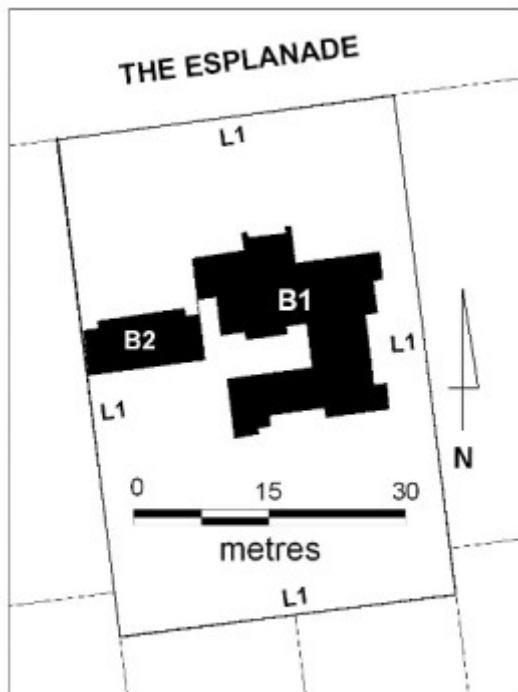


## COMBE MARTIN



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2008

1 Combe Martin Mornington



Combe Martin Mornington - plan

### Location

819-820 ESPLANADE MORNINGTON, MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

### Municipality

MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

## **Level of significance**

Registered

## **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H1900

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO76

## **VHR Registration**

September 28, 2000

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on -

What is significant?

Combe Martin is a two-storey brick residence constructed as a holiday house for the successful iron and steel manufacturer, Charles Ruwolt and his family in 1939-40. The house was designed in the Interwar Old English style by the noted architectural firm of Seabrook and Fildes and is elaborately detailed, inside and out.

How is it significant?

Combe Martin is architecturally and historically significant to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Combe Martin is architecturally significant as an unusual and accomplished example of interwar architecture in the Old English style and as an unusual example of the work of the prominent Melbourne architectural firm of Norman Seabrook and Alan L. Fildes.

Combe Martin is historically significant for its association with the engineer and manufacturer, Charles Ruwolt, whose iron and steel manufacturing firm was one of the largest in Australia. The house demonstrates its association with Ruwolt in much of its detailing in metal, produced in the Ruwolt foundry.

## **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:**

#### **General Conditions:**

1. All alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

#### **Exterior**

- \* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \* Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipework, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.
- \* Installation or repair of damp proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.
- \* Repair of fences and gates.
- \* Regular garden maintenance.
- \* Installation, removal and replacement of garden watering systems.
- \* Laying and repair of gravel toppings to the driveways.

#### **Residence Interior**

- \* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.
- \* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves and skirtings.
- \* Painting of previously painted walls and ceiling provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original painting or other decorative scheme.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and flexible floor coverings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and provided that the location of the heating unit is concealed from view.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of kitchen benches, cupboards and fixtures including sinks, stoves, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring, provided that the existing masonry structure of the building core, including the old stove alcove, remains in place.

- \* Refurbishment of existing bathrooms, toilets and or en suites including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
- \* Installation, removal and replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed.
- \* Installation, removal and replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.
- \* Installation, removal and replacement of smoke detectors

Construction dates	1939,
Architect/Designer	Seabrook & Fildes,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	5352
Property Number	

## History

### Contextual History:

Until 1864, Mornington was known as Schnapper Point. Mornington developed as a fishing village and local agricultural centre. Its road connections to Melbourne were poor but once the jetty was built in 1857, a steamer visited twice-weekly. The possibilities of the Mornington Peninsula as a seaside resort were commented on as early as the 1850s. A number of hotels that could accommodate summer visitors were built at Mornington in the 1860s and 1870s. As the roads improved, access from Melbourne became easier. The railway line to Mornington was opened in September 1889.

Mornington in the twentieth century continued to flourish as a tourist destination. At the time of the Centenary Celebrations in 1934, the town was described as having “a series of beautiful red bluffs, with lovely, clean beaches, said by many travellers to be the best in the world. The natural beauty of the foreshore is jealously guarded by a local committee.” (Moorhead (1971):201). Affluent Melbourne businessmen sought a holiday retreat, close to the city where their wives and children could spend school holidays and they could come to relax at weekends. Mornington offered a combination of safe beaches for swimming and sailing and proximity to rural land for hobby farming and horse riding.

### History of Place:

Combe Martin on the Esplanade, Mornington, opposite Mills Beach, was built for Charles Ruwolt, managing director of Charles Ruwolt Pty Ltd, iron and steel manufacturers. Ruwolt was born in Mecklenburgh, Germany in 1873 and migrated with his parents in 1878. His family farmed at Mount Gambier, South Australia. Charles was educated in State high and technical schools and was apprenticed in 1886-90 with James Martin & Co., machinery manufacturers at Gawler. He studied engineering at Gawler Technical School. He worked for various Victorian foundries and engineering manufacturers including James Alston & Co., Warrnambool, the Phoenix Foundry, Ballarat, Australia Otis, South Melbourne and Thompsons of Castlemaine.

In 1902, Ruwolt opened his own foundry in Wangaratta, making windmills and repairing agricultural machinery. He later specialised in manufacturing mining dredges for local and overseas customers, exporting to the Malay states, Siam (Thailand), the Philippines, South Africa and New Zealand. After 1922, the firm diversified into heavy industrial machinery, including roadmaking equipment, crushing machinery for mining and hydraulic presses for the car industry. By 1938, it was one of the largest engineering companies in Australia, employing 600-700 workers. Its steel foundry was one of the largest and best-equipped in the country.

The company turned to armament manufacture during World War II, employing 2000 workers, manufacturing light artillery and trench mortars. The firm developed the 25 lb. short-gun howitzer, which could be broken up into its components for easy transport. Ruwolt was himself involved in the organization of munitions production in Victoria, as a member of an eight-member central control board of the Department of Munitions from June 1940.

The house was designed in 1939 by the architects Norman Seabrook and Alan L. Fildes. Its size and style were

unusual in a seaside setting. Similar houses of the period were more commonly found in the affluent suburbs of Melbourne, such as Toorak or South Yarra. The house included servants quarters, probably for a permanent staff of a married couple. Land at the rear has been subdivided.

The attention to detail shown in the house's fittings was consistent with the owner's interest in engineering design. For example, a closet under the stairs contains a board for 138 keys to all doors and cupboards in the house. The steeply pitched roofs can be inspected readily by means of specially designed walkways. The copper rainwater hoods for Combe Martin were manufactured in the Ruwolt foundry.

The stained glass window over the stairs was commissioned to commemorate the original owner and his profession. It was designed by William Wheeldon, manager and stained glass artist at the firm of Brooks Robinson. It features a portrait of Charles Ruwolt with his tools in his role as engineer together with an image of St Giles, patron saint of engineering.

A butler's pantry, and linen room were included in the house, which was probably run by a permanent staff of a married couple carrying out the duties of a cook and butler. A small secondary kitchen was provided for the owners' wife to bake on Sunday afternoons without interfering with the servants. This room and the servants' bedroom demonstrate the organisation of a household in the 1930s, before the almost complete disappearance of household servants in Australia during and after World War II.

Seabrook and Fildes designed the MacRobertson Girls High School in 1934, and a series of 12 fire stations in Melbourne in the 1930s and 1940s. They are better known for their institutional work, much of which was heavily influenced by the international Modernism movement, and particularly by Dutch architect Willem Dudok.  
Associated People: Charles Ruwolt, engineer and manufacturer 1873?-1946

## **Assessment Against Criteria**

a. The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object  
N/A

b. The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness  
Combe Martin is a rare example of a seaside holiday house for a wealthy family of the late 1930s, with servants quarters demonstrating the way the house was used.

c. The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage  
N/A

d. The importance of the place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.  
Combe Martin is important as exhibiting the representative nature of a holiday house in a seaside resort in its siting with a view of the sea.

e. The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features  
Combe Martin exhibits good design characteristics and exhibits diversity and an unusual integration of features in its design of the interior and exterior of the house, with its unusual level of detail, and its brick walled garden, driveway and paths complementing the brickwork of the main house.

f. The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements  
N/A

g. The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations  
Combe Martin is important for its association with the engineer and foundry owner, Charles Ruwolt whose firm was one of the largest in Australia. Its level of detail demonstrates Ruwolt's interest in design and manufacture.

Combe Martin is important for its social associations in that its layout exemplifies the workings of a wealthy 1930s

household, prior to the large scale disappearance of household servants in Australia during and after World War II. The secondary kitchen for Mrs Ruwolt's recreational cooking is a most unusual survival which testifies to the way the household was organised.

h. Any other matter which the Council deems relevant to the determination of cultural heritage  
N/A

## **Extent of Registration**

1. All the buildings being the house known as Combe Martin marked B1 and B2 on plan 1900 held by the Executive Director.
  2. All the land marked L1 on Plan 1900 held by the Executive Director.
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*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/>*