

## Lipton House (former)

Prepared by: GML Heritage

**Address:** 67 Hill Road BALWYN NORTH

**Name:** Lipton House (former)

**Survey Date:** October 2021

**Place Type:** Residential Building

**Architect:** Kevin O'Neil and Raymond Tung  
(from the office of Bogle & Banfield)

**Grading:** Individually Significant

**Builder:** L. P. Kelly & Company

**Extent of Overlay:** To title boundaries

**Construction Date:** 1965



Figure 1 Lucifer Street and Hill Road elevations, 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North. (Source: GML 2021)



Figure 2 Lucifer Street elevation, 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North. (Source: GML 2021)



## Historical Context

The area of Hill Road, Balwyn North, is on the traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung.

This place is associated with the following historic themes taken from the *Boroondara Thematic Environmental History* (2012):

### *6.3.4 Suburban infill after Second World War*

### *9.3.2 Designing fine buildings*

Balwyn North is a residential suburb situated 10 kilometres east of central Melbourne. To its south is Balwyn, which is separated from Balwyn North by Belmore Road. It is bounded on the north by Koonung Creek and the Eastern Freeway. The suburb was formerly part of the City of Camberwell and since 1994 has been part of the City of Boroondara.

This house is associated with what might be termed the latter phase of post-war home-building in Balwyn North – that is, the period from the mid to late 1960s. This represented part of a broader boom in suburban residential development that had resumed after the lull caused by the credit crunch of the early 1960s. In Balwyn, and especially in Balwyn North, new and established subdivisions had already significantly filled out by that time and, by the mid-1960s, choice vacant allotments were starting to become more difficult to obtain. By the early 1970s very few were left.

### *1940s and postwar development*

There had been a scattering of new housing development in the area north of Belmore Road from the late 1930s, but this area was developed significantly from the early 1940s as the new suburb of Balwyn North (called North Balwyn at that time). Occupied with orchards and small farms, this was the one of the last remaining expanses of undeveloped land relatively close to the city. Balwyn North became the suburb of choice for many young married couples building new homes in the 1940s and 1950s, some of whom were defence force veterans. The suburb developed as quintessentially middle class, with a high proportion of brick homes and a notable absence of industrial activity. The ridge along Doncaster Road was an advantage for house blocks in the adjoining streets, providing sought-after views towards the city centre and the distant ranges, and encouraging the building of often grandiose double-storey homes. Public transport was provided with the extension of the electric tramway from East Kew to Balwyn North in 1938, along High Street and Doncaster Road. A large shopping centre, known as North Balwyn Village, developed along Doncaster Road.

In the 1950s, the potential for large-scale residential development in Balwyn North was recognised by a private company, A.V. Jennings Pty Ltd, which proposed the Trentwood Estate on a large tract of land off Doncaster Road (Built Heritage 2015:12). From 1947 Balwyn and Balwyn North were acknowledged not only as epicentres for the Small Homes Service but also for Modernist architect-designed homes in general. A number of notable architects, including Robin Boyd, designed Modernist homes in Balwyn in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly in the streets east of Balwyn Road, including the elevated area around Beckett Park.

This new residential expansion in Balwyn North, which included the Greythorn area in the 1950s, in turn brought commercial development. Several local retail strips appeared in the north of the study area, including in Bulleen Road at Dorado Avenue, in Balwyn Road between Lucifer and Echo streets, and, most notably, the prominent strip on Doncaster Road, just down from the Trentwood Estate. In 1960, G.J. Coles opened a large store on the corner of Doncaster Road and Burke Road, which was



Melbourne's first American-style self-service drive-in supermarket complex. New schools and churches also appeared during this period of development. Balwyn High School, located in Balwyn North, opened in 1954, followed by Greythorn High School in 1959. Several new churches were constructed, extended or rebuilt to provide for burgeoning congregations (Built Heritage 2015:12). This included new Catholic churches at Deepdene, Balwyn and Balwyn North.

Since the 1990s a significant influx of new residents into the area has seen the extensive replacement of interwar and 1940s homes with new residential development. The suburb of Balwyn North today is favoured by many new home-owners for access to Balwyn High School—a highly rated co-educational government secondary school with more than 2000 students.

## History

The land at 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North, originally formed part of Elgar's Crown Special Survey purchased and surveyed by Henry Elgar in 1841 (CT V7528 F001).

The subject site was Lot 116 of the large residential subdivision laid out in the early 1950s (CT V7528 F001; Age, 3 March 1952:8). The subdivision included 10 blocks on Walnut, Vicars and Hill Roads. Prices ranged from 6 pounds to 8 pounds 5 shillings per foot of frontage (Age, 3 March 1952:8).

In 1964 businessman Bertram Lipton and his wife Claudine acquired the title to the subject site. Born in Russia as Boris Lifschitz, Bertram Lipton had settled in Belgium by the mid-1930s. In 1940 Bertram, Claudine and their two sons migrated to Australia. Lipton was a moderately well-known painter and furniture maker. He hosted several exhibitions at the Victorian Artists' Society in the late 1960s and early 1970s (*Australian Jewish News*, 13 August 1971: 2).

The Liptons engaged Kevin O'Neil and Raymond Tung, architects and planners, to prepare designs for their new home in 1964. The couple wanted a relatively modest house with only two bedrooms but with large living and dining areas ('for entertaining friends and displaying some of Mr Lipton's finely-made furniture of his own design and handcrafting') and a studio-hobby room (*Australian Home Beautiful* August 1966:X). The architects proposed a split-level dwelling based around an elongated open-planned living/dining room with a lantern roof to provide additional height and clerestory windows to all sides. Bedrooms and service areas were clustered along the south side, with the hobby room and garage at the lower level.

In February 1965 a building permit was issued for the erection of a 'seven roomed brick veneer house' to cost £14,866. It was built by L. P. Kelly & Company of Bay Street, Brighton, and was completed by August 1965. The house appeared on the front cover of the popular home-making magazine *Australian Home Beautiful* in August 1966. The accompanying article observed that, as the site was not only on a corner but also elevated, it effectively had three street frontages. These qualities, the review noted, were 'analogous to those required for a piece of sculpture in the round – it must be satisfying when seen from any viewpoint'. In the *Australian Home Beautiful* piece, the Lipton house as 'an outstanding example of a house with this sculptural quality' (*Australia Home Beautiful* 1966:X).

Interior photographs from 1966 show that living areas were furnished with Chinese rugs, built-in wall units, and examples of Lipton's paintings and his hand-made furniture (*Australia Home Beautiful* 1966:X).



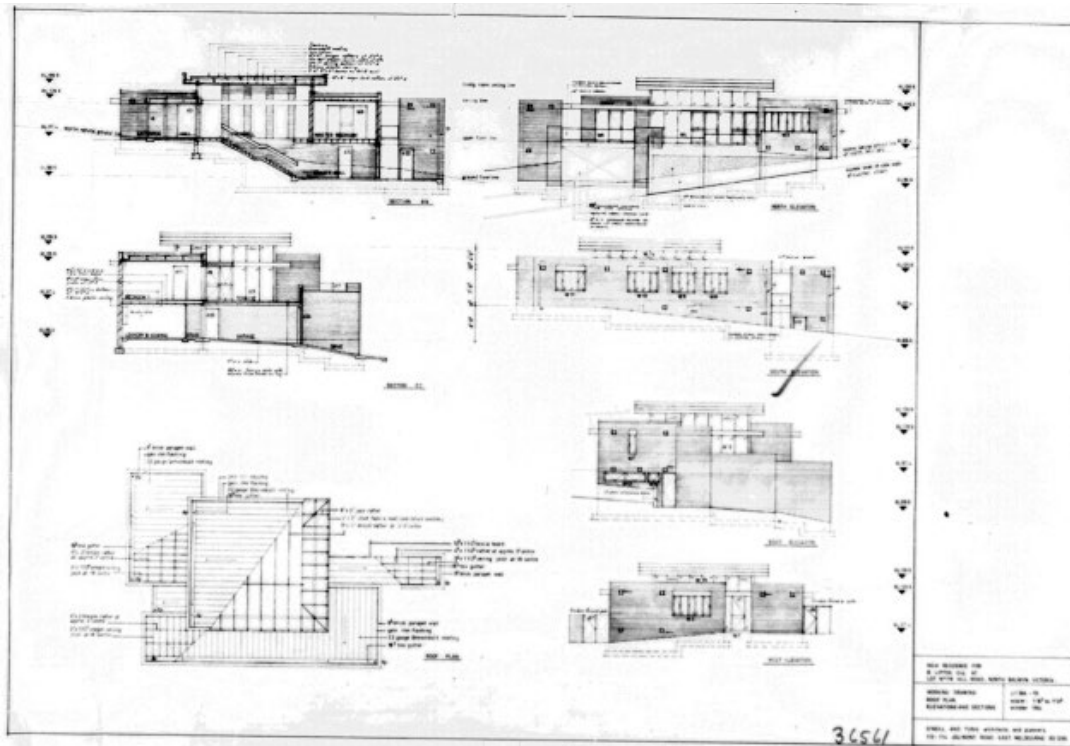


Figure 3 Working drawings for the roof plan, elevation and sections for the new residence at 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North, dated October 1964. (Source: BP 36561)

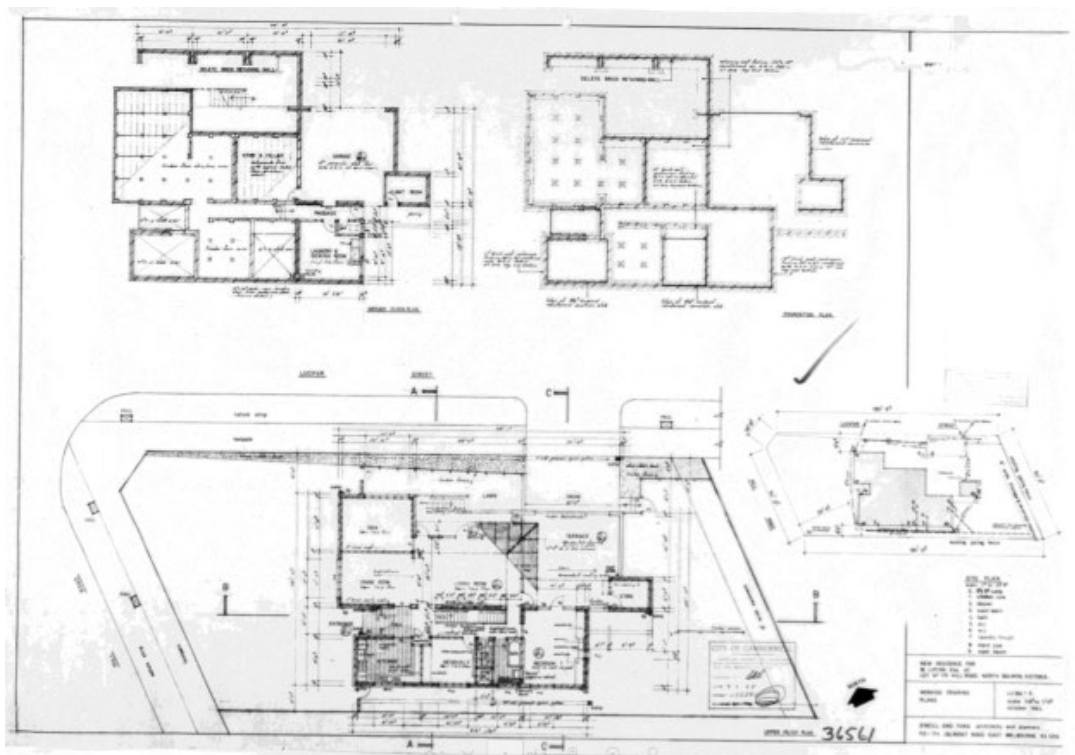


Figure 4 Working drawings of the plan for new residence at 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North, dated October 1964. (Source: BP 36561)



Council building cards show the architects also designed landscaping along the Lucifer Street boundary, comprising a sloping pebbled embankment with a timber fence along a section at the top of the embankment on either side of the driveway, and lawn (BP 36561).

Bertram and Claudine Lipton lived at 67 Hill Road until their respective deaths in 1974 and 1977 (*Australian Jewish News*, 20 December 1974:15; CT V7528 F001). Ownership of the house subsequently passed to another European emigre, German-born Gunter Friedlander, who lived there until his death in 2008 (CT V7528 F001).

Council building cards record no alterations or additions to the property since it was constructed in 1965 (BP 36561).

### **Bogle & Banfield Associates**

Bogle & Banfield Associates was a partnership formed in about 1959 between Gordon Douglas Banfield (1922–2007) and Alan Bogle (1902–1976). The pair met in the office of architect Harry Norris in 1954 and entered into practice together in 1959. Architect Bernard Joyce (1929–1994) was one of their notable employees. The firm is best known for its bold and innovative public buildings, including Gypsum House, La Trobe Street, Melbourne (c1969); St James Anglican Church, Glen Iris (c1959); the Total Carpark, Russell Street, Melbourne (1964–65); and St Vincent's Private Hospital, Victoria Parade, Fitzroy (c1972) (Willis 2012:95).

### **Description**

Occupying a corner allotment with a downward east–west slope, the house at 67 Hill Road is a flat-roofed, triple-fronted, split-level brick house expressed as a series of discrete but interlocking cubic volumes that step across the site. The composition is dominated by a central living area that incorporates a raised (lantern) roof with broad eaves, a tall fascia clad in metal decking, and timber-framed clerestory windows that, on the north and east sides, extend all the way down to floor level to create fully-glazed frontages, interrupted by broad timber-slat sunshades. The other rooms are clustered around the south and west sides of this central living area (shown on working drawings), in flat-roofed cubic volumes with lower roof-lines, simpler timber fascias, stark brown brick walls and large bays of windows with brick sills and narrow timber-framed sashes.

The house has an entrance from each of the two street façades. The main entry, on Hill Road, is set back into a deeply recessed alcove between the two asymmetrical wings that respectively contain the den/dining room and the kitchen, bathroom and bedrooms. On the Lucifer Street frontage, a small flight of steps alongside the den wing leads up to a broad L-shaped terrace, which opens of the fully-glazed living room walls. This terrace extends further westward across the double garage at the lower level, and there is a small windowless brick volume (containing a storeroom) at the extreme edge, connected to the main house via a covered walkway.

A sloped, volcanic rock embankment defines the Lucifer Street boundary, which continues as a rock garden with different sized stones and select boulders along the Hill Road boundary. A mature eucalypt, possibly a Narrow-leaved Black Peppermint (*Eucalyptus nicholii*), stands in one corner of front garden near the Hill Road boundary. There is no front fence, which was typical of the postwar Modernist house.



Figure 5 Mature single eucalypt in a corner of the front garden. (Source: GML 2021)

## **Integrity**

The house is highly intact to its original 1964 design. It retains the original form, massing, fenestration and detailing shown in the original building plans. The addition of an air-conditioning unit on the north wall and some minor changes to the original colour scheme, such as the garage and front doors (from beige to bright yellow) and the timberwork to the terrace sunshade and storeroom fascia (from dark brown to white) do not significantly diminish the integrity of the place. The house retains much of its original setting, including a sloped embankment of volcanic rocks along the Lucifer Street boundary and lawn.

## **Comparative Analysis**

Throughout the middle decades of the twentieth century there was rapid suburban growth around the fringes of metropolitan Melbourne. Increased access to the motor car, growing prosperity in the



postwar period, and the desire for a suburban lifestyle resulted in the push for new housing and services in the suburbs of Melbourne.

Despite various subdivisions in the late 1800s and in the early twentieth century, the vast majority of the housing stock in Balwyn North was not built until the postwar period. The area north of Belmore Road, where large tracts of land were taken up with orchards and small farms (and where 67 Hill Road is located), was one of the last remaining areas of extensive undeveloped land close to the city. Balwyn North became the suburb of choice for many young married couples in the 1950s and 1960s, and many used architects to design their homes. Many of these architects were influenced by the International Style that had emerged in Europe between the wars. They approached house design with optimism and innovation, despite the material shortages and other restrictions that had been imposed during the war years. Modernism offered an alternative to many of the postwar styles offered at the time, which were often simply scaled-down versions of the 1940s prototypes. The informality of open floor plans, and the relationship between interior spaces and the landscape setting, fitted comfortably within the Australian context, and this, coupled with a simplicity of structure and minimisation of decoration, worked at a time when demand for housing was high, building materials were in short supply, and money to spend on housing was scarce.

The house at 67 Hill Road can be compared to a number of contemporaneous houses in Balwyn and Balwyn North that exhibit a similar use of volumetric massing, flat roofs and full-height glazing. Despite the dominance of houses built in the years following World War II, there are only limited postwar houses in Balwyn North and Balwyn in the Heritage Overlay.

The following are comparable examples in the Balwyn North and Balwyn.



Figure 6 'The Bunbury House', 300 Balwyn Road, Balwyn North, designed by Robin Boyd in 1949 (HO616). (Source: GML 2022)

'Bunbury House', 300 Balwyn Road, Balwyn North is of local historical, architectural, aesthetic and social significance. It represents a significantly early and intact example of modernist architecture by prominent Australian architect, theorist, author and critic Robin Boyd. 'Bunbury house' displays clear associations in its design and detailing with the designs of Robin Boyd that were developed as part of the Small Homes Service, an initiative that sought to provide cost effective, architecturally designed homes to a wider audience. 'Bunbury house' incorporates design elements that are recognisable and important in Boyd's design work, including the design of efficient floor plans, floor to ceiling glazing, projecting eaves and suspended sun shading devices constructed from timber slats.



Figure 7 12–14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North, designed by Robin Boyd in 1948–49 with alterations by Boyd in 1959 and 1971 (HO928). (Source: Built Heritage 2015)

12-14 Tannock Street, Balwyn North is of local architectural and technical significance.

Architecturally, the house is an early and notably intact example of the work of the eminent designer and writer Robin Boyd. It remains as one of relatively few surviving examples from this seminal phase of Boyd's career, prior to his celebrated partnership with Roy Grounds and Frederick Romberg. Along with the Gillison House in Kireep Road, Balwyn (1951), and the Dunstan House in Yandilla Road (1950), it is one of three outstanding early and substantially intact houses by Robin Boyd in the area.

Considered collectively, these provide rare and valuable evidence of the innovation, boldness and fresh design approaches of a young architect on the cusp of an illustrious career.

There are also several postwar houses on the Heritage Overlay in the broader Boroondara context that are comparable to 1 Caravan Street Balwyn. Some examples are:



Figure 8 'Robin Boyd House I', 664-666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell, designed by Robin Boyd in 1947 (VHR H0879; HO116). (Source: National Trust of Australia (Victoria))

'Robin Boyd House I', 664-666 Riversdale Road, Camberwell is of local historical and architectural significance. The house is considered by Boyd's contemporaries as the prototype Post-War Modern house which took up new ideas about spatial flow, both inside and outside the building, revealing in the minimalism required by the war's materials conservation program and the challenges posed by the near impossible site. It extended the leading architecture of its time and strongly influenced an emerging group of architects. The house demonstrates innovative design with regard to response to site, informality in planning, flowing spatial arrangements, innovative use of materials and incorporation of built-in features. These are all aspects of domestic design which have now become common.





Figure 9 'former Hirsch House and Office' at 118 Glen Iris Road, Glen Iris, designed by Grigore Hirsch (CONARG Architects) in 1954-55 (HO897) (Source: Trethowan Architecture 2018)

The former Hirsch House and Office is of local historical, architectural, aesthetic and associative significance. The building and its response to the landscape and climate demonstrates the contemporary approach to local conditions favouring good orientation and functionalist planning

The residence is an intact example of a post-war Émigré architect's house and office and illustrates European Modernism as it was translated into a Melbourne context. The double-storey dwelling of the 1950s illustrates the Post-War Melbourne Regional style, demonstrating key characteristics of the style in the simplicity of the forms, low-pitch butterfly roof, textured clinker brick cladding and large areas of glass to the north. The bold forms are further expressed through the delineation of materials across the upper (clinker brick) and lower (concrete tile) levels and exposed steel structure. More broadly, the use of steel frame construction throughout, further allows the illusion of the upper level to dominate the architectural composition.



Figure 10 6 Reeves Court, Kew designed by Ernest Milston in 1955 (HO822). (Source: Trethowan 2017)

'Milston House', 6 Reeves Court, Kew is of local historical, architectural, aesthetic and associative significance. The house is a lightweight, timber framed house designed by architect Ernest Milston. The plan is formed of two rectangles reflective of the zones; the kitchen and living area are aligned with the street and run across the slope, while the bedrooms, bathroom and laundry are at right angles. Each wing has a separate skillion roof sloping to the other wing, creating an asymmetrical butterfly roof. A concrete driveway leads up from street level to a garage and studio, connected with the house by a pergola-covered path. A separate open pergola covers the entry. The building features extensive modular timber framed glazing. Horizontal awnings provide shade to the north, echoed in the open timber framing over the windows to the south that allow light penetration.



Figure 11 'The Guss Residence', 18 Yarra Street, Kew, designed by McGlashan & Everist in 1961 (Significant within HO530). (Source: Hermes)

'Guss residence', 18 Yarra Street, Kew (Significant within HO530) is a good example of the inventive, spare, and environment-responsive designs of McGlashan & Everist. Built in 1961, the 'Guss residence' consists of three pavilion forms around a central courtyard staggered up the sloping site. Utilising thin steel framing and light materials to reduce the bulk of the pavilions, glazed walls float above the driveway and provide views down the site.



Figure 12 'Dickie House', 6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn, c.1961–64 (HO784 City of Boroondara). (Source: Context in association with Trethowan 2017)

'Dickie House', 6 Fairview Street, Hawthorn is of local historical, architectural and aesthetic significance. The house is representative of the post-war design ethos, sense of optimism and architectural modernisation pioneered by Robin Boyd and others. The high-quality house-design features honesty of structure and material, clean lines, deep eaves and an overall sense of innovation in design. The integration of the house with the landscape, with its 'floating' appearance over the banks of the Yarra is characteristic of Modernist integration of architecture with natural context.



Figure 13 'Cukierman Residence', 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn East, designed by Hayden & Associates (attributed to Anthony Hayden) in 1966 (HO857). (Source: Context in association with Trethowan 2018)

The Cukierman Residence at 29 Leura Grove, Hawthorn, is of local historical, architectural, aesthetic, technical and associative significance to the City of Boroondara. The residence derives its aesthetic appeal from its unusual and striking architectural composition with references to the International Style. Interest is created through the floating, curved, massed form fronting the street and subtle but evocative detailing of materials. The horizontal articulation of the window sets with their green mosaic tiled spandrel panels is applied with effect. Slender circular columns support the raised form, creating an open undercroft, and the use of textured cream brick is continued in the landscaping elements such as the low walls and planters.

The former Lipton House compares well to the above examples. Like the other examples, it exhibits key elements of postwar housing typologies, including low horizontal massing, interlocking cubic forms, flat roofs and responsiveness to site topography. The architects took advantage of the prominent corner location to develop an innovative approach to its design which addresses both street frontages equally and takes on a sculptural form in the landscape.

'Robin Boyd House I' (1947) (VHR HO879, HO116 City of Boroondara) is widely recognised as the prototype for postwar Modernist homes in its adaptation to the topography of the site and the use of new ideas on the spatial flow between inside and out. These ideas are also represented in the design for the Guss Residence (1961), 18 Yarra Street, Kew (Significant within HO530 City of Boroondara) and the subject building (1965), which uses interlocking forms and split levels in response to the site's topography.

The former Lipton House, like the 'Guss Residence' and 12–14 Tannock Street, Balwyn, is enhanced by the simplicity and informality of its garden setting, largely open to the street frontages.

Overall, the subject site is a good representative example of a mid-century Modernist house. It exhibits key characteristics of the style, including responsiveness to site,

## Assessment Against Criteria

Criteria referred to in *Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay*, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, August 2018, modified for the local context.

**CRITERION A:** *Importance to the course or pattern of the City of Boroondara's cultural or natural history (historical significance).*

The former Lipton House at 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North, is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of Boroondara as a locus for leading architect-designed public and private buildings from the 1850s into the postwar period. Built in 1965 to a design by architects Kevin O'Neil





and Raymond Tung of leading architectural practice Bogle & Banfield, the unconventional house and its interiors were featured in popular home-making magazine *Australian Home Beautiful* in 1966.

*CRITERION B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Boroondara's cultural or natural history (rarity).*

N/A

*CRITERION C: Potential to yield information that will contribute understanding the City of Boroondara's cultural or natural history (research potential).*

N/A

*CRITERION D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).*

N/A

*CRITERION E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).*

The former Lipton House is of aesthetic significance as one of the more innovative examples of 1960s residential architecture in Balwyn North. Occupying an elevated corner site, the design was conceived to present equally balanced elevations to two street frontages, in the manner of a sculpture-in-the-round. Expressed as a series of stepped and interlocking rectilinear volumes, the house has an especially eye-catching roof-line that is emphasised by the inclusion of a lantern roof with broad, panelled fascias and clerestory windows. With a continuous bay of full-height windows opening onto a broad sun deck over the garage, and its unusual integrated pergola and covered walkway connecting to a detached storeroom, the house remains a striking composition on this prominent suburban site. The building is enhanced by its open garden setting and sloped, embankment of rocks along the Lucifer Street boundary, also designed by architects Kevin O'Neil and Raymond Tung in 1965 as an integral part of their plans for the site. (Criterion E)

*CRITERION F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).*

N/A

*CRITERION G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).*

N/A

*CRITERION H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Boroondara's history (associative significance).*

N/A



## Statement of Significance

### What is significant?

The former Lipton House at 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North, built in 1965 and designed by architects Raymond Tung and Kevin O'Neill, is significant.

Significant fabric includes:

- The original built form, including the interlocking cubic forms stepped across the site
- flat roofs and raised lantern roof with broad eaves and tall fascia clad in metal decking
- face brick surfaces
- window and door openings and joinery
- timber slat sunshades.

The garden setting and sloped, embankment of rocks along the Lucifer Street boundary contributes to the significance of the place.

### How is it significant?

The house is of historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Boroondara.

### Why is it significant?

The former Lipton House at 67 Hill Road, Balwyn North, is of local historical significance for the evidence it provides of Boroondara as a locus for leading architect-designed public and private buildings from the 1850s into the postwar period. Built in 1965 to a design by architects Kevin O'Neil and Raymond Tung of leading architectural practice Bogle & Banfield, the unconventional house and its interiors were featured in popular home-making magazine *Australian Home Beautiful* in 1966. This house exemplifies the high concentration of architect-designed Modernist houses built in Balwyn and Balwyn North during the 1950s and 60s. (Criterion A)

The former Lipton House is of aesthetic significance as one of the more innovative examples of 1960s residential architecture in Balwyn North. Occupying an elevated corner site, the design was conceived to present equally balanced elevations to two street frontages, in the manner of a sculpture-in-the-round. Expressed as a series of stepped and interlocking rectilinear volumes, the house has an especially eye-catching roof-line emphasised by the inclusion of a lantern roof with broad panelled fascia and clerestory windows. With a continuous bay of full-height windows opening onto a broad sun deck over the garage, and its unusual integrated pergola and covered walkway connecting to a detached storeroom, the house remains a striking composition on this prominent suburban site. The building is enhanced by its open garden setting and sloped, embankment of rocks along the Lucifer Street boundary, also designed by architects Kevin O'Neil and Raymond Tung in 1965 and integral to their plans for the site. (Criterion E)

## Grading and Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Boroondara Planning Scheme as an Individually Significant place.



Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Boroondara Planning Scheme:

<b>External paint controls</b>	
<i>Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface?</i>	No
<b>Internal alteration controls</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for internal alterations?</i>	No
<b>Tree controls</b>	
<i>Is a permit required to remove a tree?</i>	No
<b>Solar energy system controls apply?</b>	
<i>Is a permit required for Solar energy systems?</i>	Yes
<b>Outbuildings and fences exemptions</b>	
<i>Are there outbuildings or fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</i>	No
<b>Victorian Heritage Register</b>	
<i>Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?</i>	No
<b>Prohibited uses may be permitted</b>	
<i>Can a permit be granted to use the place for a use which would otherwise be prohibited?</i>	No
<b>Aboriginal heritage place</b>	
<i>Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006?</i>	No
<b>Incorporated plan</b>	
<i>Does an incorporated plan apply to the site?</i>	No

**Identified by:**

Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2015





## References

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