

HERITAGE CITATION

H0146 3-5 Wonga Road Ringwood North and 1 Wonga Road Ringwood North

Prepared by: Willys Keeble/Simon Reeves

Address: 1 and 3-5 Wonga Road,
Ringwood North

Name: Thaloo

Place Type: Residential House

Grading: Significant

Extent of Overlay:

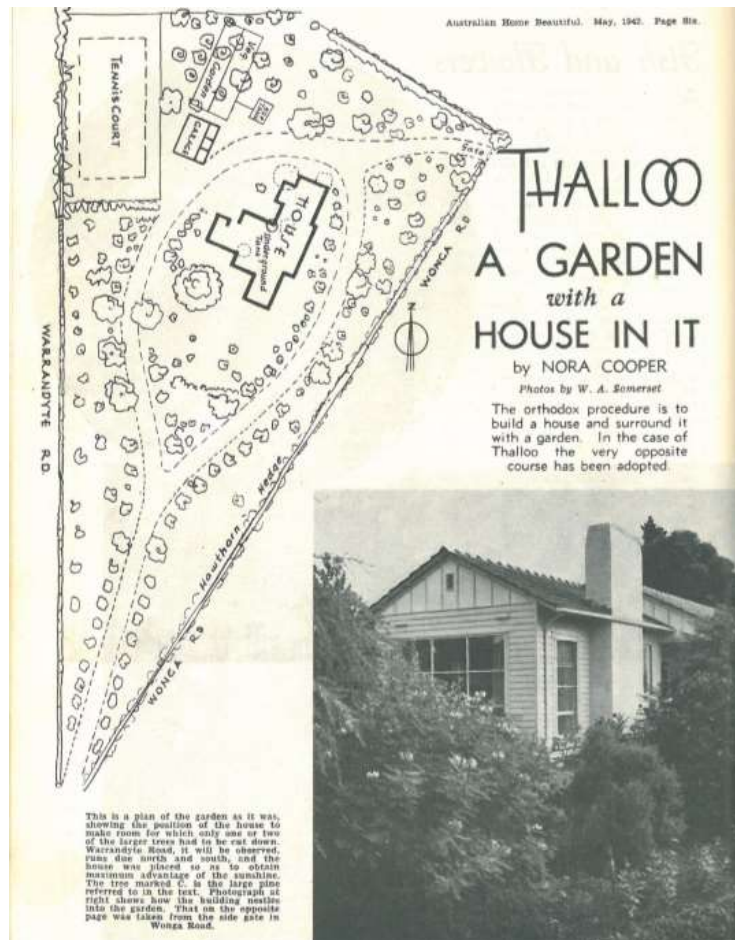
Architectural Style: Interwar Period (c.1919-c.1940)

Survey Date: 22 June 2018

Architect:

Builder:

Construction Date: 1942



House Plan and living room. May 1942 Australian Home Beautiful.

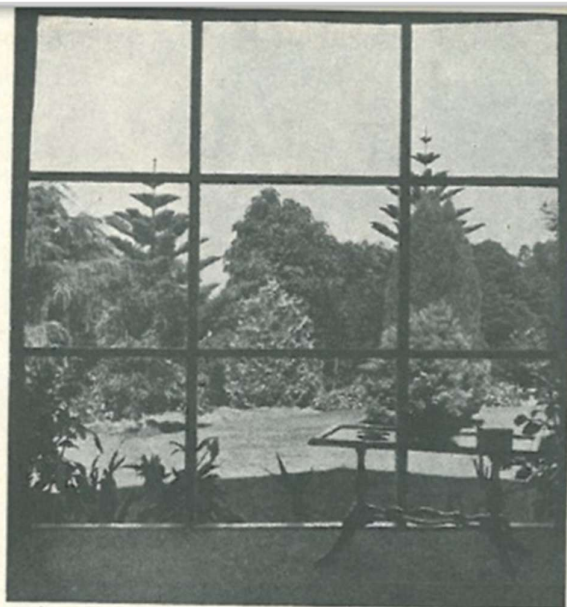


In the crazy paving to the front porch are varieties of sweet alyssum.



The lounge is a lovely room, and, as these pictures show, it is closely associated with the garden. Double doors open out on to the lawn on one side, and the large windows on the adjoining side offer a wide and beautiful view of the garden looking down towards the entrance gates. Its relation to the dining room and the Hall is seen in the lower picture.

Australian Home Beautiful. May, 1942. Page Ten.



What is significant?

The former "Thaloo" early modern house designed by the architectural partnership of Percy H. Meldrum and Arthur Noad for Mr. and Mrs. John Turner, completed in 1942, is significant to the extent of its original 1942 fabric and its extensive remnant garden setting. Other significant elements include the "Thaloo" stone gateposts with wrought iron name plate and gate at the entrance of 1 Wonga Road and the 13 metre long stone-walled driveway in 1 Wonga Road.

The c1960's-1970's addition to the west side of the "Thaloo" house is a contributory element. The rock wall along Warrandyte Road, dating from the 1960s, is of interest as homage to the earlier stone driveway wall and gateposts and for some landmark qualities in its own right. The swimming pool, gazebo, garage outbuildings are not significant.

How is it significant?

The former "Thaloo" house and remnant garden at 3-5 Wonga Road, the "Thaloo" gateway and drive at 1 Wonga Road are of architectural, aesthetic and historical significance to the Maroondah municipality.

Why is it significant?

Architecturally, the 1942 weatherboard house is an intact and rare example in Maroondah of an early modern design by notable architects Meldrum and Noad with an asymmetrical form, tiled intersecting roof gables and banks of floor to ceiling windows taking advantage of garden and mountain views, with the living room connected to the outdoors with glazed double doors. The front porch is embellished with open-work timber posts in stripped Regency revival style lending an air of gentility favoured by Melbourne's upper classes in the 1930's and early '40's.

Aesthetically, for the retention of the elevated 'hill station' garden setting with mountain views, mature trees and shrubberies (even after loss of parts of the garden to no's. 1 and 7 Wonga Roads), for the rubble stone "Thaloo" stone gateway at the fork of Wonga and Warrandyte Roads.

Historically, the garden at 3-5 Wonga Road, and the stone gateway and remnant drive at 1 Wonga Road are significant as original elements of the 1.5 acre pleasure garden with a tennis court developed during the 1920's-30's by F.W. Parker, garden enthusiast and later a notable Ringwood councillor and Mayor, the garden then maintained and further developed by the Turners' from 1940 until its c1980's subdivision.

The 1942 Turner house at 3-5 Wonga Road is historically significant for its association with distinguished architect Percy H. Meldrum and for illustrating the cultural appreciation of garden design in the 1940's and the Turners' 'hill station' way of life and social values.

History of place

The 1922 Imperial General Staff Map of Ringwood shows the elevated land one mile north of Ringwood railway station at the Warrandyte and Wonga Road fork occupied by orchards. Returned serviceman Frank Valentine Parker acquired 1.5 acres set in the fork which was surrounded by a hawthorn hedge. He developed the land as a 'hill station' pleasure garden with lawn areas punctuated by exotic specimen trees during the 1920's and '30's. He constructed a tennis court on the north-west corner and formed a driveway in the shape of a tennis racquet through the site entered from the southern corner (Warrandyte and Wonga Road intersection). This partly survives on the site of 1 Wonga Rd as the stone-walled entrance drive and gateway pillars with the wrought iron place name "Thaloo". Parker never built on his garden site but it served his collector's passion for rare trees and flowering shrubs and with tennis parties, his social life. He became a notable Borough Councillor and Mayor in the 1940's, advocating for better planning of Ringwood as a 'garden city', for land use zoning, and for increased parkland and nature reserves. In 1940 he sold to Mr. and Mrs John Turner who had discovered the garden 'tucked away in the hills, ready-made, and as full of treasures as Aladdin's cave'. The Turners' had decided to move from the city and build their own 'country retreat' house within convenient distance of a railway station. In 1940 they engaged an acquaintance, well-known Collins St. architect Percy H. Meldrum, to design a house on the elevated level land within the head of Parker's 'tennis racquet' driveway so as to avoid demolishing any but one large tree - "A Garden with a House in it". The Turners' named the 1.5 acre garden "Thaloo" and spent two years visiting and camping there, relocating smaller trees and shrubs away from the house site and forming beds for shrubs and perennials around the house which was not completed until 1942 due to wartime restrictions on building materials and petrol. (Australian Home Beautiful May 1942)

During the 1960's the Council constructed a picturesque stone retaining wall with massive boulders along the Warrandyte Road. footpath of the original "Thaloo" site, which was later subdivided into three lots (no's.1, 3-5 and 7 Wonga Rd). 3-5 Wonga Rd. is the largest of the lots and contains the 1942 house together with an extensive garden with views to Mount Dandenong, lawn areas with many mature trees originally planted by Frank. V. Parker and ornamental shrub beds surrounding the house planted by the Turners.

Description

The 1942 single storey weatherboard house at 3-5 Wonga Rd. has an asymmetrical form with intersecting tiled gables and gable ends of sheet material with vertical cover straps. It is relatively modest in size with two bedrooms but large living and dining spaces and for its time, had an extremely well equipped kitchen (with electric refrigerator and oil burning stove). It was designed by notable architectural partnership Percy Meldrum and Arthur Noad in 1941. The original section of the house is virtually intact and exhibits early Modernist tendencies. It has wide banks of floor-to-ceiling windows facing garden views to the south in the family meals room, formal dining room and large living room, the latter which has glazed double doors opening to the garden and floor to ceiling windows each side of the large fireplace. Similar large windows in the main bedroom face east to mountain views and there is a study facing north in the bedroom wing. The entrance lobby is preceded by a porch with the main roof gable extended over and supported by two openwork timber pilasters with a Regency flavour. The west wing of the house is a sympathetic extension (c1960's-70's) in weatherboard with a gabled tiled roof and large windows. The swimming pool, gazebo, garages and existing driveway are later additions.

Comparative analysis.

There are few known examples of houses in Maroondah with Modernist tendencies built before 1950. Similar examples are 'Glenbrae' at 149-151 Dorset Rd., Croydon (1934), and the former 'Birribindi' house at 77 Richardson Rd. Croydon (1936). Both have fashionable Interwar revival style exteriors with muted Modernist elements in the form of large 'landscape' windows. 'Glenbrae' was designed in 1934 by local architect Arthur Pretty for Ernest Mitchell, Dame Nellie Melba's brother. Described as a 'Normandy Farmhouse that is cleverly Modern' (Australian Home Beautiful November 1935), it is a substantial two-storey white painted brick building set in a large garden designed by Edna Walling. Modernist features include wide 'landscape windows' with low sill heights, paved entry and garden terraces, and a vertical strip stairwell window to the right of the entrance porch. 'Birribindi' is set in a large garden and was designed by noted society architect Marcus Martin as a large single storey "Indian Bungalow" style pavilion with a large mansard roof, wide 'landscape' windows and pergolas over an extensive front terrace (now altered). One other example is 'Hearth' and its large garden at 1 Hearthside Court, Ringwood, built in 1947, but the design is relatively undistinguished in comparison.

'Thaloo', 3-5 Wonga Rd. Ringwood, is the only house in Maroondah known to have been designed by the notable architect Percy Meldrum. Unlike 'Glenbrae' and 'Birribindi' above, it is a modest timber house with an early Modernist gabled roof form, 'landscape windows' extending to the floor and an indoor-outdoor relationship to the garden with glazed French doors in the dining room.

Percy Meldrum is best known for his hospital and commercial designs in the Moderne and Art Deco idioms. He had been the principal designer in the firm Stephenson and Meldrum (1921- 1937) and served on the Capital Planning and Development Committee for Canberra during 1940-1945. The American Colonial Revival house he designed in 1930 at 40 Rosserdale Crescent, Mt. Eliza, is regarded as a very fine example of this style. Meldrum adopted Modernist tendencies in the design of his own house 'Worrall' at 4 Cat Jump Road, Donvale (1937-8) which is very similar to the "Thaloo" house and one of the earliest modern houses in Victoria. The weatherboard Grabovsky house at 15 Old Warrandyte Rd. nearby, designed by Meldrum in early 1941, is also similar. Meldrum also designed the Alexander house at 21 Old Warrandyte Road, Donvale in 1941 (now much altered), and 'Sunningdale', 16 Warrandyte Rd. Donvale in 1941 (a distinguished two-storey Arts and Crafts house with a Jorgenson 'Montsalvat' character).

Primary source

Statement of Significance

N.1 and 3-5 Wonga Road Ringwood North -Statement of Significance, Willys Keeble/Simon Reeves

22 June 2019.

Gradings and Planning Control Recommendations

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

External Paint Colours Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface?	No
Internal Alteration Controls Is a permit required for internal alterations?	No
Tree Controls Is a permit required to remove a tree?	Yes Trees No: Claret Ash (Tree 10), Deodar Cedar (Tree 14), Cork Oak (Tree 16), Coast Redwood (Tree 17), Variegated Elm (Tree 22), and Kurrajong (Tree 23)
Victorian Heritage Register Is the place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?	No
Incorporated Plan Does an Incorporated Plan apply to the site?	No
Outbuildings and fences exemptions Are there outbuildings and fences which are not exempt from notice and review?	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted Can a permit be granted to use the place for a use which would otherwise be prohibited?	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006?	No

1 Wonga Road Ringwood North-

Thaloo" stone gateposts with wrought iron name plate and gate, the 13 metre long stone walled driveway.

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