Place name:	Holland Residence (former)
Address:	2-4 Oriana Court, Flemington
Place typology:	Residential
Construction date range:	1963
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:



2-4 Oriana Court, Flemington. Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, May 2022.

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

2-4 Oriana Court, Flemington, is a single-storey post-war modernist brick house on an elongated T-shaped plan with a broad low-pitched gabled roof. It was erected in 1963 for Kevin and Sheila Holland, to a design by architects Brine Wierzbowski Associates.

The significant features of the house include:

- The elongated T-shaped plan form
- The low-pitched spreading gabled roofline
- The distinctive façade with a blank brick wall crowned by a horizontal strip window along the gable end

How is it significant?

2-4 Oriana Court, Flemington, is of local architectural significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

2-4 Oriana Court, Flemington, is significant as an unusual and substantially intact example of an architect-designed modernist house of the early 1960s. While its stark face brickwork and generous windows are typical of the prevailing modernist style of the time, its low spreading roofline and particularly elongated plan form are more unusual at the local level. The former elements hint at the influence of Chancellor & Patrick, in whose office both John and Judith Brine had worked before entering into partnership with Mark Wierzbowski in 1960. The street façade, with a blank brick wall crowned by a multi-paned horizontal strip window along the shallow gable end, is a particularly distinctive feature. (Criterion E)

Description:

The former Holland Residence at 2-4 Oriana Court, Flemington, is a single-storey post-war modernist brick house with a low-pitched roof clad in red-painted cement tiles. Laid out on a T-shaped plan, the house has an asymmetrical street frontage dominated by a projecting front wing that has a broad gable end with full-width window bay along the eaves line, and a blank wall of beige brickwork below. The left side of the projecting wing has more conventional fenestration, with rectangular metal-framed sash windows, and a front door set into a recessed alcove at the far end. This abuts the garage, which has a roller shutter.

The property is enhanced by a setting that includes the original ribbon driveway (with two separate concrete paved paths flanking a central pebbled strip) and a front lawn with rock-edged garden beds containing low plantings.

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: pp.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 2-4 Oriana Court, Flemington, was erected in 1963 for health inspector and local politician Kevin Holland and his wife Sheila, to a design by the architectural firm of Brine Wiersbowski Associates.

Born in North Melbourne, Kevin Myles Stephen Holland (1910-1996) was the son of engineer and Labour politician J J Holland, who served as Member of the Legislative Assembly for Kensington for thirty years from 1925. Holland junior attended Holy Rosary Primary School in Kensington and St Mary's Christian Brothers College in West Melbourne before starting his career as a health inspector for the Victorian Heath Department (*Victoria Hansard* 15 October 1996, p.541). In November 1944, he enlisted with the Australian Army and served with the Victorian Line of Communications Area General Service branch until his discharge early the following year, when he resumed his departmental career. Holland's political career began in 1951, when he became Labour member for the Melbourne City Council: a position he held for the next quarter-century. In 1956, he took over from his father as member for Kensington and would hold that position for another decade.

During this period, Holland still resided with his parents in the family home at 56 O'Connell Street, Kensington. In 1963, aged in his early fifties, he became engaged to Anne Catherine Sheila Duffy (1913-2004), generally known as Sheila, and the couple purchased land in Oriana Court on which they intended to build their new home. The site, designated at Lot 5, formed part of a new cul-de-sac subdivision of eight residential allotments, created from what had previously been the Kent Street Tennis Courts. As this was one of the last new residential subdivisions in the area for some time, the allotments were promptly snapped up when they came up for auction in mid-1963 (*The Age*, 15 May 1963, p.27). To design his new house, Holland engaged the architectural firm of Brine Wierzbowski Associates.

The partnership of Brine Wierzbowski Associates was founded in 1960 by three recent graduates of the University of Melbourne: (Francis) John Brine (1935-2012), his wife Judith Brine (born 1937) and their Polish-born friend Zbigniew (Mark) Wierzbowski (1928-1988). From the mid-1950s, concurrently with his studies, John Brine had worked in the office of Chancellor & Patrick; after he married Judith towards the end of the decade, she joined him in the same practice. The couple left Chancellor & Patrick towards the end of 1960 to enter into partnership with Wierzbowski, who was then employed in the office of the University of Melbourne's Staff Architect. Their new practice, based in Oakleigh, went on to develop a high reputation for small-scale residential commissions, many of which were published in magazines and newspapers. In 1967, the Brines departed for extensive overseas travel and study (later settling in Adelaide), while Wierzbowski continued the Melbourne practice, under its original name, until his death in 1988.

Construction of the Hollands' new house in Oriana Court commenced some three months after the land auction, with the Melbourne City Council issuing a building permit on 17 September 1963 for a dwelling valued at £500 (MCC Building Permit No 36,494). Work was evidently completed in time for Holland and his new wife Sheila to take up residence after their marriage on 15 January 1964. In June of that year, a second building permit was issued for a shed, valued at £140 (MCC Building Permit No 37,036). Three years thence, Holland retired from the Victorian Legislative Assembly following the abolition of the seat that he and his father that successively occupied since 1925. Holland went on to serve as a commissioner of the City of Keilor and the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) and, in 1983, was made a member of the Order of Australia for his "outstanding service to local government". At that time, he and wife Sheila were still living in Oriana Court.

Sources:

Primary Sources

The Age, 15 May 1963, p.27
Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria, various.
"One the property: Oriana Court, Land, off Kent Street, Flemington", *Age*, 15 May 1963, p.27. [auction notice]
Melbourne City Council, Building Permit No 36,494, dated 17 September 1963. VPRS 17299, PROV, North Melbourne.
Victoria Hansard 15 October 1996, p.541

Secondary Sources

"Condolences: Kevin Myles Stephen Holland, Esq", *Victorian Parliamentary Debates*, 5 October 1996, p.541.
Philip Goad, "Brine Wierzbowski", in Philip Goad and Julie Willis (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.107.

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 Wierzbowski, 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, at 14 Brewster Street, is currently protected by an individual Heritage Overlay (HO).

While broadly comparable in date, these houses vary in their form, expression and finishes. Most are demonstrative of 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), 13 Alfred Road (identified in this study) and 21 Brewster Street (identified in this study).

By contrast, the subject building at 2-4 Oriana Court, Flemington, is rather more idiosyncratic in the City of Moonee Valley. While its stark brickwork and large windows bays are typical of any modernist house, its elongated L-shaped plan form and its uncommonly broad low-pitched gable roofline are more unusual at the local level. This distinctive mode of expression, which is clearly evident in a number of the firm's other houses of the same period (see following discussion, with photographs), hints at the influence of Chancellor & Patrick, in whose office both John and Judith Brine had worked before entering into partnership with Wierzbowski in 1960. One of very few recorded examples of Chancellor & Patrick's work in the City of Moonee Valley, a small brick house at 1 Elstone Court, Essendon North (1955), had some qualities in common with the former Chapman House, notably the low spreading gabled roof. It has since been demolished.

The former Chapman House has certain details in common with the contemporaneous house next door at No 1-3 Oriana Court, namely the broad low-pitched roofline with horizontal strip window along the gable end. While the latter was a project house of standardized design, rather than a bespoke one-off private commission, it was nevertheless architect-designed (by Nino Sydney) and is a sophisticated in its own right.

Other examples of the work of Brine Wierzbowski:

No other examples of the work of Brine Wierzbowski have yet been identified in the City of Moonee Valley. The firm, which was based in Oakleigh during the 1960s, is known to have undertaken numerous private residential commissions across the metropolitan area, but with a particular focus on the eastern and south-eastern suburbs (eg Doncaster, Box Hill, Burwood East, Clayton, Bentleigh East), as well as further afield (eg Kinglake, Dromana and Morwell)

The following are some examples of the firm's residential work outside the study area that are comparable to the subject building at 2-4 Oriana Court, Flemington, in terms of their date, expression and materials

Barrow Residence, 6 Theresa Street, Bentleigh East (1964) This house is comparable to the subject building for its elongated T-shaped plan, stark brickwork and broad low-pitched transverse gabled roofline. It is still standing in a substantially intact state and was shortlisted for inclusion in the City of Glen Eira's *Post-War & Hidden Gems Heritage Review* (2019)	 *Source: Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd*
Sommerville Residence, 3 Station Street, Mentone (1964) This house is also comparable to the subject building for its elongated T-shaped plan, stark brickwork and broad low-pitched transverse gabled roofline. It has been demolished.	 *Source: Wille Collection, State Library of Victoria*
Phillips Residence, 5 Pleasant View Crescent, Glen Waverley (1966) This house is also comparable to the subject building for its elongated L-shaped plan, stark brickwork and broad low-pitched transverse gabled roofline. Unlike the other examples illustrated above, it has horizontal strip windows, as also seen at 2-4 Oriana Court. The house is still standing.	 *Source: Wille Collection, State Library of Victoria*

Recommendation:

That the whole of 2-4 Oriana Court, Flemington, 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