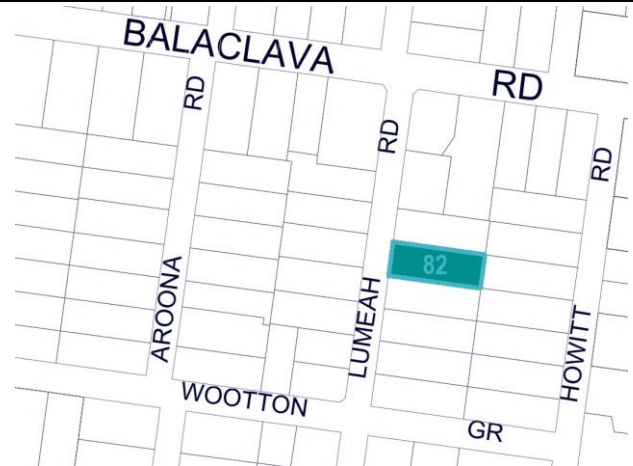


|                     |                                   |                    |         |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| <b>IDENTIFIER</b>   | HOUSE                             | <b>Citation No</b> | PW19    |
| <b>Other name/s</b> |                                   | <b>Melway ref</b>  | 58 J12  |
| <b>Address</b>      | 82 Lumeah Road<br>CAULFIELD NORTH | <b>Date/s</b>      | 1972-74 |
| <b>Designer/s</b>   | Holgar & Holgar                   | <b>Builder/s</b>   | Unknown |



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, June 2019



Location map and extent of HO

|                          |                                |                   |           |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| <b>Heritage Group</b>    | Residential building (private) | <b>Condition</b>  | Excellent |
| <b>Heritage Category</b> | House                          | <b>Intactness</b> | Excellent |

|                         |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Thematic context</b> | 6.7 Making homes for Victorians |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|

|                       |  |   |                                |
|-----------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>Recommendation</b> | Include on heritage overlay schedule as an individual heritage place |   |                                |
| <b>Controls</b>       | <input type="checkbox"/> External Paint                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interior Alteration | <input type="checkbox"/> Trees |

## Statement of Significance

### What is significant?

The house at 82 Lumeah Road, Caulfield North, is a two-storey flat-roofed house in a characteristic post WW2 modernist form, with the upper storey expressed as a rectilinear glass-fronted volume that projects over a recessed lower level. The upper level has a balcony with an unusual Moorish-style vaulted arcade, while the lower level has a blank wall (concealing a carport entered from the side) with a grand staircase leading to the front door at the first floor. It was erected in 1972-73 for a Polish-born businessman and his wife, to a design by compatriot architects Holgar & Holgar.

The significant fabric is defined as the entire exterior, key elements of the original interior fabric (namely the built-in furniture, light fittings, conversation pit, and kitchen/bathroom fitouts), the original external paving (front and rear), driveway lamp-post and in-ground swimming pool.

### 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 a highly idiosyncratic example of post-WW2 modernist residential architecture. While it adopts the trademark European modernist expression, with a glass-walled upper storey projecting above a recessed lower level, it incorporates some unusual detailing that hints at overseas influences rarely seen in Melbourne, except in other houses by Holgar & Holgar. An entirely blank wall at street level, concealing a triple carport entered from the side, is relieved by a full-width balcony at the upper level with a Moorish-style vaulted arcade which extends across a void containing a wide staircase to the front door. With a luxurious interior that remains substantially intact (including built-in furniture, conversation pit, imported light fittings and high-end bathroom and kitchen fitouts), it is an outstanding example of this rare type of glamorous post-WW2 residence, so strongly associated with Holgar & Holgar. (*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 1972-73, this house is one of best local examples of the partnership's high-end residential work from the peak period of their career in the 1970s. Occupied by its original owners for almost thirty years, it also exhibits a remarkably high degree of physical intactness, thus representing a rare survivor amongst the couple's extensive body of work in the City of Glen Eira. (*Criterion H*)

### **History**

*Note: Identifying details of property owners and their families have been deleted as per Council direction*

The house at 82 Lumeah Road, Caulfield North, was built in 1973 to a design by husband-and-wife architects Holgar & Holgar. The future house owner was born in Poland in the early 1930s, and migrated to Australia with his parents later that decade. They settled in Carlton North, where the patriarch later went into partnership with a fellow émigré as manufacturers of ladies' clothing (*Age*, 22/01/1951:7). Near the end of the 1950s, father and son had formed their own investment company, based in St Kilda. During that decade, the future house owner moved from Carlton North to a flat in St Kilda East; his parents duly followed suit, moving to Caulfield North. By the early 1960s, he had married a fellow Polish émigré, and the couple took up residence on Orrong Road. They remained there until the early 1970s, when they acquired a house in Lumeah Road. Offered for sale in April 1971, this was advertised as "solid brick residence, at present in two self-contained flats, easily converted to seven room home or valuable home site, 64 feet by 178 feet approx" (*Age* 28/04/1971:9). Acquiring the title to the property in August, the couple opted for the latter approach. It was proposed to demolish the existing house for a larger and grander counterpart, to be designed by architects (and fellow Polish émigrés) Holgar & Holgar.

John Holgar (*ne* Władysław Aleksander Janusz Holgar-Ptaszyński) (1922-2006) and his wife Helen (*nee* Helena) (1923-2012) were both born in Poland, fleeing separately during WW2 and meeting for the first time while both were studying architecture in Rome. Moving to London in 1947, they married, completed further studies and gained professional experience before migrating to Australia in 1952, where they worked separately for various Melbourne practices including Godfrey Spowers, Arthur Purnell, Brian Lewis and D F Cowell Ham. In 1957, after the couple won first prize in a high-profile competition for an exhibition house, John began private practice under his own name, with an office in Swanston Street. Eighteen month later, he was joined by Helen, who was latterly employed by Grounds, Romberg & Boyd. Circa 1963, the practice was rebadged as Holgar & Holgar, relocating to Collins Street. It soon fostered a reputation as designers of large-scale houses for fellow European migrants, initially working in a strict modernist style before embracing a more eclectic and idiosyncratic approach characterised by unusual forms and luxurious materials and finishes. High-end residential projects of this nature would continue to sustain their practice well into the 1990s.

The working drawings that the Holgars prepared for the Lumeah Road house, dated April 1972, proposed a large flat-roofed dwelling on an elongated and stepping plan. It was effectively single storey but, due to the fall of the site, incorporated a triple carport to the street frontage (which, accessed from the side, presented an entirely blank wall to the street). To the left of the carport wall, a wide staircase provided a grand entrance up to the front door, set into an angled wall at the upper level. Inside, the house was dominated by a sprawling polygonal space that acted as a combined hall, living room and dining room, with a central bar and a projecting circular bay containing a conversation pit. This open-planned living space flowed through a separate dinette and luxuriously-appointed kitchen into an expansive family room at the rear, with another bar. Towards the front of the house, there were three bedrooms facing the street and a master bedroom slightly further back, with a capacious walk-through robe and marble-lined en suite bathroom.

Demolition of the existing dwelling on the site evidently did not commence until late 1973, when a newspaper advertisement announced the sale of one thousand Selkirk bricks (“Canyon blend”) from 82 Lumeah Road, Caulfield (*Age*, 8/12/1973:117). With construction completed in 1974, the family was to remain in residence for nearly three decades. When they offered the property for sale in early 1999, it was advertised as “classic 1970s Holgar & Holgar” (*Age* 10/03/1999:88). Subsequent owners have made relatively few changes to the house. When it came up for sale again in 2015, it was noted that the interior had recently been “sensitively renovated” by the award-winning architectural firm of Kennedy Nolan (*Weekly Review* 21/10/2015:21).

## Description

The house, at 82 Lumeah Road, Caulfield North, is a two-storey flat-roofed rendered brick house in an idiosyncratic post-WW2 modernist style. It is expressed in a characteristic European Modernist manner, where the upper level (containing principal living areas) is given emphasis over the recessed lower level (containing a capacious carport). Balanced without being exactly symmetrical, the street façade is divided into a series of regular bays. At the left (north) end, a slightly wider bay forms a grand double-height entry porch with a wide staircase leading to the front door at first floor level, top lit by a trellis-like screen.

At the upper level, the remainder of the facade is full-glazed, with repetitive window bays opening onto a balcony that extends across the entry foyer to form a dead-end elevated walkway, with a full-width metal balustrade. Each of the window bays has a segmental arched fanlight, and the arch motif is echoed in the arcading along the front of the balcony, and in the vaulted ceilings above it. The ground floor level is dominated by a blank white-painted wall, partially screened by the supporting posts of the balcony. This wall encloses the capacious carport, which is accessed from the south (right) end via a short driveway. A doorway at the opposite end of the carport provides access back to the entry stairs. The front entrance, set into a splayed wall at the top of the stairs, has a wide door with a textured gilt finish and bespoke sculpted door handle. The house retains much of its original external setting, including paved driveway, metal lamp-post with amber glass luminaire, and an in-ground swimming pool of unusual form, with paved surround.

While an internal inspection was not undertaken for this assessment, photographs accompanying real estate listings for its most recent sale in 2015 indicate that the sumptuous interior remained substantially intact. Key elements include bespoke timberwork in the form of panelling, room divider screens and built-in furniture (including a leather-upholstered bar with cylindrical timber pendant lights), other imported light fittings (including several Murano glass chandeliers and a Hans Poulsen pendant light over the dining area), a conversation pit, a luxurious master bathroom (with sunken terrazzo tub, travertine lining, glass mosaic tiling and gilt fittings), a smaller family bathroom with a bold red and white colour scheme, and a futuristic kitchen with silver colour scheme, circular island bench and striped floor that extends into an adjacent breakfast nook with built-in daybed and telephone counter. Other rooms, namely the bedrooms and utility rooms, tend to be much more conventional (ie plainer) in their finishes and fitout.



## Comparisons

Polish-born architects John and Helen Holgar were notably active in what is now the City of Glen Eira. Their first collaborative project in Melbourne, and the one that prompted them to open their own architectural office, was a prize-winning scheme for the Herald Ideal Home (1957) that was moved to Centre Road, Bentleigh East, after being displayed at the Ideal Home Show. From 1963, when the burgeoning practice was rebadged as Holgar & Holgar, they undertook a steady stream of residential work that included many houses and blocks of flats in the Caulfield area (and others in Elsternwick and McKinnon). Over the next quarter century, they are known to have completed at least twenty projects in what is now the City of Glen Eira. Their output encapsulates several discrete phases: the academic modernist style of their earliest work (c1958-63), which gave way to a more hybrid and inclusive approach (c1963-68), and then to their mature style, the individualistic and highly idiosyncratic approach for which they are best-known (c1968-79).

Dating from the Holgars' late period, the Lumeah Road house (1972-73) is one of many grand and luxurious residences commissioned by clients who, almost without exception, were wealthy self-made European émigré families. While five other examples are recorded in the Caulfield area, few remain intact. Examples at 45 Rosemont Avenue (c1971), and 18 Howitt Road (1969) have both been remodelled beyond recognition, while another at 8 Hartley Avenue (1975) has also altered, but remains recognizable. Considerably more intact are two outstanding and virtually unaltered examples at 49 Aroona Road (1970) and 49 Rosemont Avenue (1972-73). As at Lumeah Road, these are two-storey flat-roofed houses with a glazed upper storey over a recessed lower level. Instead of the Moorish-style arcade and grand entry staircase, they are enlivened by equally quirky details: the Aroona Road house has a concrete feature resembling a huge faceted crystal, and the Rosemont Avenue house by full-width decorative grilled screen at the upper level. All three houses are exceptional examples of the Holgar's mature work.

## References

Certificate of Title, Volume 3943, Folio 403, created 17 November 1921.

Holgar & Holgar Pty Ltd, "Proposed residence at No 82 Lumeah Road, Caulfield, for Mr & Mrs [redacted]", working drawings dated 17 April 1972. City of Caulfield Permit No 42,443.

Simon Reeves, "Gold-plated doors if you want them: Holgar & Holgar and the Architecture of Opulence," in Ann Marie Brennan & Philip Goad (eds), *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia & New Zealand*. Vol 33 (Melbourne, 2016), pp 568-577.

## Identified by

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*The Lumeah road house, photographed soon after completion*  
Source: Holgar & Holgar Archive (Private collection, Melbourne)