



Stalemates of Significance

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Post - War Heritage Places Without Protection



8 Bronte Court, Hampton

In 1954, Nell Cleehan, then director of the Age Small Homes Service, designed a demonstration house at Surrey Hills to showcase current trends in residential design, construction and furnishing. Known as the Dream House, it opened to the public in 1955 and garnered huge publicity before finally being given away as first prize in a radio competition. The lucky winner, however, insisted that her new home should be unique and urged Cleehan to remove the plan for the Small Homes Service range. Although he obliged, an exact replica of the house was erected in Hampton during 1956. With the demolition of the original Surrey Hills house in recent years, its Hampton doppelgänger is now the only surviving evidence of what was the most celebrated project house of the 1950s.



13 Banksia Avenue, Beaumaris

This striking flat-roofed elevated glass box was designed in 1957 by a Polish émigré architect for his own residence. A hitherto unsung hero of local modernism, Tadeusz Karasinski (1903-68) graduated from the University of Lviv in 1931, worked as City Architect, then District Architect,

then Director of the Technical Division for the entire province of 12 million people. With a staff of 37, he designed schools, hospitals and churches, and, in 1938, was awarded the Silver Order for Distinguished Service by the Polish Government. After a stint practising and teaching in Stuttgart, he migrated to Australia in 1947, where he worked for A.V. Jennings, the Department of Works and the office of Godfrey Spowers before starting his own practice. Few of his independent works, however, have yet been identified here.



2 Bolton Avenue, Black Rock

Sydney architect Donald Crone (1923-1994) is lauded for many celebrated large-scale city projects, from the Chevron Hotel in Kings Cross (1960) to the Centrepoint Tower (1961). What is less well known, however, is that Crone was born in Melbourne, where he graduated in 1950 and started his career in the offices of Roy Grounds, Mussen Mackay & Potter, and Stephenson & Turner before moving north in 1959. It was in 1954, while in Grounds' employ, that Crone was approached by a long-time friend, the recently retired test cricketer Lindsay Hassett, to design his new house at Black Rock. The extraordinary timber-clad skillion-roofed house that Crone designed therefore represents this noted architect's earliest private commission, and the only known example of his work in his native Victoria.

148 Weatherall Road, Cheltenham

This seemingly unremarkable 1950s villa belies the fascinating story of an English engineering firm, the Trusteel Corporation, which was contracted by the State Government in 1950 to supply a number of packaged steel-framed hospitals for regional centres. The ambitious project, however, was cancelled after only a few examples were built. Left with a yard full of leftover steel components, the firm's managing director, Charles Cook, incorporated them into a house that he designed and built for his own use in 1952, with a butterfly roof created by simply inverting the framework for the low-pitched hospital roof. A comparable house, built by Cook in Camberwell, has since been demolished, leaving this one as a unique marker of the early application of steel-frame technology to domestic construction in Victoria.



475 McDonalds Road, South Morang

Relocated here over 20 years ago, this space-odyssey once stood at 299 Plenty Valley Drive, Greensborough, where it served as an estate agent's sales office on the edge of a 1980 subdivision. While its provenance is hazy, it is clearly one of the 96 identical prefabricated fibreglass dwellings designed in 1968 by Finnish architect Matti Suuronen as a prototype for modern living. Marketed as the Futuro House, these space-oddities were distributed around the world, where they were displayed at home shows and trade fairs to much merriment. They have since been the subject of a book, a documentary and a website—the last of which aims to locate and catalogue all extant examples around the world. This is one of a mere handful to have been sighted in Australia, and the only example remaining in Victoria.



27 Lawson Parade, Highett

This quirky gingerbread cottage was not occupied by a Wicked Witch but rather by local carpenter Stanley Johnston, who built it for himself in the late 1940s. With its rough ship-lap boards, shingled roof on bowed rafters, eyebrow

dormers and barley-sugar brick chimney this represents an exceptionally rare local appearance of what Charles Jencks (in *Dynadrom Houses of Los Angeles*) codified as the Witch House (aka Hässel & Gertel or Haunted Gnostic style). He says: "you can always spot this kind of fantasy by the pointed eaves, undulating roofs and quaint windows, because the average Witch House has been standardised and mass-produced since the '30s". In Beverly Hills, certainly, but scarcely here in Melbourne, where it may even be a unique local manifestation.



7 Roosevelt Court, Brighton East

The celebrated partnership of Neil Everist and David McGlashan began humbly in 1955, when the pair opened an office in a back room of McGlashan's parents' home on Brighton's Esplanade. Many of the fledgling firm's earliest projects were local, including two houses in Beaumaris—one since razed and the other now altered. In 1957, an old school-friend of McGlashan invited the firm to design his new home at Brighton East. A stark flat-roofed dwelling with overlapping planes of concrete brick, defining an open plan with double-sided fireplace, integrated mural and formal pond, it clearly anticipates the mature work that would win McGlashan & Everist both acclaim and awards. This tiny gem of house, retaining even its original pale blue front door, remains one of the most intact early projects of this significant firm.

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