

62 Napier Crescent, Essendon Statement of Significance

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| Heritage Place: | Dumbarton Flats | PS ref no: | HO499 |
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62 Napier Crescent, Essendon, principal residence (source: Context 2018)

What is significant?

62 Napier Crescent Essendon, a set of Post-War Moderne flats with Functionalist, Old English and Art Deco references, is significant. It was designed in 1948 by architect Leslie Edward Rowell for quarry master Cyril Hector Reid.

Significant elements include the:

- Original building form, roof forms, concrete Marseille tile roof forms and balconies;
- Face brick surfaces including dentil course, clinker brickwork, tapestry detailing;
- Pattern of fenestration, steel-framed casement windows, etched glass windows, iron balustrading on balconies;
- Early letter boxes.

The aluminium entrance assembly and recent replacement window frames are not significant.

How is it significant?

62 Napier Crescent Essendon is of local historical, architectural (representative), aesthetic and associative significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

Dumbarton Flats at 62 Napier Crescent Essendon is historically significant for its demonstration of the incentive by Essendon City Council to promote a middle-class and thoroughly modern residential development on the Peterleigh Estate. Subdivided just prior to World War II in 1938, the estate was

promoted as a brick area which sought to reinforce a more affluent type of development. The high quality of the design of Dumbarton flats are indicative of the intention of the estate to promote both a more middle class but also a more modern type of residential development that coincided with changing social conditions as higher density living became more common after World War II. (Criterion A)

62 Napier Crescent Essendon is architecturally significant as an example of post-war Moderne flats. Post war development and flats as a building typology are not well represented on the Heritage Overlay in Moonee Valley. Two particularly early examples of the style were built pre-war at 2-4 Sherbourne Street Essendon, c.1936 (HO279) and 2 Riverview Road Essendon, 1935 (VHR1160, HO108). Two further examples include houses built in 1940 at 93-95 Mooltan Street Travancore (HO75) and 34 Peterleigh Grove Essendon (HO97).

The Moderne style formed a distinct change from past architectural styles, combining aspects of Functional Modernism that were concerned with building form and structure, with a decorative approach to materials and detail. 62 Napier Crescent is one of a small cohort of Moderne buildings in Moonee Valley and is of high integrity with very few changes visible to original or early elements. The building retains its original building form, roof forms, balconies, some original steel windows, brickwork and glazing detail. (Criterion D)

62 Napier Crescent is aesthetically significant for its form, materials and details all present at a high level of integrity. Elements include the asymmetrical 'L' shaped massing around a central flat-roofed tower with deck. Integrated with the stepped plan are cantilevered concrete balconies fitted with iron balustrading and accessed via a pair of steel-framed glazed doors with sidelights. A level of decorative detail is provided by the brickwork that features a shadow line coping detail, a blind, round-arched window, a dentil course below the eaves forming a discrete frieze around the entire building. Several windows are glazed in etched glass with a late Art Deco pattern. The setting of the flats is enhanced by a several mature trees. (Criterion E)

62 Napier Crescent is significant for its association with Cyril Hector Reid, quarry master and later director of Reid's Quarries, North Essendon. Reid's Quarries that operated from the late 1930s to 1965 were suppliers of basalt, primarily for road building. As well as Dumbarton Flats, Cyril Reid also built the double-storey dwelling at 66 Napier Crescent in 1955. (Criterion H)

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