Place name:	Summerton Residence (former)
Address:	13 Alfred Road, Essendon
Place typology:	Residential
Construction date range:	1964-66
Architectural style:	Post-War Modernist
Assessment:	Built Heritage Pty Ltd, May 2022
Recommendation:	To be included in the schedule to the heritage overlay

Photos of place:



13 Alfred Road, Essendon: Built Heritage Pty Ltd, May 2022.

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

13 Alfred Road, Essendon, is a two-storey flat-roofed post-war modernist orange brick house on an elevated site with an integrated garage at the lower level. It was erected in 1964-66 for Bill and Beryl Summerton, to a design by architect and former local resident Ivan Anderson.

The significant features of the house include:

- The stark expression of bold rectilinear massing in orange brickwork
- The flat roof with broad eaves and raked fascias
- The full-height window bays opening onto a cantilevered balcony with simple metal railing
- The unusually wide front door at street level

How is it significant?

13 Alfred Road, Essendon, is of local architectural significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

13 Alfred Road, Essendon, is significant as an excellent and remarkably intact example of an architect-designed modernist house of the early/mid 1960s. Its upside-down plan, bold rectilinear massing, broad-eaved flat roof, stark orange brick walls, large windows, cantilevered balcony and white-painted joinery are all characteristic of that era. Occupied for more than six decades by the same family, who made very few changes to the dwelling, the house exhibits an exceptional degree of exterior intactness. (Criterion E)

Description:

The former Summerton Residence at 13 Alfred Road, Essendon, is a large double-storey flat-roofed orange brick house in the post-war modernist style. Set well back on an elevated site that slopes gently upward from the street, the house was conceived on the so-called 'upside down' model, where the principal living spaces are located on the first floor and various subsidiary and service areas (as well as an integrated double garage) are located downstairs. The prominent flat roof is clad with metal decking and has broad eaves with raked fascias (evident at the corners).

The elongated and asymmetrical street facade is dominated by a full-height window wall at the upper level that extends about two-thirds of the length of the house, opening onto a cantilevered concrete slab balcony with simple white-painted metal railing. Underneath the balcony is the double garage, with a single double-width metal roller shutter, and the off-centre front entrance, with its atypically wide front door. At the far left (west) side of the facade, each floor level has a wide window bay with four large rectangular aluminium-framed sashes, and a white-painted rendered spandrel below.

Since the property was sold by the Summerton family in 2018, few changes have been made to the street frontage. The front door (originally painted olive green and later a pale aqua/blue) has been repainted in a different shade of blue, and an off-centre vertical strip window has been inserted. The short slight of concrete steps to the left (east) of the garage has been altered by the removal of its white-painted railings. A new front fence, comprising a dwarf wall of white-painted rendered masonry with black-painted metal railings, has been erected along the street boundary, with an electronically-operated sliding gate across the driveway entrance.

History:

Contextual History

City of Moonee Valley occupies part of the Traditional lands of the Wurundjeri-willam clan of the Woi-wurrung people. Many sites in the area now known as City of Moonee Valley show evidence of Woi-wurrung activities and spiritual connections. Fish were trapped in the rivers and creeks, stone was quarried from the river edges, murnong daisy was collected and kangaroos hunted across grassland areas, and bark was harvested from trees in the river valleys. This

relationship between the Woi-wurrung and the land, water, animals and plants, continues to this day (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.29).

The first Europeans to explore the area known as Moonee Valley was a surveyor, Charles Grimes in 1803. In 1836, settlers moving from Van Diemen's Land crossed the area in the hope of finding empty, cheap and plentiful land for sheep. By 1842, surveyors had created the first map of the Parish of Doutta Galla and then Woi-wurrung lands were offered for sale by the British Crown to Europeans (noting that the land was never ceded). The Wurundjeri were moved off their land which had a profound impact on their culture, health and language. By 1860, the entire parish was sold (Living Histories*, Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.32-33).

Early development of the area began with the goldrush period of the 1850s which saw Mount Alexander Road used as a thoroughfare to the diggings with over 30,000 people estimated as moving along the dirt road each week. Businesses and shops sprang up providing sustenance, transport and accommodation to service the passing gold rush trade. Some very early wayside hotels and shops still survive from this period (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p. 51-54). After the heady days of the goldrush, the 1860s saw Essendon, Ascot Vale, Moonee Ponds and Flemington develop into permanent townships. The development of railways by private companies gave huge impetus to suburban development of the area with the opening of the Essendon railway in 1860. The government purchased the line in 1868. Suburban trains terminated at Essendon and it wasn't until 1889 that Ascot Vale, Moonee Ponds and Newmarket stations were completed. By 1893 stations opened at Strathmore and Pascoe Vale and in 1922 Glenbervie Station opened. The railways provided an enormous boost to residential development along the line and those who had previously moved to areas without trains, now clamoured for them (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.59).

By the 1880s Essendon had become a Borough and by 1891 had a population of 14,411. Many subdivisions occurred during the land boom of the 1880s and many failed to eventuate due to the depression of the 1890s. In the interwar period a boom in subdivision and residential infill occurred in Travancore, Essendon, Ascot Vale, Strathmore and Moonee Ponds, which was focused on new transport routes along the tram lines, first established to Essendon in 1905. In 1919 the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board was formed and lines were extended and improved. The tram lines saw development occur either side of Maribyrnong Road, further along Mt Alexander Road, Buckley Street and Keilor Road (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.65-68, p.115).

Education was an important consideration in the development of the municipality, with schools having been established in Essendon and Flemington in the 1850s. The development of State schools in the area reflects the major phases of education and includes a number of 'firsts'; the first non-denominational school in Victoria was set up in Essendon in 1850, the first purpose-built infants school in the state was set up in 1902, and Essendon High School was the first purpose-built high school in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Denominational schools were also set up in the area in the early 1850s, with more private schools established during the boom period of the 1880s. Residents wanted a better life than the one most had left behind in Britain, including a good education for their children (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.157-161).

In the three decades after the Second World War, Melbourne's suburbs ballooned outward to cater for post-war migration, the baby boom, an increasing need for new housing, and a more car-centred economy. Areas to the north of Essendon had been open paddocks in 1945, but by 1950 the Shire of Keilor found themselves with a developing suburb with no name. It was later called Niddrie. Similarly, Airport West was developing quickly with houses being built before the roads. By 1964 it was claimed that Airport West had the cheapest cream brick veneers in Melbourne (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.120-121). Many houses in these post-war areas were austere weatherboard or brick veneer bungalows, with a few scattered architect designed or project homes on new blocks, particularly along the Boulevard in Aberfeldie. These post-war housing areas were car-centred communities located close to industry along Keilor Road, Matthews Avenue around Essendon Airport and East Keilor. By 1960 Airport West had its first hotel, the famous Skyways Hotel and then in the 1970s the first shopping centre, owned by Westfield was begun (heritage ALLIANCE, G*ap Heritage Study*, 2005: p.28-30).

Post-war housing pressure also saw a huge investment by the Housing Commission of Victoria who developed 150 bungalows in concrete, weatherboard and brick in Aberfeldie. They then began an ambitious estate of houses and flats on a 77 acre site at Ascot Vale in 1949. These low-rise walk-up flats eventually gave rise to the high-rise flats of Flemington which opened in June 1965 (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.123).

Many post-war migrants bought or built houses in the outer areas of the municipality, close to employment and industry and where new, cheaper housing was readily available. These developments and public housing in Aberfeldie, Ascot

Vale and Flemington have had a long-lasting effect on the nature of the Moonee Valley community which today is one of the most diverse and vibrant in Melbourne (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.124).

Place History

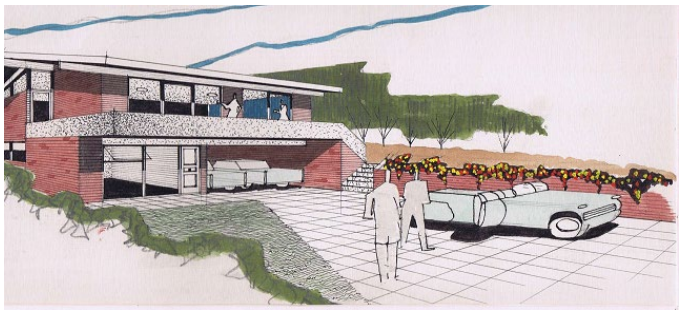
The house at 13 Alfred Road, Essendon, was erected in 1964-66 for William and Beryl Summerton, to a design by architect Ivan Anderson.

An engineer by profession, William Arthur Robert Summerton (1917-1998) was born in South Australia and studied at the University of Adelaide. He moved to Melbourne to take up a position with Gordon Brothers, a well-established firm of refrigeration engineers founded in 1917 by Summerton's maternal uncles. Originally based in Port Melbourne, the firm soon moved to a two-acre site in Union Street, Brunswick, which expanded steadily thereafter. When Summerton arrived in the early 1940s to work as a draftsman with the family firm, he initially lived in Moonee Ponds but duly moved to Union Street, opposite the factory. During 1949, he became engaged to Beryl Estelle Stowe (1923-2016), a hairdresser who resided nearby. Married later that year, the couple continued to live in Union Street for some time, moving thence to Brunswick Road as the family grew with son John and then daughter Michele. By the mid-1950s, the Summertons had moved to a two-bedroom brick veneer house in Coonans Road, Pascoe Vale South. Intending to build a new family home, the couple acquired land in Alfred Road, Essendon. Located on the elevated north side of the street, the block formed Lot 12 of a 20-lot residential subdivision that had been laid out a few years earlier (LP 40954, dated 23/07/1957).

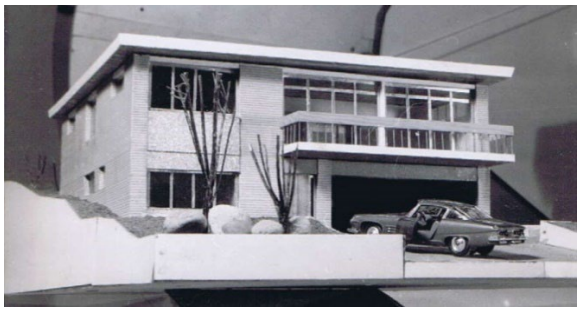
By now, Summerton had succeeded one of his uncles as chief engineer and director of the company's refrigeration department and Gordon Brothers had expanded considerably, broadening its operations to include the air conditioning equipment, ice tank coils, water chillers, cool rooms for meatworks, mortuary cabinets, smoke houses and bakery equipment. From the 1950s, the firm had provided equipment for some high-profile architectural projects in Melbourne, including a factory for Rowntree & Company in Brunswick (1955) and the new BHP head office, *Essington Lewis House*, in Bourke Street (Meldrum & Noad, 1958). Connections with leading architects loomed large. When Gordon Brothers established a new factory in Reservoir in 1960, it was designed by Leigh & Bartlett.

Thus, Summerton would have already had some professional links with architects when, in the early 1960s, he and Beryl decided to build a new house. They engaged Ivan Anderson, who had only recently entered private practice. The son of a builder, Anderson (1927-2003) grew up in Essendon, attending the technical school and starting his career as a draftsman with Ansett Airways Pty Ltd at Essendon Airport. Completing architectural studies at RMIT in 1949, Anderson worked for Leith & Bartlett and then travelled overseas for a year, returning to Melbourne and later taking a position with D Graeme Lumsden before opening his own office around 1961. Anderson had then recently moved from Essendon to Oakleigh, where he would later design a house for himself. He continued to focus on private residential work as well as factories. From the mid-1960s, he began to undertake an increasing number of projects for the Roman Catholic denomination, including churches and various buildings for the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

For the Summertons, Anderson proposed a two-storey brick house on an elongated 'upside down' plan. A preliminary perspective, dated April 1964, depicted the house with a low gabled roofline and full-width balcony with solid balustrade and steps down to ground level, where there was an integrated double garage and a glazed room with separate entry. The design was subsequently revised. The final version, as shown in working drawings dated November 1964, had a flat roof, a shorter balcony with open balustrade, and a relocated ground floor entry. Upstairs, there were expansive living areas (opening to the balcony), kitchen, bathrooms and three bedrooms, while the lower level included a study and what was identified as a "children's party room". Due to the revisions, the house was not completed until March 1966, when the family took up residence. They would remain there for five decades, with the property being offered for sale for the first time in 2017, following Beryl Summerton's death at the age of 93 years.



Perspective drawing of initial scheme, dated April 1964. Source: Summerton family collection, Travancore.



Scale model of revised scheme, circa November 1964. Source: Summerton family collection, Travancore.



Early photograph of completed house, circa 1966. Source: Summerton family collection, Travancore.



Similar view in 2016, still occupied by the Summertons Source: Summerton family collection, Travancore.

Sources:

Primary Sources
Lodged Plan No 40,954, dated 23 July 1957. <www.landata.vic.gov.au>
Ivan R Anderson, "Mr and Mrs W Summerton residence", perspective drawings, dated 18 April 1964.
Courtesy Ms Michele Summerton, Travancore.
Ivan Anderson, "Residence at No 13 Alfred Road, Essendon", revised working drawings, dated 10 November 1964.
Courtesy Ms Michele Summerton, Travancore.

Secondary Sources
Gordon Brothers: 100 Years, 1917 – 2017. (No place or date, circa 2017).
Emails from Ms Michele Summerton, October 2021.
Built Heritage Pty Ltd, research file on Ivan Anderson.

Thematic Context:

City of Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History, 2012

6.0 Building towns, cities and the garden state

6.7 Making homes for Victorians

Comparative Analysis:

The following are some notable architect-designed modernist houses in the City of Moonee Valley from 1960 to 1965:

- Bourke Residence, 31 Brewster Street, Essendon (Smith & Tracey, 1960) – *included in this study*

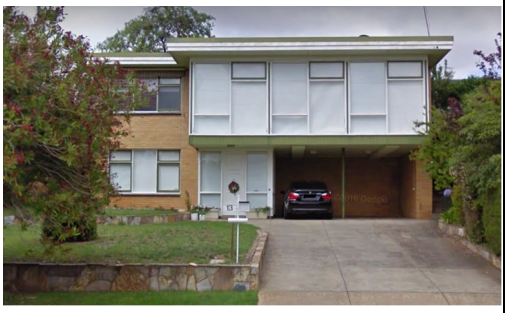
- Abbey Residence, 33 Bournian Avenue, Strathmore (Earle & Bunbury, 1961) – *demolished circa 2019*
- Seligman Residence, 146 The Boulevard, Aberfeldie (David Pincus, 1961) – *identified in previous study but no HO*
- Holland Residence, 2-4 Oriana Court, Flemington (Brine Wierbowski, 1963) – *included in this study*
- Richardson Residence, 14 Brewster Street, Essendon (Graeme Gunn, 1963) – *existing HO165*
- Cuthbertson Residence, 53 Willonga Road, Strathmore (Albert W Ross, 1963) – *demolished circa 2018*
- Summerton Residence, 13 Alfred Road, Essendon (Ivan Anderson, 1964-66) – *included in this study*
- Cameron Residence, 43 Woolart Street, Strathmore (Ian Napier, 1965) – *included in this study*
- Woods Residence, 21 Brewster Street, Essendon (Clarke, Hopkins & Clarke, 1965) – *included in this study*

It is noted that only one of these examples is currently protected by an individual heritage overlay (HO).

While broadly comparable in date, these houses vary in their form, expression and finishes. The examples that are most comparable to the subject building are those in what might be described as the more conventional strain of International Modernism that continued from the late 1950s, characterised by a dominant horizontal expression, stark walls of face brick, broad-eaved flat roofs, and generous glazing, typically as full-height windows and sliding doors. This is evident in the examples at 53 Willonga Road (demolished), 146 The Boulevard (identified in previous study), 21 Brewster Street (identified in this study) and 31 Brewster Street (identified in this study). Several other examples cited above are more idiosyncratic, such as 2-4 Oriana Court (identified in this study), with a gabled roof rather than the characteristic flat roof, and 14 Brewster Street (HO165), with stark concrete block walls that hint at the emergence of the Brutalist style. Other examples listed above are more demonstrative of the sub-style showing the pervasive influence of Frank Lloyd Wright and the Prairie School, namely 33 Bournian Avenue (demolished) and 43 Woolart Street (included in this study).

As an example of two-storey modernist house in the characteristic form of an elevated box, with principal living areas upstairs and an integrated garage underneath, the subject building is mort pertinently comparable to the demolished example at 53 Willonga Road, and two extant ones at 43 Woolart Street and 21 Brewster Street, all of which similarly date from the mid-1960s rather than the earlier years of the decade.

Other local examples of the work of Ivan Anderson

Sylvetta Flats, 87 Baroda Street, Ascot Vale (1961) This three-storey block of flats is the only other example of Anderson's early work that has been identified in the City of Moonee Valley. While it has some broad characteristics in common with 13 Alfred Road, such as the block-like massing, integrated garages and wide multi-sash window bays, it is less intact (the original cream brickwork is now painted white) and incorporates some overt Featurist tendencies in its decorative brick spandrels and concrete block screen wall to the central staircase.	 *Source: Google StreetView*
House, 13 Church Street, Keilor (1962) Although located just outside the study area, in the adjacent City of Brimbank, this example of Anderson's residential work has much in common with 13 Alfred Road: the block-like massing, low roofline and broad eaves, and especially its asymmetrical façade with large windows and integrated garage at the lower level. The house still stands but has been much altered since 2010, including rendering of the face brickwork, replacement of original front windows, and the addition of a new front balcony	 *Source: Google StreetView, January 2010*

Recommendation:

That the whole of 13 Alfred Road, Essendon be included in the Heritage Overlay schedule.

Schedule:

External Paint Controls	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Solar Energy Controls	Yes
Fences and Outbuildings	No
Prohibited Uses	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No