

Statement of Significance: 14-16 Clee Street, McKinnon

Date of Statement: August 2020

Address:	14-16 Clee Street, McKinnon	Name:	-
Place Type:	Residential building (private)	Grading:	Significant
PS ref no:	HO224	Constructed:	1962-63



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, October 2019

What is significant?

The house at 14-16 Clee Street, McKinnon, is a flat-roofed post-WW2 modernist house starkly expressed as a glass-fronted box-like volume that, occupying a sloping site, incorporates an undercroft carport to one side, where the land falls away. The house was erected in 1962-63 for a Polish businessman and his wife, and was designed by the compatriot husband-and-wife architectural partnership of Holgar & Holgar.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house, and the detached cabana that was later designed for the original owners, by architect Theodore Berman.

How is it significant?

The house satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Glen Eira planning scheme:

- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.
- Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or groups of persons, of importance in our history.

Why is it significant?

The house is aesthetically significant as an exceptional example of high-end modernist residential architecture of the early 1960s. Built across a sloping site, the house is boldly articulated as a stark rectilinear volume that appears to hover above the ground at one end, incorporating an undercroft carport. With its bold massing, broad eaves and continuous window wall, it represents a particularly confident distillation of European Modernism. It must also be considered as a truly authentic example, being designed by Polish-born architects for a well-heeled compatriot couple who would have been familiar with such progressive architecture in pre-war Europe. (*Criterion E*)

The house is historically and architecturally significant for associations with the Polish-born husband-and-wife architectural partnership of Holgar & Holgar, which was notably active in Caulfield and environs in the 1960s, '70s and '80s. Dating from 1962, this house was one of the partnership's first major private residential commissions in what is now the City of Glen Eira after their prize-winning scheme for the Herald Ideal Home (moved to Bentleigh after being displayed at the 1957 Ideal Home Show) that prompted the couple to commence private practice. A grand and luxurious residence for a successful Polish-born manufacturer, this house was the first of many such palatial houses that Holgar & Holgar would design in the study area (invariably, for similarly well-off émigré clients) over the next quarter-century. With at least twenty examples recorded in the former City of Caulfield, this house stands out as the only in the former City of Moorabbin (excluding the couple's Herald Ideal Home in Bentleigh East, which technically predates the formalised partnership of Holgar & Holgar). (*Criterion H*)

Primary sources

Heritage Citation PW09, *City of Glen Eira Post-war & Hidden Gems Heritage Review 2020, Stage 2: Citations*, prepared by Built Heritage Pty Ltd.