

d o _ c o _ m o _ m o _ Australia (Victoria)

Australian chapter of the International working party for the **Documentation and Conservation** of buildings, sites and neighborhoods of the **Modern Movement**

Full Documentation Fiche 2006

Composed by Victorian group of the national/regional working party of: **Australia**

0. Picture of building/ building group/ urban scheme/ landscape/ garden/ etc:



depicted item: Former McIntyre House, Kew

source: Image courtesy of Doug Evans

date: 27.08.06



depicted item: Former McIntyre House, Kew

source: Peter Wille slide collection, State Library of Victoria date: 27.08.06

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

1. 1 Data for identification

current name:	Former McIntyre House
former/original/variant name:	McIntyre House/ 'Butterfly House'
street address:	2 Hodgson Street
town/suburb:	Kew
state:	Victoria
post code:	3101
country:	Australia
national topographical grid reference:	
current typology:	Commerical
former/original/variant typology:	Private Residential
comments on typology:	Peter and Dione McIntyre originally designed the building as their home, however it is currently used as their architectural office.

1. 2 Status of protection

protected by:	National Trust of Australia register
grade:	State significance
date:	First Classified 18/6/90, Revised: Classified State 3/8/98
valid for:	The land parcel including buildings contained within it.

protected by:	Boroondara City Council Heritage Overlay
grade:	Heritage Place
valid for:	All buildings and surroundings.

protected by:	RAIA 20 th Century heritage register
grade:	National significance
valid for:	All buildings and surroundings

1. 3 Visually or functionally related building(s)/site(s)

name(s) of surrounding area/building(s): n/a

visual relations: The building is situated on a sloping riverfront site in Kew, overlooking the Yarra River and its treed surrounds.

functional relations: Residential buildings in a residential street.

other relations: n/a

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:

design period(s): 1955

start of site work: 1955

completion/inauguration: 1955

2. 2 Summary of development

commission brief:	The McIntyre House was designed by Peter and Dione McIntyre as their home. The site was purchased by Peter McIntyre when he was still a student.
design brief:	The McIntyre House was an experiment in lightweight materials and tensile structures. (This experimentation in suspension and lightweight materials was characteristic of key Melbourne architects during the fifties.) <i>Doug Evans, Modern in Melbourne 2, Practice Archives</i>
building/construction:	'The two level house is suspended above a 14 foot square concrete base at the flood level mark, and sits between two triangular steel frames which cantilever 40 feet to either side of a central steel tower. This steel A-frame is exposed internally and externally with triangular infills of compressed strawboard panels painted tomato red and cadmium yellow.' <i>National Trust of Australia - Victoria</i>
completed situation:	'In 1956, Vogue magazine likened it to a Paul Klee butterfly. One entered through a front door that slid upwards, then ascended a central spiral staircase to each of the hovering platforms of space with open balconies high above the trees.' <i>Goad. P, Melbourne Architecture, The Watermark Press, Sydney, 2001, p.170</i>
original situation or character of site:	The House is located on the steep banks of the Yarra River, and is immersed in trees.

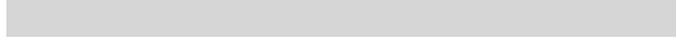
2. 3 Relevant persons/organisations

original owner(s)/patron(s):	Peter and Dione McIntyre
architect(s):	Peter and Dione McIntyre
landscape/garden designer(s):	not applicable

other designer(s):

not applicable

consulting engineer(s):



building contractor(s):



2. 4 Other persons or events associated with the building(s)/site

name(s):	not applicable
association:	not applicable
event(s):	not applicable
period:	not applicable

2. 5 Summary of important changes after completion

type of change:	alteration
date:	1958
circumstances/reasons for change	Expansion of interior space
effects of changes:	Balconies enclosed
persons/organisations involved:	Peter and Dione McIntyre

type of change:	alteration/extension
date:	1960s
circumstances/reasons for change	Additional space required
effects of changes:	Annexe built beneath the east wing of the house, in addition to the covering of the house's colored panels.
persons/organisations involved:	Peter and Dione McIntyre

3. Description of building(s) etc.

3.1 Site/building character

Summarize main character and give notes on surviving site/building(s)/part(s) of area.

If a site: principle features and zones of influence; main elements in spatial composition.

If a building: main features, construction and materials.

See 2.2 above

3.2 Current use

of whole building/site: The McIntyre House is currently used as an architectural office by the McIntyre Partnership.

3.3 Present (physical) condition

of whole building/site: The House is in good condition, subsequent alterations have been carried out by the original architects who have permanently occupied the house since its initial completion.

of other elements (*if applicable*): The site is well cared for.

of surrounding area (*if applicable*): The street remains well cared for.

3.4 Note(s) on context, indicating potential developments

Indicate, if known, potential developments relevant for the conservation/threats of the building/site

A number of other buildings have been designed and built within the site by the McIntyre family. No current development plans for the immediate vicinity that threaten the heritage value of the former McIntyre House

4. Evaluation

Give the scientific reasons for selection for docomomo documentation

Intrinsic value

4.1 technical evaluation:

'The exposed structure illustrated the interest in suspension of that time and was one of the exciting variant on the Wachsman space frame idea. The dominant use of the triangle was a logical expression of the lightness and tensile qualities of this structure.'
Doug Evans, Modern in Melbourne 2, Practice Archives

4.2 social evaluation:

'The McIntyre House is a period exemplar of the radical stylistic and structural experiments that were taking place in Australian architecture in the post-war years, and is indicative of the optimism and excitement felt by architects when released from the austerity of World War 2 and the immediate post-war years of material and financial shortages.'

National Trust of Australia – Victoria

4. 3 cultural and aesthetic evaluation:

'Built in 1955 on a steep slope above the former flood-line of the Yarra River in Kew, the McIntyre House is structurally and formally, one of the most extraordinary house designs executed in Australia in the 1950s. Designed by architect owner Peter McIntyre, The steel A-frame is exposed internally and externally with triangular infills of compressed strawboard panels painted tomato red and cadmium yellow. The house is entered from below through a front door that slides upwards into the ceiling. A central spiral staircase ascends to each of the hovering platforms of space which have open decks at either end high above in the trees.' In 1956, Vogue magazine compared the McIntyre House to a Paul Klee butterfly, following this correlation the house was often referred to as the 'butterfly house'.

National Trust of Australia - Victoria

Comparative significance

4. 4 canonical status (local, national, international)

The McIntyre House is recognized on the Royal Australian Institute of Architects 20th Century Heritage list as being of National significance and by the National Trust of Australia as being of State (local) significance. It is recognized as a seminal early example of the post-war interest of a number of Melbourne architects in structural experimentation (see 4.5 below). The architect-occupier Peter McIntyre, later Professor of Architecture at the University of Melbourne was prominent in the Melbourne profession during the three decades following World War Two. His prominence was initially based on his membership of the competition-winning design team for the structurally daring Olympic Swimming and Diving stadium for the Melbourne Olympic Games in 1956. During the 1950s he attracted attention and criticism) for a string of colorful, exuberant, structurally innovative small suburban houses. During the 1960s he was responsible for the production of an innovative urban design plan for metropolitan Melbourne which although only partly implemented was nevertheless influential. During the 1980s he was an initiator and designer of an environmentally tempered ski resort in the Victorian alps.

4. 5 historic and reference values:

The McIntyre House is historically significant as a seminal early example of a larger architectural movement towards experimentation with lightweight materials and suspension structures. Other important examples of this movement include the Rice House (Kevin Borland Architects), Wood House and Pharmacy (Robin Boyd), Former Olympic Swimming Stadium (Borland McIntyre & Murphy), Sidney Myer Music Bowl (Yuncken Freeman brothers) and the Academy of Science building in Canberra (Roy Grounds of Grounds, Romberg & Boyd). The appearance of these and other innovative buildings from a small group of Melbourne architects during a few years in the 1950s prompted Robin Boyd to describe Melbourne somewhat optimistically as 'the cradle of modernity'.

5. Documentation

5. 1 archives/written records/correspondence etc. (state location/ address):

National Trust Victoria, 4 Parliament Place, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002
State Library of Victoria, 328 Swanston Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

5. 2 principal publications (in chronological order):

"Peter and Dione McIntyre's Own House at Kew, Victoria", Architecture and Arts June 1956;
"Architect's Own House at Kew, Melbourne", Architecture in Australia January/March 1957, p. 26-28
Goad. P, Melbourne Architecture, The Watermark Press, Sydney, 2001, p 167

5. 3 visual material (state location/ address)

original visual records/drawings/photographs/others:

Peter Wille Slide collection State Library of Victoria, 328 Swanston Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

National Trust Victoria, 4 Parliament Place, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002

recent photographs and survey drawings:

film/video/other sources:

5. 4 list documents included in supplementary dossier

not applicable

6. Fiche report

name of reporter: William Harkness

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date of report: 06.09.2006

examination by DOCOMOMO national/regional section

approval by working party co-ordinator/registers correspondent (name):

sign and date:

examination by DOCOMOMO ISC/R

name of ISC member in charge of the evaluation:

comment(s):

sign and date:

ISC/R approval: date:

working party/ref. n° :

NAi ref. n° :