

Statement of Significance: 64 Balaclava Road, Caulfield North

Date of Statement: August 2020

Address: 64 Balaclava Road, Caulfield North	Name: -
Place Type: Residential building (private)	Grading: Significant
PS ref no: HO220	Constructed: 1951-54



Photographs by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, October 2019

What is significant?

The house at 64 Balaclava Road, St Kilda East, is a two-storey skillion-roofed cream brick house in a stark post-WW2 modernist style, with asymmetrical street facade incorporating a wide stone-clad chimney, large windows and north-facing sundecks. Designed in 1951 by Austrian-trained architect Dr Ernest Fooks, the house was commissioned by a compatriot who was a successful canned fruit magnate, and whose family occupied it for three decades.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior of the entire house, along with the matching brick garden wall and boundary walls (with metal gates) along both street frontages. The garage to the rear, which occupies the footprint indicated on Fooks' drawings, is not considered significant.

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 early and unusually substantial example of post-WW2 modernist residential architecture. Designed by an architect who trained and even practiced in Austria before migrating to Australia in 1939, the house represents a confident and authentic articulation of the International Style, with its bold rectilinear massing, stark planar walls, broad-eaved skillion roof, expansive windows and sundeck above a columned undercroft. Atypically large for its time, this grand two-storey residence, occupying a prominent corner site at the junction of two major roads, remains a conspicuous element in the streetscape. (*Criterion E*)

The house is historically significant for associations with Austrian-trained architect Dr Ernest Fooks, who started private practice in Melbourne in 1948 and soon became sought-after as a designer of residential projects for fellow European émigré clients. Notably prolific in the former City of Caulfield (where he himself resided, in Howitt Street, from 1966 until his death), Fooks maintained a long personal and professional association with what is now the City of Glen Eira, including several art exhibitions held at the Caulfield Town Hall. Dating from 1951, the house is one of Fook's two oldest surviving buildings in the study area (along with another at 16 Cantala Avenue, also 1951) that, together, provide rare and significant evidence of the early presence of an architect whose work re-shaped the Caulfield area. (*Criterion H*)

Primary sources

Heritage Citation PW05, *City of Glen Eira Post-war & Hidden Gems Heritage Review 2020, Stage 2: Citations*, prepared by Built Heritage Pty Ltd.