d o ∎ c o _ m o ∎ m o _

International working party for
documentation and conservation

of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the

modern movement

New International Selection
Full Documentation Fiche 2003

for office use only

composed by national/regional working party of: Australia

0. Picture of building/ group of buildings/ urban scheme/ landscape/ garden

depicted item: Pettit & Sevitt Display Homes Richmond Avenue, St Ives
source: RAIA NSW Chapter

d o ∎ c o _ m o ∎ m o _

ISC/R members update 2003

for office use only

International working party for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

1 of 11

1. Identity of building/ group of buildings/ group of buildings/ landscape/ garden

• **Data for identification**

current name: **Pettit and Sevitt Project House Display Village (First Display village)**

former/original/variant name:

number(s) and name(s) of street(s):   400 Mona Vale Road 17, 19, 221, 23, 25, 27 & 29 Richmond Avenue

town/suburb   St Ives

province/state: NSW

post code:

block or lot (if known)

country   Australia

national topographical grid reference:

current typology: Residence

former/original/variant typology: Residence

comments on typology: In the decade following the opening of the Richmond Avenue Display Village project houses built in Sydney as a percentage of all houses built from 1959 to 1972 jumped by 50%. Architect commissioned design reached a greatly increased number of people, over 4,000 Pettit & Sevitt houses were built.

d o ▪ c o _ m o ▪ m o _

ISC/R members update 2003

for office use only

International working party for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

2 of 11

1.2 Status of protection
protected by: state/province/town/record only

Register of the National Estate	No
RAIA National Register	Unconfirmed
RAIA Register of Twentieth Century Buildings of Significance	Yes
National Trust Register	Unconfirmed
State Heritage Register/Inventory	Nominated for an Interim Heritage Order
LEP	Some of the residences are listed on the LEP
Grade (ie level of protection)	Currently Local
Archival Recording exists?	Comparative Study of display villages by the RAIA
Date:	2005
valid for: whole area/parts of area/building	LEP listings for individual buildings only.

1.3   Visually or functionally related building(s)/site(s)

name(s) of surrounding area/building(s):	Pettit & Sevitt Display village at 400 Mona Vale Road 17, 19, 221, 23, 25, 27 & 29 Richmond Avenue, St Ives
visual relations	This is the first project home village development associated with the Sydney School (complete with landscape treatment) that laid the foundations of the philosophy of the conservation of an indigenous Australian landscape where the landscape of the place is preserved and reinforced by the development. The practice of this idea was subsequently widely adopted.
functional relations	Display of suburban housing
other relations:	

d o ▪ c o _ m o ▪ m o _

ISC/R members update 2003

for office use only

International working party for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

3 of 11

2. History of building(s) etc.

2.1 Chronology

Note if the dates are exactly known (e) or approximately estimated = circa (c) or (±)

commission or competition date:	Display village opened May 1964
commission or competition date:	
design period(s):	
start of site work:	
completion/inauguration:	

- **Summary of development**

commission brief:	
design brief:	
building/construction:	
completed situation:	Suburban display home village
original situation or character of site:	Bushland

d o ▪ c o _ m o ▪ m o _

ISC/R members update 2003

for office use only

International working party for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

4 of 11

- **Relevant persons/organisations**

original owner(s)/patron(s):	Pettit and Sevitt, Project Home builders
architect(s):	Ancher, Mortlock & Wolley
design architect:	Ken Wolley
landscape/garden designer(s):	Bruce Mackenzie
other designer(s):	unknown
consulting engineer(s):	unknown
building contractor(s):	Pettit and Sevitt

- **Other persons or events associated with the building(s)/site**

name(s):	
association:	
event(s):	
period:	

- **Summary of important changes after completion**

type of change: alteration/renovation/restoration/extension/ other:	The houses were sold and have been altered by the individual owners.
date(s):	
circumstances/ reasons for change	
effects of changes:	
persons/organisations involved:	

d o ▪ c o _ m o ▪ m o _

International working party for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

3. Description of building(s) etc.

3.1 Site/building character

The following description is drawn from the advice provided by the RAIA to the NSW Heritage Office regarding the First Display Village

> The Display Village in Richmond Avenue demonstrates the resolution and evolution of Ken Woolley and Ron Sevitt's ideas: each of the generic house types represented here, the linear – 'lowline' and 'gambrel', the 'spilt level', 'court yard' and 'two storey' house types evolved and were refined from their earlier concepts as short term exhibition buildings at the Parade of Homes at Cherrybrook and the Carlingford Homes Fair. Each of these basic house types was developed further in the following decade in the Pettit & Sevitt Display Villages at Staddon Close, Belrose, Westleigh, Castle Hill, and Baulkham Hills, many winning multiple RAIA Project Housing Awards.

INDIVIDUAL TYPES		TYPE ILLUSTRATED
400 Mona Vale Road	Lowline Home (1500 of this type built)	
17 Richmond Avenue	Courtyard House	
19 Richmond Avenue	Split Level II	
21 Richmond Avenue	Split Level I	
23 Richmond Avenue	Unidentified	
25 Richmond Avenue	2 Storey House	

d o ▪ c o _ m o ▪ m o _

27 Richmond Avenue	Gambrel House	
29 Richmond Avenue	Courtyard Home	

- **Current use**

of whole building/site:	Suburban housing
of principal components (*if applicable*):	
comments:	

- **Present (physical) condition**

of whole building/site:	The condition of the individual houses varies.
of principal components *(if applicable)*:	
of other elements *(if applicable)*:	
of surrounding area *(if applicable)*:	
comments:	

d o ▪ c o ‗ m o ▪ m o ‗

ISC/R members update 2003

for office use only

International working party for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

7 of 11

- **Note(s) on context, indicating potential developments**
  Indicate, if known, potential developments relevant for the conservation/threats of the building/site

The RAIA has supported the nomination of 400 Mona Vale Road, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29 Richmond Avenue and their curtilage as a heritage items in the Local Environmental Plan. These houses are all on the RAIA Register of Twentieth Century Buildings of Significance. It considers this Display Village to be the most significant of the Pettit and Sevitt Display villages. Consequently the RAIA is alarmed to learn that Ku-ring-gai Council has decided not to list 400 Mona Vale Road and 19 Richmond Avenue as heritage items in the Local Environmental Plan (LEP). The demolition of any of the houses in the Richmond Avenue group and the erection of new dwellings in their place will adversely impact on the significance of this highly significant display village.

4. Evaluation

Intrinsic value

4.1   technical evaluation:

It was a major contributor to the perpetuation of the principles established by the Sydney School architects which influenced vernacular housing not designed by architects. Pettit & Sevitt project houses at the time represented a revolutionary approach to residential design in Australia. It popularised open planning, the family room and ensuite bathroom once restricted to individually designed houses. Many later merchant builders used the Sydney School style and copied the generic house types displayed at Richmond Avenue.

4.2   social evaluation:

Australian suburbanites bought more than 4,000 Pettit and Sevitt project houses. Number 400 Mona Vale Road is the first of 1,500 'Lowline' houses (and variants) constructed around Sydney. The 'Lowline' at 2 Staddon Close won the first of the Project House Design Awards in 1967. Another significant 'Lowline J' at Westleigh Drive, Westleigh won the RAIA Project House Design Award in 1973. The most famous of the Lowline house was the set of the movie "Don's Party." (We note the full social significance of the Pettit and Sevitt Villages has yet to be fully explored.)

4.3.   cultural and aesthetic evaluation

The houses and their siting were designed by one architect, a leading proponent of the Sydney School, Ken Woolley. The village demonstrates the resolution and evolution of Ken Woolley and Ron Sevitt's ideas: each of the generic house types represented here, the linear – 'lowline' and 'gambrel', the 'spilt level', 'court yard' and 'two storey' house types evolved and were refined from their earlier concepts as short term exhibition buildings at the Parade of Homes Cherrybrook and Carlingford Homes Fair. Each of these basic house types was developed further in the following decade in the Pettit & Sevitt Display Villages at Staddon Close, Belrose, Westleigh, Castle Hill, and Baulkham Hills, many winning multiple RAIA Project Housing Awards.

d o ▪ c o _ m o ▪ m o _

ISC/R members update 2003

for office use only

International working party for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

8 of 11

Comparative significance	
4.4 canonical status (local, national, international)	
In the decade following the opening of the Richmond Avenue Display Village project houses built in Sydney as a percentage of all houses built from 1959 to 1972 jumped by 50%. Architect commissioned design reached a greatly increased number of people over 4,000 Pettit & Sevitt houses were built.	
4.5 historic and reference values:	
It was the place where Pettit and Sevitt, architect Ken Woolley and landscape architect Bruce Mackenzie, introduced the mechanisms that protected the original landscape from clearing and damage during construction. This was achieved by providing fencing off the building footprint including envisaged driveways, turf and drying areas. This is the first project home village development associated with the Sydney School (complete with landscape treatment) that laid the foundations of the philosophy of the conservation of an indigenous Australian landscape where the landscape of the place is preserved and reinforced by the development. The practice of this idea was subsequently widely adopted.	

5.   Documentation

5.1 archives/written records/correspondence etc. (state location/ address):

Conservation Plan prepared?	No
Listing & files Australian Heritage Commission	No
Listing & Files National Trust	No
RAIA	Summary of the significance of the Display villages prepared for the NSW Heritage Office June 2005

- **principal publications (in chronological order):**

Burke, Sheridan, *Conserving and Documenting Modernism*, The Asia Pacific Experience, Docomomo Journal, No. 29 September 2003.

Burke, Sheridan, *Australian Project House Group Saved*. Docomomo Journal, No. 32 March 2005.

d o ▪ c o _ m o ▪ m o _

ISC/R members update 2003

for office use only

International working party for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

9 of 11

- **visual material (state location/ address)**

original visual records/photographs/others:	Max Dupain photographs (collection held in part by the NSW Chapter of the RAIA
Original drawings	
recent photographs and survey drawings:	
film/video/other sources:	
website	

5.4 list documents included in supplementary dossier

Copies of DOCOMOMO journal articles by Sheridan Burke.

6. Fiche report

name of reporter:	Noni Boyd
Information provided by	Based on information provided by Anne Higham of the RAIA
address	GPO Box 1334, Sydney, NSW 2001 Australia
telephone:	+61 412 737 921
fax	Not applicable
e-mail:	noni_jd@hotmail.com
date of report	June 2005

examination by DOCOMOMO national/regional section
approval by wp co-ordinator/registers correspondent (name):
sign and date:

▄▄

d o ▄ c o _ m o ▄ m o _

ISC/R members update 2003

for office use only

International working party for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

10 of 11

examination by DOCOMOMO ISC/R
name of ISC member in charge of the evaluation:

comment(s):

sign and date:

ISC/R approval: date:

wp/ref. no.:

NAI ref. no.:

d o ▪ c o _ m o ▪ m o _

International working party for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement