

## WALLER HOUSE AND COLLECTION



WALLER HOUSE



WALLER HOUSE STUDIO



WALLER HOUSE GARDEN



WALLER HOUSE



WALLER HOUSE PAINTING



WALLER HOUSE MURAL  
LIVING HALL



Waller House Main Living Hall



Waller house detail of front verandah



Waller house front view  
aug1981



Waller house glass studio



Waller House Main Living Hall 2



Waller house\_mural

DIAGRAM 617

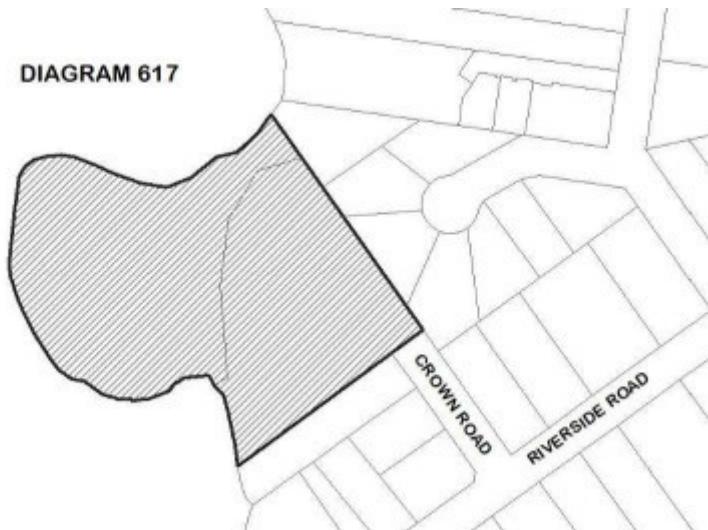


Diagram 617



Waller paper title

## Location

9-9A CROWN ROAD IVANHOE, BANYULE CITY

## Municipality

BANYULE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

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

H0617

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO22

## **VHR Registration**

February 19, 1986

## **Amendment to Registration**

December 19, 2019

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - April 7, 2021

### **WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT?**

The Waller House and Collection including all the buildings (interiors and exteriors), fixed and movable objects and the garden. The buildings include the main house with semi-detached sunroom and laundry/bathroom, a separate garage and a separate Art Studio. The garden near the house includes plantings, terraces and garden rooms with brick and stone edged gravel paths, brick or stone walls and concrete paths. A less formal bush garden is located further away from the house. The Collection includes artworks by Napier Waller; Napier and Christian Waller's full-size cartoons for stained-glass windows, library, art materials, tools and equipment as well as items associated with the Wallers including a collection of Melbourne Art Pottery, rugs and household items. Most of these objects are still in the house.

### **HOW IS IT SIGNIFICANT?**

The Waller House and Collection is of architectural, historical and social significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

#### **Criterion A**

Importance to the course, or pattern, 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 Waller House and Collection is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The Waller House and Collection is historically significant as the residence and workplace of renowned artists Napier and Christian Waller where, with assistance from Lorna Waller and others, many artworks of State and national significance were designed and fully or partially executed. These include mosaics, stained-glass windows, painted murals, ceramics, prints and books. Evidence of these creative practices still exists at the place. [Criterion A]

The Waller House is architecturally significant as a notable example of an artists' residence and workplace, specifically designed and modified for the production of monumental artworks such as murals, mosaics and stained-glass windows, noting that smaller scale prints, paintings and drawings were also made at the house. A separate Glass Studio was attached to the Living Hall in 1931 and the original studio and light well were converted to a double height Living Hall and Minstrels Gallery respectively. Full-size cartoons of monumental artworks could be hung in the Living Hall and viewed from the Minstrels Gallery and Entrance Hall. A simple self-contained Art Studio was constructed on a lower terrace in 1937 for mosaic work and print making. Both studios have large south facing windows intended to provide good light to the artists. [Criterion D]

The Waller House and Collection is also architecturally significant for its architecture, interiors, furnishings and garden; all of which demonstrate the ideals of the English Arts and Crafts movement, especially the value of simplicity, utility and beauty; unified design schemes for buildings and their interiors and gardens, and collaborations between designers and crafts people. The house was designed by the Wallers in 1922 and has similarities to the work of the Wallers' friend architect Harold Desbrowe-Annear. Later alterations were designed by architect Percy Meldrum, in sympathy with the original design. The individually designed furniture resulting from collaborations with the Wallers, Percy Meldrum and furniture designer and manufacturer Harry Goldman, reflects the Wallers' creativity and is either Arts and Crafts or Moderne in style. The handcrafted interior finishes were also designed by the Wallers. The Australian Arts and Crafts style garden has more formal terraced garden rooms and hand-crafted features nearer the house, and an informal bush garden further away from the house. [Criterion D]

The Waller House and Collection is significant for its association with artists Napier and Christian Waller. Mervyn Napier Waller CMG OBE (19 June 1893 - 30 March 1972) was a noted Australian stained-glass artist, mosaicist, muralist, print maker and painter. Christian Marjory Waller (1894-1954) was a noted book designer, printmaker, stained-glass artist and painter. The Waller House and Collection provides a unique insight into the daily lives, work practices, friendships, range of interests and personal and professional associations of the Waller family and their circle of artist friends especially ceramicists Kylie Slater/Pate and John Barnard Knight, architect Percy Meldrum, sculptor Ola Cohn and furniture designer and manufacturer Harry Goldman. Most of the Collection consists of artworks by Napier Waller; Napier and Christian Waller's full-size cartoons for stained-glass windows, their library, art materials, tools and equipment as well as items associated with the Wallers including a collection of Melbourne Art Pottery, rugs and household items. Most of these objects are still in the house, many in their original rooms. [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:**

It should be noted that Permit Exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.49(3) of the Heritage Act). Permit Exemptions can also be applied for and granted after registration (under s.92 of the Heritage Act).

#### General Condition 1

All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.

#### General Condition 2

Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works 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 works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible.

#### General Condition 3

All works should ideally be informed by Conservation Management Plans and Collection Management Plans prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan or Collection Management Plan and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

#### General Condition 4

Nothing in this determination prevents the Heritage Council from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

#### General Condition 5

Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the relevant responsible authority, where applicable.

### Specific Permit Exemptions

The following works do not require a permit provided that they are carried out in a manner which does not harm the cultural heritage significance of the place.

#### General

Maintenance and replacement of existing external electrical and fire services in the same location and of the same size.

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. Every attempt must be made to conserve and retain as much significant fabric as possible. The Executive Director, Heritage Victoria, must be notified within seven days of the commencement of these works or activities.

The erection of temporary security fencing, scaffolding, hoardings or surveillance systems to prevent unauthorised access or secure public safety.

## Landscape

The process of gardening, including mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, disease and weed control, maintenance of existing plants and replacement with similar species.

The removal or pruning of dead or dangerous trees to maintain safety.

Management and maintenance of trees including formative and remedial pruning, removal of deadwood, pest and disease control, cabling and similar supportive works.

Works associated with the management of possums and vermin.

## Exterior of buildings

Repair to or removal of items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials and making good.

Minor patching, repair and maintenance which replaces like with like without large-scale removal of or damage to the existing fabric or the large-scale introduction of new materials. Repairs must maximise protection and retention of fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements. Any new materials used for repair must not exacerbate the decay of existing fabric due to chemical incompatibility, obscure existing fabric or limit access to existing fabric for future maintenance.??

Painting of previously plain painted external surfaces in the same colour, finish and type provided that preparation or painting does not remove all evidence of earlier paint finishes or other decorative schemes.

## Collection

Movement of non-fixed objects within the place does not require a permit provided that the movement is to return objects to known pre-1986 positions within the house, or when the movement is temporary and is intended for the security or safekeeping of the objects or for interpretation of the place. Handling of objects is to be undertaken in accordance with the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) collection management policy once submitted to and accepted by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria.

Construction dates 1922,

Architect/Designer Waller, Mervyn Napier, Meldrum, Percy,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place, Registered object integral to a registered place,

Hermes Number 602

Property Number

## History

Mervyn Napier Waller (1893-1972) was a prolific artist and designer who worked in many media including small scale oil, watercolour and printmaking and monumental murals, mosaics and stained-glass windows. His murals include *Peace After Victory* (1929) in the State Library of Victoria, (VHR H1497); the Mural Hall murals (1935) in the Myer Emporium, (VHR H2100) and the *Pioneer Mural* (1962) in St Andrew's Church Brighton, (VHR H2100). His mosaic art includes *The Five Lamps of Knowledge* at the University of Western Australia (1931); *I'll put a girdle round about the earth* (VHR H0447) commissioned by Theodore Fink in 1933 for Newspaper House; *Prometheus* (1962) for the SEC at Monash House and *the "Eight" Aboriginal Tribal Headmen* (1963) for Temple Court. A few of his many stained-glass windows include those for St Peters Eastern Hill (1945), (VHR H0009); St Mark's, Camberwell (1952), (VHR H2158); St Paul's, Frankston (1960) and St Stephen's, Gardenvale (1970). Many preliminary drawings, sketches and full-size cartoons of these works remain in the Waller House Collection. Between 1955 and 1958 he designed and executed (with others) the mosaics and stained glass for the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, creating one of the largest single mosaics in the world.

Christian Waller (1894-1954) was a noted book designer, print maker, painter and stained-glass artist. In the 1930s she produced her finest prints, book designs and stained glass while residing at the house. Using an 1849 printing press still at the house, she designed, cut, and hand printed *The Great Breath: A Book of Seven Designs* (1932). A copy, purchased by the National Gallery of Victoria in the year it was published, was her first work to enter a public collection. Christian Waller created more than 65 stained-glass windows for a number of churches, especially for those designed by Louis Williams in Melbourne, Geelong, and rural centres in New South Wales. She also created *The Robe of Glory* mural in 1937 for the crematorium at Fawkner Memorial Park (VHR H2331) and the *East of the Sun and West of the Moon* stained glass window at Beleura (VHR H0319).

Napier and Christian Waller were married in 1915. Napier lost his right arm while serving on the Western Front in 1916. After he returned to Australia in 1917, Christian supported him briefly by working as a commercial artist. Napier Waller bought the land at 9 and 9A Crown Street in 1920. He discharged the mortgage to the War Services Homes Commissioner in 1922 and the house was constructed by builder Phillip Millsom in the same year.

The Wallers visited England, Venice and Ravenna in the late 1920s and became interested in murals and received training in mosaic and stained-glass techniques. The interwar period was a highly creative period for both Napier and Christian Waller when many of their major public commissions were created. Artistic collaboration by the Wallers on stained glass projects has been noted and both artists are recognized as among Australia's leading stained-glass artists of the twentieth century. Napier Waller is also recognised as Australia's leading mosaic artist. Napier Waller lived at the house continuously for fifty years, while Christian Waller lived there on and off for thirty years. The house tells the story of the artists' home and of their work spaces and is a memorial to them.

All images, objects and artworks created by or depicting Christian Waller were removed from the house following her death in 1954. Her niece Klytie Sclater/Pate was given many items, and others were sold. These works are now mainly held by the National Gallery of Victoria, the National Gallery of Australia, Beleura (VHR H0319) and in private collections.

Napier married his second wife Lorna Waller (nee Reyburn) (1912-1997) in 1958. She was Napier Waller's model and studio assistant in stained glass and mosaic although she also made prints. She did the lettering on his stained-glass windows and was the assistant to Waller for the work at the Hall of Memory in the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. Following Napier's death, she was forced to sell some of the Collection for financial reasons. Lorna Waller was responsible for the preservation of the Waller House. Her will specified that her trustees should:

.establish in the dwelling . a centre for the study of art and in particular of monumental art in Australia; not to sell or otherwise dispose of the art collection; to keep the art collection on display at the dwelling . and not to remove or cause to be removed the art collection nor any part thereof from the property other than for temporary purposes. the dwelling .not be subjected to external alterations; the exterior and interior decoration of the dwelling house to be maintained in the form in which it is at the time of my death .

While many artworks have been attributed to Napier Waller in the past, it is almost certain that Napier and Christian Waller collaborated on many stained-glass windows, mosaics and murals in the 1930s and 1940s as well as the decoration of the house. This is based on stylistic similarities; their shared artistic vision; known collaborative work practices including sharing the studios at the house; Napier's disability and Lorna's efforts to expunge Christian Waller from the house. Works dating from the early 1950s would have been designed by Napier Waller alone.

Harry Goldman (1872-1939) the co-designer and manufacturer of much of the varnished timber furniture in the house was a noted Melbourne cabinet maker and designer who worked exclusively in Australian timbers. His manufacturing company was known as H. Goldman Manufacturing Co. He also co-designed and constructed furniture for the Marion and Walter Burley Griffin's Cafe Australia in Melbourne. The painted built-in furniture in the house and Art Studio was designed by Christian Waller and architect Percy Meldrum (1887-1968) in a Moderne style and constructed by H. Goldman Manufacturing Co. Meldrum also designed Newspaper House where the Wallers' mosaic *I'll put a girdle round about the earth* (VHR H0447) was installed and the 1931, 1934 and 1937 alterations to the Wallers' house and studios.

Many of the ceramics at the house are made by noted ceramicists Klytie Sclater/Pate (1912-2010) and John Barnard Knight (1910-1993). Klytie Sclater was Christian Waller's niece and lived in the house from 1925 until 1937 when she married William Pate. Her artistic practice was very much influenced by Christian. She began her

sculptural practice making drawings, prints and plaster models and learning sculptural techniques from Ola Cohn at the Waller House. Later she made ceramics at the Working Men's College. John Barnard Knight was a potter who studied and worked with Napier Waller in the 1930s. The house holds 17 vessels that he threw, and which Napier Waller decorated and others that he made and decorated alone.

#### KEY REFERENCES USED TO PREPARE ASSESSMENT

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Lane, Terence, 1990, *The Napier Waller House*, Trust News, vol 18, No. 9, April 1990

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Thomas, D, 2002, Christian Waller, *Australian Dictionary of Biography Online*,  
<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/waller-christian-marjory-11944>

#### Extent of Registration

Heritage Act 2017

#### 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 modifying a place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H0617

Category: Registered Place, Registered Objects Integral to a Registered Place

Place: Waller House and Collection

Location: 9-9a Crown Road, Ivanhoe

Municipality: City of Banyule

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 617 encompassing all of Crown Allotments 2004 and 1T, Parish of Keelbundora and all objects integral to place including movable and fixed objects listed in the inventory dated August 2019, held by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria.

19 December 2019

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/>*