bush. It was easily accessible by rail until the 1950s. In 1927, notable architect Harold Desbrowe-Annear completed his weekender 'Clover Hill' at Crossover. Architect Edith Ingpen commenced working at Annear's firm in 1932 and spent time with him at Clover Hill. A circle of Annear's friends had homes in the area which locals nicknamed 'Toorak'. By the mid-1930s Ingpen had designed and built her own rural retreat on an adjacent block to Annear, constructing it gradually on weekends.

Edith Ingpen

Edith Ingpen was one of the best-known woman architects of the 1930s in Victoria and Australia, and the first woman graduate of the University of Melbourne Architecture course (1933). She commenced at the University in 1926 and was articled to the Melbourne firm of EJ & CL Ruck as part of her degree. In 1932 she joined the office of renowned Melbourne architect Harold Desbrowe-Annear where she was made an associate. When Desbrowe-Annear died in June 1933 his firm closed and Ingpen established her own business, mainly working on domestic projects and commercial fitouts. In 1934, she designed a block of flats in the Moderne style, Kalingra, in East Melbourne (extant). The building's interior exemplified Ingpen's economic use of space, also evident in a small house she designed in Balwyn, believed to be the Moderne house at 24 Riverside Avenue, North Balwyn (c.1930s).

During World War II, Ingpen closed her practice and took up a position with the Victorian Public Works Department (PWD). She was the first professional woman architect to be employed there and received a lower salary than her male colleagues. In 1965, after being denied a promotion to a senior position – despite a recommendation from the Chief Architect – Ingpen resigned in frustration. She left Australia soon afterwards to live in England.

When Ingpen started her career in the 1930s, only 1-2% of registered architects in Victoria were women (an annual average of 7 women to 422 men). In this context, she was a trailblazer. She practised at a time of ongoing debate regarding the suitability of female architects to design anything other than domestic structures. Despite the numerous barriers to women in the profession, including lower wages, she made a name for herself and received press coverage and invitations to speak at events. In 1936 she was described as 'one of the best-known women architects practising solo in Melbourne'.

A circular house

Edith Ingpen designed and built her house at Crossover gradually on weekends from around 1933 to 1937 as a holiday house for herself and her mother. Her family lived in Gippsland at the time. The house is notable for its thirteen-sided circular (tridecahedral) design. Architectural historian Harriet Edquist notes that the circular form was uncommon in Australian domestic architecture and is generally associated with the 'geometric modernism' of the postwar era 'heroic architects' such as Roy Grounds. It is significant that the design of Ingpen's house predates Ground's critically acclaimed circular Henty House (1953) by around twenty years. The secluded location of Ingpen's house, the absence of a client's brief, and no fixed construction timeframe arguably allowed her a degree of unfettered experimentation. As Edquist notes, Ingpen's design 'was intentionally difficult; it is circular, and the internal spaces are arranged as segments which fan out from a central dining/sitting space'.

Ingpen built the house (with some professional assistance) from locally source materials, including the timber weatherboards from Gippsland. The fireplaces and chimneys were built of quartz, in plentiful supply across this former gold mining area. The interior spaces are practical and economical: the internal battens double as shelving, and the fireplaces are accessible from the outside by small openings in the stonework from which the ashes can be taken.

One of the most striking experimental aspects was a long footbridge (no longer extant) which extended from the driveway over the front door to the flat roof which was a viewing platform. From the rooftop there was an extensive view over a valley to hills at the north. Ingpen first held the land relatively inexpensively under a miner's lease, the provisions of which allowed the building of a house. This was a resourceful approach, allowing her to avoid an initial large cash outlay or bank loan. She constructed the residence at her own pace from 1933 and purchased the land 1939-40 after the house was completed in around 1937.

Selected bibliography

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Edquist, Harriet, *Harold Desbrowe-Annear 1865-1933: A Life in Architecture*, Miegunyah Press, 2004.

Edquist, Harriet, 'Edith C Ingpen and Harold Desbrowe-Annear: Themes and Variations', *Transitions*, vol. 54, no. 5, 1997.

'Enterprising Women and their Careers: Edith Ingpen – Architect', Age, Sat 24 Jul 1937, p. 2

Hanna, Bronwyn, 'Australia's Early Women Architects: Milestones and Achievements', *Fabrications*, Vol 12, No. 1, June 2002.

Willis, Julie, 'Edith Ingpen', in Goad, Philip & Willis, Julie (eds.) 2012, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne.

Willis, Julie, *A Statistical Survey of Registered Women Architects in Australia*, Faculty of Art, Architecture & Design, University of South Australia, 1997.

Willis, Julie and Bronwyn Hanna, *Women Architects in Australia, 1900-1950*, Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 2001.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion

The Edith Ingpen House is of architectural significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion B

Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

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Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act 2017, I give notice under section 53 that the Victorian Heritage Register

is amended by including a place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H2416

Category: Registered Place

Place: Edith Ingpen House

Location: 65 School Road, Crossover

Municipality: Baw Baw Shire

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2416 at 65 School Road, Crossover comprising Crown Allotments 15 and 15A Township of Crossover, Parish of Neerim.

Dated 23 June 2022

STEVEN AVERY

Executive Director

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/>