

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 Roy Grounds House & Flats, Melbourne Victoria

source: National Library of Australia www.nla.gov.au

date: 07.06.06



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

1. 1 Data for identification

current name:	Former Roy Grounds House and Flats
former/original/variant name:	Roy Grounds House and Flats
street address:	24 Hill Street
town/suburb:	Toorak
state:	Victoria
post code:	3142
country:	Australia
national topographical grid reference:	
current typology:	Private Residential
former/original/variant typology:	Private Residential
comments on typology:	<p>The former Roy Grounds house is an elegant example of a courtyard house which was in 1954, and still is, an unusual type in Melbourne. In the decades either side of World War Two Grounds in his various practices showed himself to be an innovator with regards residential design. 'Roy Grounds covered new ground in his designs for blocks of flats. Flats were relatively unknown in Melbourne, and Grounds set a pattern for efficient design of small spaces, combined with high aesthetic standards.'</p> <p>www.science.org.au/dome/grounds</p>

1. 2 Status of protection

protected by:

Heritage Victoria

grade:

Heritage Place

valid for:

The Grounds Residence, the three flats in addition to the land parcel.

remarks:

On the below diagram: L1 denotes the property boundaries, B1 represents the Grounds House, and B2-B4 illustrates the rear flats.



protected by:

National Trust of Australia register

grade:

National significance

valid for:

The land parcel including buildings contained within it.

protected by:

Stonnington City Council Heritage Overlay

grade:

Heritage Place

valid for:

All buildings and surroundings.

protected by:	RAIA 20th 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: No significant visual relationship to adjacent buildings or vegetation.

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):	1953
start of site work:	1953
completion/inauguration:	1954

2. 2 Summary of development

commission brief:	See below
design brief:	<p>The brief was to provide a small residence for the architect and his wife on the street frontage to the east of the sloping site and three flats intended as a source of rental income for the architect-owner of the site, down the hill to the west at the rear of the site. 'The plan of the Grounds house is square with a circular courtyard at its centre. The oriental influence on the design has frequently been noted. <u>Goad</u> comments 'By concealing the circular court and providing windows only at eaves level, Grounds create an inward looking house, almost Japanese in its retreat from the outside world.'</p> <p><i>Goad. P, Melbourne architecture, The Watermark Press, Sydney, 2001, p.167</i></p>
building/construction:	Conventional domestic construction, cavity brick walls timber framed flat roof, slab on ground floor, partly brick-paved, partly carpeted.
completed situation:	One House and three flats.
original situation or character of site:	Suburban residential construction

2. 3 Relevant persons/organisations

original owner(s)/patron(s):	Roy and Betty Grounds
architect(s):	Roy Grounds of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd
landscape/garden designer(s):	not applicable
other designer(s):	not applicable
consulting engineer(s):	unknown
building contractor(s):	unknown

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:	no substantial changes made
date:	not applicable
circumstances/reasons for change	not applicable
effects of changes:	not applicable
persons/organisations involved:	not applicable

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.

'The plan of the house is a perfect square with a circular courtyard at its centre. The house is a striking essay in pure geometry, a hallmark of Grounds work during the 1950s. With only highlight windows on the external walls, all of the rooms focus on the internal courtyard, creating an inward looking, almost eastern character. This oriental influence continues to the external design, with strong solid walls, topped by projecting eaves floating above the highlight windows, and a single central large door with oversized knocker. The original planting of the courtyard with persimmon and bamboo also displays an eastern influence.'

The three flats to the rear sequentially step back from the main house to allow undercover carparking. While they do not have the geometry or oriental repose of the main house, they include distinctive features such as the angled carpark walls, small slatted balconies, and a double height main space, with a tall window wall facing the side courtyard gardens.

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3.2 Current use

of whole building/site:	The former Grounds House and Flats remain in private residential use.
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3.3 Present (physical) condition

of whole building/site:	The built fabric of all buildings is in good condition and the appearance of the main house is little altered.
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of other elements (*if applicable*): The garden is maintained

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

No current development plans for the immediate vicinity that threaten the heritage value of the former Grounds house and flats.

4. Evaluation

*Give the scientific reasons for selection for docomomo documentation
Intrinsic value*

4.1 technical evaluation:

There are no significant technical aspects to the former Grounds house and flats.

4.2 social evaluation:

There are no significant social aspects to the former Grounds house and flats.
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4.3 cultural and aesthetic evaluation:

The former Grounds house and flats is one of the first and best of Roy Grounds mature designs, emblematic of the architect's growing interest in architecture derived from the juxtaposition of pure geometric figures to form the plans of his designs. Although he began to experiment with this approach in the 1930s it first became one of the defining characteristics of Melbourne architecture in the decade following the war. The other most famous remaining examples of this approach design are the circular Henty House in Frankston (1953), and the domed Academy of Sciences in Canberra (1956-59). Grounds was the foremost exponent of this approach in the post-war period in Victoria, but it signifies the influence he exerted at the time that it was also adopted by some of his Melbourne contemporaries.
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Comparative significance

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

The Grounds House and Flats is of National significance as a fine example of Roy Grounds' mature work. It was widely praised at the time of its construction and won the Victorian Architecture medal of 1954. Roy Grounds was one of the most important Australian architects of his generation. One of the first Australian architects to employ the modernist idiom before World War Two Grounds was in 1953 the instigator of the Grounds, Romberg and Boyd partnership, one of Australia's most important architectural firms during the 1950s. He was certainly one of Victoria's best-known and most influential architects in the decades either side of World War Two.

4. 5 historic and reference values:

The geometrically-driven design approach signified by the former Grounds house (not the flats) signaled the emergence of a completely new tendency in the development of modern architecture in Melbourne. Monumental and symmetrical but still characterized by Grounds' own version of contemporary modernist detailing these buildings were a new and original synthesis of contemporary and historic forms and western and oriental architectural influences. This design tendency culminated in Grounds' own design for the National Gallery of Victoria and its associated theatre complexes.

5. Documentation

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

La Trobe University Archives, Bundoora, Victoria

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

Heritage Victoria, Level 7, 8 Nicholson Street East Melbourne Victoria 3002

State Library of Victoria, 328 Swanston Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

5. 2 principal publications (in chronological order):

Joan Leyser, "He Really Shapes his Houses", Australian Home Beautiful, Feb 1954, pp 16 - 25

Goad. P, Melbourne architecture, The Watermark Press, Sydney, 2001, pp 167

5. 3 visual material (state location/ address)

original visual records/drawings/photographs/others:

La Trobe University Archives, Bundoora, Victoria

recent photographs and survey drawings:

film/video/other sources:

5. 4 list documents included in supplementary dossier

6. Fiche report

name of reporter: William Harkness

address:

telephone: fax: e-mail: s2117817@student.rmit.edu.au

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° :