

Statement of Significance: 30 Aroona Road, Caulfield North

Date of Statement: August 2020

Address: 30 Aroona Road, Caulfield North	Name: -
Place Type: Residential building (private)	Grading: Significant
PS ref no: HO218	Constructed: 1963 (1999 additions)



Photographs by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, October 2019

What is significant?

The house at 30 Aroona Road, Caulfield North, is a two-storey flat-roofed brick house in the post-WW2 modernist style, with a projecting upper storey that, supported on paired struts, forms a ground level undercroft. It incorporates expansive windows, two corner balconies with timber-lined eaves and a range of decorative finishes including rock-faced marble chips to the first floor spandrel, projecting brick courses at the lower level, feature stone cladding and concrete breeze block screens to the side elevations. Erected in 1963 for Czechoslovakian-born husband-and-wife clothing manufacturers, the house was designed by German-born architect Michael R E Feldhagen.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the house, and the crazy paved-stone driveway.

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 modernist residential architecture of the early 1960s. While the expression of a two-storey house with an upper level projecting over a recessed lower level is a recurring motif in modernist architecture (represented by many examples in what is now the City of Glen Eira), this one is outstanding for its more distinctive and idiosyncratic articulation, which includes a subtle concave curve to the street façade, pairs of angled strut-like supports, corner balconies (rather than a full-width balcony) and an uncommonly varied application of decorative surface treatments that include rock-faced marble strips, feature stone cladding, projecting brick courses, concrete breeze block screens and a crazy paved driveway. With the house owned by its original family for many years, its exterior remains remarkably intact to the period, and is a striking element in the streetscape (*Criterion E*)

The house is historically and architecturally significant as one of the most outstanding examples of the work of German-born architect Michael R E Feldhagen, a former employee of Dr Ernest Fooks who, reportedly at the urging of Fooks' clients, left to commence his own practice in 1963 and soon became sought-after as a designer of high-end residences, mostly for fellow European émigrés. While Feldhagen is said to have been notably active in Caulfield in the 1960s and '70s, few of his buildings have been conclusively identified therein. This standout example, with its uncommonly lively and virtually unaltered exterior, remains as his best known residential project. (*Criterion H*)

Primary sources

Heritage Citation PW03, *City of Glen Eira Post-war & Hidden Gems Heritage Review 2020, Stage 2: Citations*, prepared by Built Heritage Pty Ltd.