HERITAGE COUNCIL DETERMINATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determination Date</th>
<th>7 December 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place/Object Name</td>
<td>Godsell House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>491 Balcombe Road, Beaumaris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VHR Number</td>
<td>H2379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place Category</td>
<td>Heritage Place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At a meeting of the Heritage Council on 7 December 2017 it was determined to include this place in the Victorian Heritage Register and make certain amendments to the registration material that had been proposed in the Executive Director’s Recommendation, namely the removal of reference to Criterion H.

The Heritage Council endorses the attached registration information for the above place.

Professor Stuart Macintyre AO
Chair, Heritage Council of Victoria
Recommendation of the Executive Director and assessment of cultural heritage significance under s.32 of the Heritage Act 1995

Name: David Godsell House
Location: 491 Balcombe Road Beaumaris, City of Bayside
VHR Number: VHR H2379
VHR Category: Heritage Place
Hermes Number: 55876
Heritage Overlay: City of Bayside, HO412 (Individual)

David Godsell House (c.2016)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE HERITAGE COUNCIL:

- That the David Godsell House be included as a Heritage Place in the Victorian Heritage Register under the Heritage Act 1995 [Section 32 (1)(a)].

STEVEN AVERY
Executive Director
Recommendation Date: 22 September 2017

This recommendation report has been issued by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria under s.32 of the Heritage Act 1995. It has not been considered or endorsed by the Heritage Council of Victoria.
EXTENT OF NOMINATION

Date that the nomination was accepted by the Executive Director
21 October 2008

Written extent of nomination
The whole house and immediate surroundings, including all original fixtures and fittings.

Nomination extent diagram
This is a nomination that was received by Heritage Victoria in 2008. No diagram was provided with this nomination.

Is the extent of nomination the same as the recommended extent?
Yes.

EXTENT OF REGISTRATION

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2379 encompassing all of Lot 1 on Title Plan 710912.

The extent of registration of the David Godsell House in the Victorian Heritage Register includes the whole place shown on Diagram 2379 including the land, the building (including the exterior and interiors), street boundary brick walls and other exterior brick walls, landscape elements and other features.

The registration also includes all of the building’s fixtures at the time of registration including the wall and ceiling linings, light fittings, copper rainwater head, built-in furniture, cabinetry and shelves.
RATIONALE FOR EXTENT

The recommended extent encompasses the cadastral block and all of the elements relating to the cultural heritage significance of the David Godsell House.

AERIAL PHOTO OF THE PLACE SHOWING EXTENT OF REGISTRATION
STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT?

The David Godsell House, including the exterior and interiors of the residence including the 1966 studio and the 1972 upper storey addition; the street boundary brick walls and other exterior brick walls; landscape elements and other features; and fixtures attached to the building including the wall and ceiling linings, light fittings, copper rainwater head, built-in furniture, cupboards, cabinets and shelves. The cylindrical concrete pool, associated timber steps, decking, battened safety fence and gate at the central courtyard’s western edge have no cultural heritage significance.

History Summary

David Godsell and his wife Ursula (‘Terry’) Godsell purchased the 491 Balcombe Road site in November 1956. The David Godsell House is the realisation of a design for himself and his family upon this site and was documented by Godsell during the first half of 1960. The majority of the present-day house was constructed between mid-1960 and the early months of 1961. Small spaces also designed by David Godsell were added to the house during the Godsell family’s occupation of the house in subsequent years – a home-office (studio) in c.1966, laundry adjacent to the kitchen in c.1970, and an additional upper-storey bathroom and bedroom in c.1972. Prior to his death in 1986, David Godsell conducted his architectural practice from the studio at 491 Balcombe Road. Terry Godsell continued to live in the house until its 2008 sale to the current owners. Very little change has occurred to the house since that time, apart from the addition of an outdoor timber decking area to the north of the living room, and a cylindrical concrete plunge pool and associated timber steps, decking, safety fence and gate to the central courtyard’s western edge.

Description Summary

The David Godsell House is a freestanding single-family dwelling sited centrally within a roughly rectangular 935 sq.m (0.23 acre) block of land. Its external walls are predominantly of Californian Redwood cladding boards and fawn-coloured face brickwork. The house is a careful composition of rectilinear flat-roofed wings, three of which face inwards towards a sheltered courtyard. The 12-inch Californian Redwood boards which clad the house also feature prominently in its interiors. The living room features a large linear skylight of timber-framed topaz panes of glass, the western end of which terminates in a junction with the house’s face brick chimney. The corners and edges of this chimney – and of other panels of brickwork in the house – feature toothed and recessed bricks in alternate courses, creating richly textured surfaces. Joints between panes of window glass at the external corners of rooms, and between the horizontal and vertical glass along the living room skylight’s northern edge, have been mitred and glued with great care. Soffits of the carport and entry roofs – and the wide eaves of other roofs – are lined with the same 12-inch Californian Redwood boards used on the house’s external and internal wall surfaces, subtly vertically stepped and also mitred at the corner junctions. Much of the house’s interior materials and finishes remain in their original state, including the unpainted face brickwork; timber wall and ceiling lining boards; internal doors; built-in furniture and open shelves; storage cupboards; kitchen cabinetry and shelves; and some of the fixtures within the bathrooms. The house’s original and carefully concealed ceiling-mounted fluorescent tube lighting also appears intact. Free-standing external brick walls, including the wall along the Balcombe Road street boundary, feature courses of toothed and recessed bricks detailed similarly to those deployed within the house.

Traditional owners/Registered Aboriginal Parties

The David Godsell House is located on the traditional lands of the Bunurong people.
HOW IS IT SIGNIFICANT?
The David Godsell House is of architectural, aesthetic and historical significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

**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 David Godsell House is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The David Godsell House is architecturally significant as an outstanding example of the work of architect David Godsell, who was a leading exponent of 1960s and 70s Modern organic architecture in the years immediately following Frank Lloyd Wright’s death when that strand of Modern architecture was a focus of several architects in Victoria. Designed and constructed as a home for Godsell’s own family at the time when he was beginning his own architecture practice, the David Godsell House allows its clear association with its architect and former occupant to be readily appreciated better than most other places in Victoria. Conceived, documented and largely completed within the space of one year when Godsell was 30 years old, the house is a testament to the young architect’s creativity and maturity. Publications and print media cite this house as one of David Godsell’s finest realised designs. [Criterion H]

PERMIT POLICY

Preamble
The purpose of the Permit Policy is to assist when considering or making decisions regarding works to a registered place. It is recommended that any proposed works be discussed with an officer of Heritage Victoria prior to making a permit application. Discussing proposed works will assist in answering questions the owner may have and aid any decisions regarding works to the place.

The extent of registration of the David Godsell House in the Victorian Heritage Register affects the whole place shown on Diagram 2379 including the land, the residence and studio (including the exterior and interiors), street boundary brick walls, other exterior brick walls, landscape elements and other features. Under the *Heritage Act 1995* a person must not remove or demolish, damage or despoil, develop or alter or excavate, relocate or disturb the position of any part of a registered place or object without approval. It is acknowledged, however, that alterations and other works may be required to keep places and objects in good repair and adapt them for use into the future.

Name: David Godsell House  
VHR Number: PROV VHR H2379  
Hermes Number: 55876
If a person wishes to undertake works or activities in relation to a registered place or registered object, they must apply to the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria for a permit. The purpose of a permit is to enable appropriate change to a place and to effectively manage adverse impacts on the cultural heritage significance of a place as a consequence of change. If an owner is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that Heritage Victoria be contacted.

Permits are required for anything which alters the place or object, unless a permit exemption is granted. Permit exemptions usually cover routine maintenance and upkeep issues faced by owners as well as minor works or works to the elements of the place or object that are not significant. They may include appropriate works that are specified in a conservation management plan. Permit exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.42 of the Heritage Act) or after registration (under s.66 of the Heritage Act).

It should be noted that the addition of new buildings to the registered place, as well as alterations to the interior and exterior of existing buildings requires a permit, unless a specific permit exemption is granted.

Conservation management plans
It is recommended that a Conservation Management Plan is developed to manage the place in a manner which respects its cultural heritage significance.

Aboriginal cultural heritage
If works are proposed which have the potential to disturb or have an impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage it is necessary to contact Aboriginal Victoria to ascertain any requirements under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. If any Aboriginal cultural heritage is discovered or exposed at any time it is necessary to immediately contact Aboriginal Victoria to ascertain requirements under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

Other approvals
Please be aware that approval from other authorities (such as local government) may be required to undertake works.

Archaeology
Ground disturbance may affect any archaeological deposits at the place and, subject to the exemptions stated in this document, requires a permit.

Cultural heritage significance
Overview of significance
The cultural heritage significance of the David Godsell House lies in all of the place at 491 Balcombe Road, including the 1960-61 building and its c.1966 and c.1972 additions, and elements associated with those periods of construction including the street boundary brick walls, other exterior brick walls, landscape elements and other features, and fixtures attached to the building including the wall and ceiling linings, light fittings, copper rainwater head, built-in furniture, cupboards, cabinets and shelves.

PERMIT EXEMPTIONS (UNDER SECTION 42 OF THE HERITAGE ACT)
It should be noted that Permit Exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.42(4) of the Heritage Act). Permit Exemptions can also be applied for and granted after registration (under s.66 of the Heritage Act).

Name: David Godsell House
VHR Number: PROV VHR H2379
Hermes Number: 55876
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 prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation 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

Landscape Exemptions:
• The process of gardening, including mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, disease and weed control, and maintenance to care for existing plants.
• Subsurface works involving the installation, removal or replacement of watering and drainage systems or services.
• Works associated with the management of possums and vermin.
• Removal or lopping of trees where there is a risk of personal injury or damage to property.
• Removal, or maintenance and repair of existing paving and other hard landscaping elements, like for like.
• Removal, or maintenance, repair and replacement of existing fences and gates, like for like.

Specific Exemptions:

Building Exteriors
• Repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
• Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae and aerials.
• Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.
• Painting of previously painted surfaces provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.

Building Interiors
• Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of any original paint or other decorative scheme (no stained timberwork is to be painted).
• Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping by non-abrasive methods.
• Installation, removal or replacement of non-original carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- Installation, removal or replacement of non-original curtain tracks, rods and blinds.
- Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted art.
- Refurbishment of existing bathrooms including removal or replacement of non-original sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
- Removal of tiling in wet areas provided there is no damage to or alteration of original structure or fabric.
- Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ.

**RELEVANT INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Government Authority</th>
<th>Bayside City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Overlay</td>
<td>HO412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Overlay Controls</td>
<td>External Paint: Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal Alteration: No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tree: No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Overlays</td>
<td>VPO3: Beaumaris and Black Rock Native Vegetation Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Listings</td>
<td>National Trust of Australia (Victoria): State-level significant, File Number B5112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Names</td>
<td>Godsell House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Former David Godsell House</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**HISTORY**

**David Godsell and his work**

David Brymer Godsell (1930-86) was born in Portsmouth, England. His father, Thomas Anthony Godsell, was born in Coventry in 1903, migrated to Australia as a boy, grew up in South Melbourne, joined the Royal Australian Navy as a 14 year old and during his subsequent service in the UK met and married Kathleen (‘Kay’) Brymer. In c.1939 Thomas and Kay Godsell left England with their family and settled in Melbourne. David Godsell gained his architectural qualifications through part-time study in engineering at the Melbourne Technical College (later RMIT) and also through the Atelier course at the University of Melbourne. He complemented this training with practical experience at ICI, Shell, the State Rivers & Water Supply Commission, and Arnold Bridge & Associates where he developed an understanding of industrial architecture. Although Godsell did not complete his University degree (having failed its perspective drawing component) he subsequently undertook and passed the Architects Registration Board’s exams, qualifying him to practice as an architect in the State of Victoria.

While still an architecture student Godsell first joined the office of architect Marcus Martin, and then later in 1953 when a senior student he was offered work by Guildford Bell, who at the time was a guest lecturer and reviewer at the University of Melbourne. Godsell documented important domestic commissions within Bell’s practice during his approximately seven years there. In 1960, after the successful completion of Godsell’s own house in the Melbourne suburb of Beaumaris, he departed Bell’s office and commenced his own private practice.

Like many other Australian architects of the 1950s and 1960s, and fellow Melbourne architects Charles Duncan and Geoffrey Woodfall in particular, David Godsell was keenly interested in the ideas of the American master architect, interior designer, writer and educator, Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright was a vigorous advocate of ‘organic architecture’ and he held that a truly organic methodology – to be achieved through design sympathetic and well-integrated with a building’s site – was obtained when buildings, their furnishings and surroundings were all designed to form unified interrelated compositions. Godsell’s own and arguably also organic approach to design was influenced by traditional Japanese architecture – in particular its incorporation of asymmetry and of the module of the tatami mat – as well as by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy’s *The Transformation of Nature in Art* (1956), an examination of the ways in which patterns of nature are used in art. The quality of the drawings that David Godsell prepared to depict and document his designs also bears witness to his highly-developed mind’s eye and its contribution to the richness of his architectural work. Godsell’s own house at 491 Balcombe Road in Beaumaris is an excellent representative example of the realisation of the architectural principles that informed his years of practice.

For some twenty five years up until his death in 1986 David Godsell worked as a sole practitioner, mainly on domestic commissions and via personal contacts. As well as several dozens of residential projects his completed designs included a combined optical lens factory and flat (1961) in Hawthorn East, the Olive Phillips Kindergarten (1974) at Beaumaris – comprising two concrete-block pavilions with pyramid roofs and a linking breezeway – and post offices at Mordialloc (1970) and Bentleigh (1972).

**Design and construction of the David Godsell House**

David Godsell and his wife Ursula (‘Terry’) Godsell purchased the land at 491 Balcombe Road in November 1956, intending to build a house on this site for themselves and their future family.

The majority of the present-day house is the realisation of the third of three different schematic designs that Godsell prepared for this site during the first half of 1960. The earliest of these designs featured lower and upper floor plans generated by triangular and diamond-shaped geometries. A second unrealised scheme was much closer in its rectilinear planning, massing and tectonic expression to the third and final scheme, upon which construction then commenced in mid-1960 and was completed in early 1961.
The earliest and most substantial construction stage of the David Godsell House comprised an assembly of an L-shaped plan arrangement of two single-storey wings which contained the living room, dining, kitchen and bathroom areas; a two-storey wing – adjoining the L’s south end – containing three bedrooms, a utility room and a stair; a single-car carport to the north of the dining room; and lawn terraces and a partially paved courtyard space. This courtyard, nestled within the three principal wings, also preserved an existing landform ‘shoulder’ around which Godsell carefully configured the house’s footprint.

Beside the carport, a stairway of square-shaped concrete stepping stones linked the driveway to a covered path – comprising identical stepping stones, here set within pebbles – leading to the living room entry door. The house’s flat roofs were originally finished with gravel over ‘Malthoid’ bituminous felt, insulated with Styrene foam. The roof planes were designed to drain rainwater from the upper-storey roof by stages all the way to the eastern end of the entry path’s roof, at which point the water discharged through an ornamental rainwater head of copper into a pond crossed by the stepping stones.

The house’s ground floor concrete slabs are a chocolate-brown colour, which was achieved by the addition of a pigmented topping. This colour is currently concealed by carpet and cork floor finishes which have been laid over the slabs at different times during the years following the house’s original construction.

In 1966 Godsell received a building permit for the addition of a new flat-roofed rectilinear volume adjoining the west side of the house’s existing carport. This contained a single 3.0 by 5.2m (10 by 17 foot) room – with a separate entry path and door, and internally unconnected to the rest of the house – that on its completion became the studio from which Godsell conducted his architectural practice for the next 20 years.

Some years after this Godsell also documented a compact addition to the house’s existing kitchen and bathroom, which created a new walk-through laundry that linked these spaces. Another building permit was then granted in 1972 for an upper-storey addition above the house’s dining, kitchen and bathroom areas. This addition contained a new bedroom with a cantilevering balcony in its northeast corner, and a compact second bathroom. The present-day arrangement of the house contains all of these completed works.

Godsell himself constructed many of the house’s components, including the stepped and tapering brick finial atop the carport’s western pylon, the original entry path pond, wall and ceiling interior linings, Living Room bookshelves, and some of the joinery. A handful of other adjustments to elements of the house took place over a span of some 18 years, commencing at around 1972 – including:

- c.1972 – with the exception of the carport roof, the 1960-61 gravel on Malthoid roof surfaces were clad with clip-fixed aluminium roof sheeting, and painted aluminium guttering was fixed to some portions of those roofs’ eaves;
- c.1972 – re-tiling of the downstairs bathroom;
- c.1974 – partial filling-in of the entry pond (each of these three also undertaken by Godsell); and
- c.1990 – a re-build of the carport, matching its original design and form.

Some further minor changes have occurred to the original fabric at the David Godsell House since these periods of construction. The entry stepping stones, pond and pebbles have been replaced with timber railway sleeper steps and brick paving. Small areas of the originally unfinished timber board cladding on the house’s exterior have also been painted.

Following David Godsell’s death in 1986, Terry Godsell continued to live in the house until its sale to new owners in 2008.

### CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architect name:</th>
<th>David Godsell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architectural style name:</td>
<td>Postwar Modern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builder name:</td>
<td>R. Daniels Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction started date:</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction ended date:</td>
<td>c.1972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name: David Godsell House  
VHR Number: PROV VHR H2379  
Hermes Number: 55876
VICTORIAN HISTORICAL THEMES

06 Building towns, cities and the garden state
   6.3 Shaping the suburbs
   6.7 Making homes for Victorians

09 Shaping cultural and creative life
   9.3 Achieving design and artistic distinction

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The David Godsell House is a freestanding single-family dwelling with external walls predominantly of Californian Redwood cladding boards and fawn-coloured face brickwork. The house is sited centrally within a roughly rectangular block of land. The block has a 19 metre frontage to Balcombe Road on its north boundary, and slopes upward away from the road for much of its approximately 55 metre depth.

The house consists principally of three separate rectilinear and flat-roofed wings. Two of these wings — a single-storey wing to the north, and a parallel two-storey wing approximately 7.5 metres to its south — are sited with their long axes rotated slightly clockwise from an east-west orientation. The single-storey wing is the house’s living room, and the two-storey wing contains four bedrooms – one at each end of both of its storeys – which flank a return-flight stair with a half landing. These parallel wings are joined at their eastern ends by a perpendicular wing of two storeys, which contains dining, kitchen, laundry and bathroom spaces on its ground floor, and a second bathroom and large bedroom space above. The three wings of the house’s resulting U-shaped plan shelter a central courtyard. A separate outdoor area finished with ground-level timber decking boards and featuring a central circular fire pit is located outside the living room’s north wall. The house is otherwise surrounded by paths and flat areas paved with bricks, low retaining walls of brick and stone, garden beds, native trees and shrubs, and a flat area of lawn at the site’s southern end.

Within a separate rectilinear volume extending northward from (and perpendicular to) the living room is a single room which housed David Godsell’s studio. An open carport, with its crushed-stone paving approximately 1.8m below the living room floor level, abuts the home office’s eastern side. A stepped brick path links the crushed-stone driveway under the carport’s roof to the home office’s Balcombe Road-facing separate entrance. Eight steps made from railway sleepers ascend from the opposite side of the driveway to the east end of a brick-paved linear path between the carport and the solid north wall of the dining room, which in turn leads to the house’s principal entry door in the northeast corner of the living room. Individual flat roofs at different levels cover the office, the brick-paved entry path and the carport. The carport roof’s north edge prominently cantilevers about 3.2 metres beyond a pair of brick pylons that are aligned with the home office’s north face. The western pylon features a playfully-stepped tapering brick finial.

The 12-inch Californian Redwood boards which clad the house also feature prominently in its interiors, and are deployed in compositions of extraordinary finesse and assurance. Ground floor spaces receive light and natural ventilation from carefully-positioned banks of floor-to-ceiling timber-framed windows and glazed hinged doors. The bedrooms’ external walls in the southern wing’s upper storey consist entirely of timber-framed glazing. In these two rooms, a mixture of fixed panes and side-hung casements extends from the one-metre above-floor window sills up to the wall-ceiling junctions. Directly outside and below these window sills around the entire perimeter of this wing is a c.350mm-wide ‘planting tray’, designed to function as a continuous flower box. The living room features a linear skylight of timber-framed topaz panes of glass, the western end of which terminates in the skylight’s junction with the house’s brick chimney. The corners and edges of this face brick chimney — and of other panels of brickwork in the living room — feature toothed and recessed bricks in alternate courses, creating richly textured surfaces. The joints between the panes of window glass at the corners of rooms, and between the horizontal and vertical glass along the skylight’s northern edge, have been mitred and glued with great care. Some of the larger panes (for example the south
windows in the Living Room) are reused commercial shopfront glass, retrieved by Godsell from a fish and chip shop and repurposed here.

Roofs are clad with clip-fixed aluminium roof sheeting, apart from the rebuilt c.1990 carport which retains the appearance of the original 1960-61 gravel topping on Malthoid bituminous felt and timber framing. Soffits of the carport and entry roofs – and of the wide eaves of the house’s other roofs – are lined with the same 12-inch Californian Redwood boards used on its external and internal wall surfaces, subtly vertically stepped and also mitred at the corner junctions. A sheet copper rainwater head featuring stepping rectangular hollow volumes and horizontal fins is fixed to the centre of the fascia board at the west end of the roof above the path to the living room entry door.

A cylindrical-shape concrete plunge pool with associated timber steps, decking and battened safety fence and gate occupy the western edge of the central courtyard. Together with the ground-level timber decking and circular fire pit north of the living room, these elements are not significant.

INTERIORS

Much of the house’s interior materials and finishes have been retained in their original state and are of significance to the place. These include the unpainted face brickwork; timber wall and ceiling lining boards; internal doors; built-in furniture and open shelves; storage cupboards; kitchen cabinetry and shelves; and some of the fixtures and fitments within the bathrooms. The original and carefully concealed ceiling-mounted fluorescent tube lighting also appears intact.

LANDSCAPE, TREES & GARDENS

Face brickwork walls at the Balcombe Road street boundary, and near the living room entry door, feature alternate courses of toothed and stepped detailing matching that seen in the walls of the house and are also significant in the context of the place. The site’s topography – including its interaction with the stone boulder and brick retaining walls, brick paver and timber railway-sleeper steps and pathways – is integral to David Godsell’s design intent at the place. The trees, shrubs and groundcover plantings between the house and Balcombe Road contribute to an appreciation of the significance of this place.

ARCHAEOLOGY

There is no identified archaeology of state level significance at this place.

INTEGRITY/INTACTNESS

Intactness – The intactness of the David Godsell House is very good, both externally and internally. The original 1960-61 portion of the building and its 1966 and 1972 additions retain most of their original architectural form and detailing. Internally, most of the house’s finishes and fixtures from these original periods of construction also remain intact. [August 2017]

Integrity – The integrity of the David Godsell House is excellent. The high proportion of significant extant original fabric at the present-day building and site allows the cultural heritage values of the place to be clearly understood and appreciated. [August 2017]

CONDITION

Overall the David Godsell House is in very good condition. Some small areas of external brickwork are showing signs of slight deterioration where they abut ground surfaces, likely due to rising damp. Several of the topaz glass panes in the living room skylight contain cracks. Very minor cracking and weather damage is evident on some of the exterior timber cladding, fascia and eaves boards. [August 2017]
COMPARISONS

*Modern houses of the 1950s and 60s in the Victorian Heritage Register*

**Fenner House [VHR H2350]: 228 Domain Road, South Yarra**

The Fenner House is architecturally significant as one of the most celebrated of the Modern houses built in Melbourne in the post-war period. It is an outstanding example of the innovative residential designs produced in Melbourne in the 1960s and is notable as an early and highly influential townhouse design on a confined suburban site. The Fenner House design brought together characteristics such as an emphasis on privacy, restrained detailing and the use of minimal building materials and finishes. The Fenner House won the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects’ Victorian Architecture Medal in 1967, and featured in many professional journals and popular publications.

The Fenner House is historically significant as an outstanding example of the design of architect Neil Clerehan, one of the most influential architects working in Melbourne during the postwar period. He has received a number of awards for his work and made significant contributions to the architectural profession in Victoria for a long period from the 1940s to the present day, through design (particularly the suburban house), publishing, writing and community work. In 2008 Clerehan was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Architecture from the University of Melbourne for significant contributions made to the community.

The Fenner House, South Yarra was designed by architect Neil Clerehan in 1964 as a townhouse for retired pastoralist Mr Clive Ross Fenner and his wife. It is a small three-bedroom house, orientated to the northern rear of its block, with an asymmetrical, balanced arrangement of blank concrete brick walls facing Domain Road. Positioned close to the front of the block with no front garden, the ground floor is a half-storey above street level to enable the placement of a double carport below. Walls are of exposed concrete brickwork throughout, and ceilings and joinery are of exposed timber. Bathrooms and a walk-in cloak room with delivery hatch lie behind the windowless street facade, and an adjacent entry passage leads to the living room at the rear of the house. The simple plan includes two small internal courtyards and a small rear garden. This eliminates the need for side windows and enables all main rooms, including bedrooms, dining room, living room and kitchen, to receive north light via full height sliding aluminium doors.

Fenner House [VHR H2350]: (L) Domain Road façade; (R) view from rear showing small east courtyard.
Grimwade House [VHR H2209]: 28-54 Dundas Street, Rye

The Grimwade House is of architectural significance as a fine and highly intact example of a house by the accomplished Victorian architects McGlashan and Everist – who were emerging young architects at the time of its design – illustrating key directions in domestic architecture in the 1960s.

The Grimwade House was designed by architects McGlashan & Everist, and constructed in 1961-62 for Victorian business leader Geoffrey Holt Grimwade and his family. It was built as a retirement home that could also serve as a holiday house, on a large block of land at Rye hidden from view by the extensive natural bush. Influenced by Japanese architecture, the house comprises five flat-roofed pavilions, linked by covered ways, with sheltered outdoor courtyards between the wings. The design takes a creative approach to siting, form, planning, and use of materials, and maximises flexibility and privacy for the house’s occupants. Walls are of vertical weathered timber, limestone rubble quarried on the site, and full height glass. Floor and ceiling finishes vary internally. The site retains its natural bushland.

The Grimwade House was awarded the Victorian Architecture Medal for 1963 and led to other architectural commissions for McGlashan & Everist, including John and Sunday Reed’s Heide II project at Bulleen. It established McGlashan & Everist’s reputation as designers of beautifully sited and elegantly minimal houses.

Views of the Grimwade House [VHR H2209].

Robin Boyd House II [VHR H2105]: 290 Walsh Street, South Yarra

The Robin Boyd II House, South Yarra is of architectural significance as one of the most innovative houses built in Victoria in the post-war decades and as one of the most important houses designed by prominent Melbourne architect and architectural critic, Robin Boyd. One of a number of influential houses designed in Melbourne in the 1950s and 1960s, it is a highly intact example of Modern design inserted into an established suburban area and is innovative in its response to a narrow inner suburban block.

The Robin Boyd II House is of historical significance for its direct association with acclaimed architect and architectural critic, Robin Boyd, a member of a well-known Melbourne family of artists and writers. He lived there from 1959 until his death in 1971 and the house then remained in the Boyd family until 2004. Known for both his buildings and his writings, he became a leader within the architectural profession. Boyd also influenced the general community through his prolific writings about architecture and the environment, in which he challenged Australian complacency and became an arbiter of taste and standards.

This house was the second that Boyd designed for his own family. Its design is an attempt to use zoning to temper the effect of open planning on adults and children living together in a family house, through the creation of two buildings that are separated by an open courtyard. The adult section’s brick Walsh Street facade features an asymmetrically-placed and canopied flight of splayed stairs leading to the front door, and a strip of high windows. Its two levels face inwards to a central courtyard, and fully-glazed walls allow a visual connection between the separate adults’ and children’s buildings across this courtyard. This glazing
also allows the controlled penetration of daylight, with little direct sun entering the Walsh Street portion of the house, but plentiful diffuse light being reflected into it from the courtyard. A distant view of the Dandenongs to the east of the property is cleverly utilised from the adults’ building’s upper level, through the courtyard aperture and beyond.

Boyd House II [VHR H2105]: (L) Walsh Street façade; (R) view of parent zone from courtyard.

Snelleman House [VHR H2282]: 40 Keam Street, Ivanhoe East

The Snelleman House is architecturally significant as an outstanding and intact example of the innovative residential designs produced in Melbourne in the early postwar period, when the limited availability of materials resulted in experimentation with materials and structures by some highly individual architects. It is one of the finest residential designs of the architect Peter McIntyre. It was built in 1954 as a family home for Hans and Pamela Snelleman, who had purchased the land in 1952. After failing to find an appropriate design through The Age’s Small Homes Service the Snellemans were advised by Robin Boyd to contact McIntyre, who had established his own practice in 1950.

The Snelleman House is a flat-roofed split-level Modernist house with an elongated narrow plan only one room wide which steps down its sloping site in a reverse J-shape, enclosing a space containing gardens and a terraced outdoor living area. The outer facade is of bagged brick, originally painted green but now white, with small window openings punched into it. The courtyard wall is of lightweight timber and glass, with sashless glass sliding doors and windows. Each of the interior spaces is on a separate platform, and these step down the slope with the living room at the top and the entrance hall, dining room, kitchen, two children’s bedrooms a bathroom and the original master bedroom below. Instead of a hallway connecting the rooms there is a gallery which runs along the inner wall, enlarging every room and allowing views across a valley to the east which contains the Yarra River.

Snelleman House [VHR H2282]: (L) view from Keam Street; (R) view from living room interior.
Summary of Comparisons

The David Godsell House is notable for its demonstration of design excellence, and takes its place alongside these other examples of single-family houses built in the years between the mid-1950s and mid-1960s. It and the houses above all share characteristics including a highly sophisticated integration of planning with site; generous amounts of glass in walls facing private courtyard spaces; and careful deployment of solid street-facing walls to shield their occupants from the public realm. The David Godsell House’s interplay of stepping horizontal roof and floor planes – together with its skilful deployment of face brickwork, timber cladding and lining boards, and very wide eaves overhangs – combine to create a dwelling that is outstandingly integrated with its sloping site. Its high-level intactness and integrity allow the sophistication and finesse of its design to be readily appreciated and understood.

KEY REFERENCES USED TO PREPARE ASSESSMENT


McMahon, Philippa (1985), _David Godsell_, ‘Investigation project’, Department of Architecture & Building, University of Melbourne.


_Modern Houses: A guide to residential architecture in and around Melbourne_ (1964 pamphlet), compiled by the Small Homes Service of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in conjunction with The Age.

National Trust of Australia (Victoria) ‘Classification Report’ (undated), _Name: Godsell House; File No: FN B5112_; 9 pages total.


RMIT Design Archives, _Accession Lot 0004/2015_, ‘Collection: David Godsell (1930-1986), architect’, Box Nos 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13.


**Journal and newspaper articles**


**PROPOSED TEXT FOR THE BLUE HERITAGE PLAQUE**

This house is an outstanding example of Modern domestic architecture in Victoria. Designed by David Godsell as a home for his family when he was also beginning his own architecture practice, it is spatially rich and forms a creative and skilful response to its site.
**ADDITIONAL IMAGES**

Floor plans showing the interior layout of the David Godsell House
Also see the floor/site plan of the 1960-61 house on p.32 below.

View of the David Godsell House from the north-east. Note brick steps to Studio entry at right, brick finial atop carport’s right-side pylon, and lining board pattern on the carport roof underside. (c.2014)
Carport in foreground, with fixed glazing to Studio’s east side beyond. (Aug 2017)

Looking north along the house’s east-most wall.
Ground-floor window is to Kitchen, and upper-storey balcony to Main Bedroom. (Aug 2017)
Looking westward along the brick-paved entry path, through the open front door and into the Living area. Note the carport roof’s gravel top surface. (Aug 2017)

Eastern end of the roof above the entry path.
Original copper rainwater head is at the middle of the fascia board. (Aug 2017)
Outside the Kitchen, looking at the eastern end of the two-storey bedroom wing. The c.1970 Laundry is within the lower-storey timber board clad volume. (Aug 2017)

Looking from the south at the two-storey bedroom wing. (Aug 2017)
Looking from the northwest at the north wall of the Living Room, with mitred-and-glued corner window glass. (c.2016)

Eaves lining boards outside the Living Room’s north window. (Aug 2017)
Within the Courtyard, looking at bedroom wing’s northwest corner. Post-2008 plunge pool is in foreground. (Aug 2017)

Face brick street boundary wall at northeast corner of site. (Aug 2017)
Looking west within Living Room towards the fireplace. The carpet and built-in seat’s upholstery are post-2008. (c.2016)

Southwest corner of Living Room, with concealed ceiling lighting. (Aug 2017)
Looking southward through Living Room window to Courtyard. (Aug 2017)

Looking southward along passage between Kitchen and Courtyard. (c.2016)
Looking southward within the Kitchen – same viewpoint as photo on p.35. (c.2016)

Looking westward from upper-storey stair landing into Bedroom, with intact original ceiling boards. (c.2016)
Floor/site plan following 1960-61 phase of construction.
(Source: Australian House & Garden, July 1963)

c.1961-62: looking across the Courtyard at the bedroom wing, with ‘shoulder’ in the foreground. The upper-storey bedroom wing (c.1972) has not yet been built. (Source: RMIT Design Archives)
c.1961-62: looking northwards across the original entry pool and stepping stone pavers. The copper rainwater head is visible above the pool. (Source: RMIT Design Archives)

c.1961-62: looking from northwest at Living Room exterior – same viewpoint as photo on p.27. The Studio (c.1966) and upper-storey bedroom wing (c.1972) have not yet been built. (Source: RMIT Design Archives)
c.1961-62: looking eastward within the Living Room: entry is to L with stepping stone pavers and pebbles, Dining area is up steps to R. (Source: RMIT Design Archives)

c.1961-62: looking westward from Dining area into Living Room.
The dark brown concrete floor colour is visible in the gaps between the panels of grass matting.
(Source: RMIT Design Archives)
c.1961-62: looking southward within the Kitchen.
(Source: RMIT Design Archives)

(Source: RMIT Design Archives)
c.2008: looking southward across the Courtyard at the two-storey bedroom wing.  
(Source: ‘realestate.com.au’ website)

c.2008: looking westward across Living Room towards fireplace.  
(Source: ‘realestate.com.au’ website)