
Garden Avenue & George Street Flats

Location

48-50 Wellington Parade, 1-3 and 2-16 Garden Avenue and 37 George Street,, EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002 - Property No B6998

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 20, 2007

What is significant? The complex which includes a guest house, bachelor flats and residential units located at Wellington Parade-Garden Avenue and stretching through to George Street, East Melbourne, includes seven buildings all designed by the same architect, I. G. Anderson, during the period from 1938 - 1941.

The buildings are designed in the 'Moderne' style popular during the late 1930's. All the buildings are of three storeys and are designed with strong horizontal and vertical emphases. Building material is of brick and tile with concrete floors and concrete rendered features such as balconies. The selection of bricks covers a rich palette from cream to rose and deeper red with decorative coursing in 'tapestry' and brown brick. Windows are both steel and timber framed. With the exception of one building, 'Islander Place,' which has a flat roof, all the other buildings have shallow pitched tile roofs behind parapet walls.

Although the whole site shows a remarkable unity and development of design style, each building is unique both in external form, internal plan and decorative detail. The buildings are set around two quiet cul-de-sacs and are surrounded by lawns, shrubs and mature trees, providing an oasis amidst a busy urban area.

The guest house and flats built to house young professional workers, provide a pleasant environment with easy transportation to the central city area. They were designed to be compact whilst offering all the amenities of modern living in the 30's. The building specifications show the care and consideration taken over specific fixtures and fittings. The whole group comprising the seven buildings and the surrounding environment of gardens and pathways is remarkably intact with minimal external modifications. True to the original context the buildings still fulfil the purpose for which they were designed.

How is it significant? The residential flats and guest house which comprise the group of buildings at Garden Avenue-George Street are significant for aesthetic, architectural and social reasons at a State level.

Why is it significant? The Garden Avenue-George Street flats are architecturally important as a unique group of 'Moderne' flats which are exceptionally well preserved in their original context. Each of the seven buildings is designed with an unusually high level of detail, incorporating a range of 'Moderne' motifs into individual facades.

Horizontal elements, balconies, window frames and richly coloured decorative brick courses contrast with the vertical accents of stair towers and concrete ribbing. The facades incorporate a variety of modeled forms, curved corners, projecting bays and balconies, and recessed entries with decorative screen doors and porthole windows. The massing is dynamic, including angled and stepped forms, creating a diverse and lively streetscape along both cul-de-sacs.

Other groups of flats designed in the 1930's exist within Melbourne, but none are quite as extensive, well preserved or rich in detail in the 'Moderne' style as are the ones on this site.

The flats are an excellent example of the work of I.G. Anderson, an architect with a very distinctive style, which relied on a meticulous attention to detail and specification. Anderson had made a practice of designing residential flats in Melbourne during the 1930's including the State listed 'Ostend' at Brighton Beach. The flats on the Garden Avenue- George Street site show a significant development of his architectural style and functional planning, and compare favourably with other urban housing schemes being erected overseas.

Socially the flats are a perfect expression of the pressure to house young professional white collar workers in the 1930's many of whom migrated to work in central city offices and businesses. These workers demanded well designed, functional accommodation at a reasonable price, and within close proximity to the city center and transport systems. They still provide for this need and evidence confirms that they are still popular as living units and continue to foster a sense of community and pride.

Classified: 05/08/2002

Other Names Islander Place, Kingscourt, Greensborough, Tuffnell Lodge,

Hermes Number 65059

Property Number

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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