

Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of 42, 44, 46 Vasey Cres, Campbell) Notice 2008 (No 1)

Notifiable Instrument NI 2008 - 119

made under the

Heritage Act 2004 section 34 Notice of decision about provisional registration

1. Name of instrument

This instrument is the Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration for 42, 44, 46 Vasey Cres, Campbell) Notice 2008 (No 1)

2. Registration details of the place

Registration details of the place are at Attachment A: Provisional Register entry for 42, 44, 46 Vasey Cres, Campbell.

3. Reason for decision

The ACT Heritage Council has decided that 42, 44, 46 Vasey Cres, Campbell meet one or more of the heritage significance criteria at s 10 of the Heritage Act 2004. The provisional register entry is at Attachment A.

4. Date of Provisional Registration

21 April 2008.

5. Indication of council's intention

The council intends to decide whether to register the place under division 6.2.

6. Public consultation period

The Council invites public comment by 21 May 2008 on the provisional registration of 42, 44, 46 Vasey Cres, Campbell to

The Secretary
ACT Heritage Council
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2602

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Gerhard Zatschler
Secretary ACT Heritage Council
GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2602

21 April 2008



ACT Heritage Council

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**HERITAGE REGISTER
(Provisional Registration Details)**

Place

For the purposes of s. 33 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, an entry to the heritage register has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council for the following place:

- **42, 44, 46 VASEY CRESCENT at Campbell**

DATE OF PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

Notified: 21 April 2008 Notifiable Instrument: 2008-119

PERIOD OF EFFECT OF PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

Start Date: 21 April 2008 End Date: 21 September 2008

Extended Period (if applicable) Start Date _____ End Date _____

Copies of the Register Entry are available for inspection at the ACT Heritage Unit. For further information please contact:

The Secretary
ACT Heritage Council
GPO Box 144, Canberra, ACT 2601

Telephone: (02) 6207 6147 Facsimile: (02) 6207 2229

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PLACE

- **42, 44, 46 Vasey Crescent, Blocks 9, 10, Section 36, Suburb of Campbell, ACT.**

42 Vasey Crescent, Block 9, Section 36, Campbell
44 Vasey Crescent, Block 10, Section 36, Campbell
46 Vasey Crescent, Block 9, Section 36, Campbell

HISTORY OF THE PLACE

42, 44, 46 Vasey Crescent, Campbell, were designed by Roy Grounds, or Grounds, Romberg and Boyd in 1960. After Grounds received the commission to design the Victorian Arts Centre, Robin Boyd took over the managed of the Vasey Crescent group.

The following is an extract from an article in *Australian Home Beautiful*, December 1963: 5-11:
The land on which the houses were built was released for sale of leaseholds at the same time. One of the buyers was unknown to the other two and each had no specific brief, other than putting up a family home when he bid for the land.

Buyer of the first lot, at No 46 was Mr G Blakers, a senior civil servant. Second lot, at No 44 went to Dr B Griffing, a scientist from the USA, at present with the CSIRO in Canberra. Dr John Philip, another CSIRO scientist, bought No 42.

The three buyers later met casually on their blocks, and talked about building in general terms. Then each of them independently decided to commission the same architects (Grounds Romberg and Boyd) of Melbourne to build his home.

The architects naturally took up this opportunity to do some co-ordinated planning.

These three houses have a unity about them that the homes of the other good neighbourhoods lack, and an imagination that is sadly lacking in those other suburbs of Canberra that have unity – the drab uniformity of street after street of unvarying typed Government houses.

The Vasey Crescent trio have outstanding architectural lessons for those newest suburbs of Canberra where uncontrolled design and speculative building are producing a chaotic mixture of conventionally dull and stridently gimmicky houses characteristic of newer areas in other capital cities, but out of character with the generally conservative architecture of Canberra.

....Landscaping... This being beyond the architects brief, was tackled by the owners. All realised that the basic plan, whereby the view was shared by all, could fall down if tall growing and thick foliaged trees were planted on the forward slopes of the front gardens. So the Blakers, the Griffings and the Philips got together to agree on a co-ordinated garden plan that took this problem into account.

The houses were designed and built in 1960 – 61. No 42 was built by Civil and Civic, No 44 by Meli and Eglitis Pty. Ltd and No 46 by ACT Builders Pty. Ltd.
The houses received the RIAA twenty Five Year Award in 1998.

Metcalfe states that (2003:153):

Roy Grounds was an eclectic individualistic architect... By the late 1920s he was in the United States on a

travelling scholarship working in New York and Los Angeles, the latter at RKO Studios as a set designer. Upon his return to Melbourne he formed a partnership with Geoffrey Mewton that is now recognised as one of the early architectural practices to introduce Modernism to Australia. ... Between 1939 and 1942 Grounds, practising on his own, designed several significant apartment blocks. After the war he re-established his private practice and then from 1953 to 1962 was part of Grounds Romberg and Boyd, It was during this period that he produced the important Canberra works.... In 1959 Grounds won a commission to design the National Gallery of Victoria and Cultural Centre, and eventually left the partnership in 1962 to concentrate on this project which occupied him until his death in 1981, aged 76.

Grounds was recognised as one of Melbourne's and Australia's leading architects of the modern movement. He was awarded the RIAA Gold Medal in 1968 and knighted the same year.

The buildings at 42, 44, 46 Vasey Crescent, Campbell are one a of a small number of private residences that Grounds designed in Canberra. They exhibit aspects of his work that combine rational planning with the use of natural materials and explore the use of geometric forms. (Metcalf 2003:77)

Grounds is associated with the following buildings in Canberra:

- Australian Academy of Science, 1958
- Forrest Townhouses, 1960
- Holy Trinity Lutheran National Memorial Church, Turner, 1961
- Houses at 42, 44, 46 Vase Crescent, Campbell, 1960-61
- CSIRO Phytotron Building, Acton, 196
- 324 Cobby Street, Campbell, 1963-4
- ANU Botany Building, 1968

Major Works in Victoria include:

- Ranelagh, Mt Eliza, 1934-5
- Evan Price House, Essendon, 1935-6
- Bellaire Flats, St Kilda, 1936
- Moonbria Flats, Toorak, 1941
- Round House, Frankston, 1952
- Grounds House and Flats, Toorak, 1953-4
- National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1959-68
- Victorian Arts Centre, Melbourne, 1969-84

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE

As a result of collaboration between their respective owners these three adjacent houses were designed by the same architects, Grounds, Romberg and Boyd and built at about the same time as a co-ordinated group. The site is a spur running from Russell Hill on an east–west alignment, with a significant fall to the road. Each house is set perpendicular to the road and has a northerly aspect, but by a staggered site planning arrangement each also enjoys western views over the city centre. No 46 is sited nearest the road and No 42 the furthest away. As there is a minimum of dividing or enclosing fences a continuity of landscape setting is achieved, the well tended mature native gardens blending directly into the public open space on the hillside beyond the southern boundary.

The ground floor of each house is at the same level and materials, construction and building form are common to all three. Common design features include modular concrete masonry walls, timber framed window panels, flat roofs with metal decking, and overhanging eaves, slender verandah posts and strong rectilinear forms. Collectively these features create a unity and continuity of architectural character.

No 42 Vasey Crescent, Block 9, Section 36, Campbell

The building is planned on three levels on a site sloping north towards the street. Level 1 which is cut into

the hillside contains a large single garage, studio and storage. External stairs lead to Level 2, which is the main entry level. Access is via a timber balcony, which runs the full width of the front northern elevation. The double timber veneered doors open into a central living space, with a movable timber screen delineating the entry foyer. Glass doors lead from the rear of the living room to the rear garden and reserve. This level originally contained three bedrooms and a large laundry / workroom off which were a small bathroom and separate toilet. Two of the bedrooms now form a large study space. An open rise timber stair leads to level 3, which contains the main living rooms and commands the best views. The stairs rise centrally into an open plan living, dining and kitchen space facing north and west to capture sun and views. The master bedroom, with small ensuite, faces south. Both bedroom and living room open onto a small timber balcony facing the reserve.

Construction comprises concrete block cavity walls with natural finish inside and out. Windows and doors are full height timber framed, which are set out in panels over both upper floors, alternating with masonry panels. Internal doors and the extensive joinery units are ash veneer panels. Interior trim is kept to a minimum and there are no skirtings or architraves. Internal partition walls and all ceilings are clear finished timber board, end matched at ceiling / wall junctions. The roof is a flat metal deck with metal fascias all round. The roof overhangs on all sides – 1800mm on the east, west and north, and 900mm on the south. It is supported on thick timber posts, spaced at approximately 3m centres all round the building. The soffit lining is cut out on the northern side to admit light to the living areas and to relieve the effect of a heavy overhang at the building entry.

Renovations made in 2000 have ensured that the building has only been altered slightly, and do not impact on its heritage significance. The key changes were the external windows and doors, carefully replacing the dark-painted timber with modern black powder-coated models. The roof (with skylights inserted) and the wall and roof insulation have been replaced as have the timber decks. Internally, the wet areas throughout the house, and floors, have been replaced. Any other internal changes such as knocking bedrooms 3 and 4 into one room as a study (in 1977), have had any removed elements kept in storage so that if necessary the changes can be reversed.

The building is in good condition.

No 44 Vasey Crescent, Block 10, Section 36, Campbell

The building is planned on three levels. Level 1, set into the hillside, contains a single garage and store room. External stairs led to the main entry on Level 2, originally via an intermediate courtyard area. Level 2 contains a large open plan living and dining room with large windows looking east and north to capture views and sun. The kitchen, originally at the front, facing north was divided from the dining area by a servery unit, and a family room was located behind with a large easterly window. A half flight of stairs leads to Level 3 set to the rear and containing three bedrooms, study and bathroom. The two front bedrooms and stairway have clerestory windows facing north, above the level 2 roof.

Construction comprises concrete block cavity walls with natural finish. Windows and doors are full height timber framed. The roof is a flat metal deck with metal fascias all round. The roof overhangs on all sides, 900mm on the north and south, and 1800mm on the east and west, supported on timber posts at 3600 centres.

The building has been extended on three occasions. In 1973 a sunroom was added in the north west corner and the front door relocated to this level, with shower room and rumpus room tucked under the bedrooms above. In 1990 a master bedroom and ensuite were added to the rear of Level 3, facing the reserve, with a skillion roof rising to the north. In 1996 the kitchen was moved back into the family room area, and the dining room extended across the northern side. A small addition to the south provided space for a relocated laundry. Externally the additions generally match existing details. The master bedroom at the rear and the kitchen re-arrangement are generally hidden from public view and do not detract from the original building form. The sunroom addition somewhat lessens the crisp division of rectangular forms between the living areas and the upper level bedrooms and breaks the rhythm of posts supporting the wide roof overhang on the western side.

In 1992 a carport was added in front of the building on the western boundary. It is located at the same level as the original garage, is detailed to match the original building and is largely concealed by the mature planting.

In 1999 the building was rendered, a light sand coloured bagged finish being applied over the natural concrete blockwork. This has irretrievably altered the original external finish common to all three houses.

Externally the building appears in good condition. Timber windows and trim have been painted a light colour, rather than their original brown stain.

No 46 Vasey Crescent, Block 11, Section 36, Campbell

The building is planned on three levels. Level 1, set into the hillside, contains a single garage and store room. External stairs lead up under a wide roof overhang to the main entry on Level 2. This level is planned as a rectangle running north to south. A large L shape living dining room looks via large areas of glass to the north and west. The east facing kitchen is divided from the dining area by a servery unit and has access to the garden via a verandah.

The main bedroom with ensuite opens off the entry foyer. Access to level three is through a laundry workroom, which has access to the rear yard. A half flight of stairs lead to the children's wing on level three. This has the form of another crisp rectangle set perpendicular and half a level higher than level two. It contains a central play room, two small bedrooms on either side and a bathroom.

Construction comprises concrete block cavity walls with natural finish. Windows and doors are full height timber framed. Internal doors and the extensive joinery units are timber veneer panels. Interior trim is kept to a minimum and there are no skirtings or architraves. Ceilings are clear finished timber board The roof is a flat metal deck with metal fascias all round with overhangs on all sides - 900mm on the north and south, and 1800mm on the east and west, supported on timber posts at 3600 centres.

The least altered of the three houses until 2008, other than staining the brown timber work a blue/grey, changes and additions to the house to the house took place in April 2008, and consist of:

- a minor kitchen addition under the existing roof
- reinterpretation of an existing deck
- interior refurbishments while echoing the design character of the original. Removal / demolishing of significant timber wall linings and timber veneered joinery and doors are balanced by retaining a sample of these elements and re-using others elsewhere in the building
- a additional pavilion to the rear of the current building will reinforce its scale, form and rhythm

The building is in good condition.

General Description

The three buildings are in the Post War Melbourne Regional Style characterised by:

- steel roofing
- widely projecting eaves
- long, unbroken roofline
- narrow edge to roof
- verandah
- timber posts
- simple balustrades
- glass wall with regularly spaced timber mullions

Jennifer Taylor writes, of Post War Melbourne Regional Style (1990:13-14):

The post-war shortage of money and materials was sensibly met by rigorous planning and the use of cheap substitute materials such as asbestos cement sheeting and chipboard. This led to a new, low key aesthetic, which, when combined with minimal interference to natural bush sites, resulted in an inexpensive, unassuming but sensible house type.

This style is best represented elsewhere in Canberra in Ground's Forrest Townhouses, 1959, which display many similar details within a medium density development of 7 attached dwellings.

Other Canberra houses in the Post War Melbourne Regional Style include:

Fenner House, Red Hill, by Robin Boyd, 1954

Manning Clarke House, Forrest, by Robin Boyd, 1954

This style combined with characteristics of Post War International Style is evident in Grounds' buildings at 4 and 24 Cobby Street, Campbell, although the latter building has been substantially altered.

Other elements which are important to the integrity of the buildings include the open planning of main living areas, the interior opening up to the landscape, the timber veneer lining boards and panels, the extensive joinery and the fine detailing of materials and finishes.

STATEMENT ABOUT THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE

The buildings and their landscape setting at 42, 44, 46 Vasey Crescent, Campbell are significant for their architectural and design qualities.

The buildings are excellent examples of Post War Melbourne Regional Style and display typical characteristics of the style. Nos 42 and 44 have been altered, though not so as to affect significance, No 46 was unaltered at the time of listing (2008). All three buildings are in good condition.

The buildings present a rare example of individual owners collaborating to achieve a unified architectural character for domestic dwellings on adjacent sites in a Canberra suburb. They are important for the way they were designed, as a group, by Melbourne firm Grounds, Romberg and Boyd, with a consistency of style, form and materials, while responding to individual owner requirements. The buildings are unified by a landscape of native plants with continuity across the three sites and into adjoining bushland.

Sir Roy Grounds was celebrated as one of Australia's foremost architects of the modern movement. This is a good example of his work and one of only a few examples of his explorations in these styles in Canberra.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Pursuant to s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, a place or object has heritage significance if it satisfies one or more of the following criteria. Significance has been determined by research as accessed in the references below. Future research may alter the findings of this assessment.

- (a) it demonstrates a high degree of technical or creative achievement (or both), by showing qualities of innovation, discovery, invention or an exceptionally fine level of application of existing techniques or approaches;**

This place does not meet this criterion.

- (b) it exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group;**

The houses are excellent examples of Post War Melbourne Regional Style, by Melbourne firm, Grounds, Romberg and Boyd, exhibiting typical characteristics such as:

- widely projecting eaves
- long, unbroken roofline
- narrow edge to roof
- verandah
- timber posts
- simple balustrades
- glass wall with regularly spaced timber mullions

The following design features are of additional significance:

- split level design to accommodate orientation and slop
- open planning of living rooms
- timber veneered plywood sheeting and boarding
- extensive interior joinery
- well resolved, yet simple detailing of materials and finishes

These houses are very good examples of this Post War Melbourne Regional Style, as identified and awarded by the RAIA.

The houses are rare Canberra examples of owners collaborating to achieve a group of houses with consistency of form, style and materials on adjacent blocks, together with an integrated landscaping plan.

(c) it is important as evidence of a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function that is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost or is of exceptional interest;

This place does not meet this criterion.

(d) it is highly valued by the community or a cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations;

This place does not meet this criterion.

(e) it is significant to the ACT because of its importance as part of local Aboriginal tradition

This criterion is not applicable.

(f) it is a rare or unique example of its kind, or is rare or unique in its comparative intactness

This place does not meet this criterion.

(g) it is a notable example of a kind of place or object and demonstrates the main characteristics of that kind

This place does not meet this criterion.

(h) it has strong or special associations with a person, group, event, development or cultural phase in local or national history

The buildings are significant for their association with their architect, Sir Roy Grounds.

Sir Roy Grounds (1905-81) is recognised as one of Australia's leading architects of the modern movement and a key practitioner of the Post War Melbourne Regional Style He was awarded the RAIA Gold medal in 1968 and knighted the same year. The buildings at 42, 44, 46 Vasey Crescent, Campbell are part of only a

few private residential commissions undertaken by Grounds in Canberra during a five year period 1958–63.

- (i) it is significant for understanding the evolution of natural landscapes, including significant geological features, landforms, biota or natural processes**

This criterion is not applicable.

- (j) it has provided, or is likely to provide, information that will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of the natural or cultural history of the ACT because of its use or potential use as a research site or object, teaching site or object, type locality or benchmark site**

As excellent examples of Post War Melbourne Regional Style in their original landscape setting, the buildings provides a valuable resource in providing a wider understanding of the style and the work of Roy Grounds, and as an early exercise in co-ordinated planning and landscaping.

- (k) for a place—it exhibits unusual richness, diversity or significant transitions of flora, fauna or natural landscapes and their elements**

This criterion is not applicable.

- (l) for a place—it is a significant ecological community, habitat or locality for any of the following:**
- (i) the life cycle of native species;**
 - (ii) rare, threatened or uncommon species;**
 - (iii) species at the limits of their natural range;**
 - (iv) distinct occurrences of species.**

This criterion is not applicable.

FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE

The physical features of the 42, 44, 46 Vasey Crescent, Campbell, that particularly reflect its heritage significance are:

- external built fabric and details, including metal deck roofing, metal profiled fascias, timber boarded eave linings, unpainted concrete block walls, timber eave and verandah posts, timber window walls, timber balustrades.
- elements of the internal floor plan, including the point of entry and foyer, unpainted concrete blockwork, clear finished timber veneer panels and boarding to walls and ceilings, timber veneer doors and stable doors, joinery units.
- the siting relationship between the three residences in terms of relative setbacks and heights.
- the Australian native landscape setting

REASON FOR PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

42, 44, 46 Vasey Crescent, Campbell, has been assessed against the heritage significance criteria and been found to have heritage significance against 3 criteria under the ACT Heritage Act.

APPLICABLE HERITAGE GUIDELINES

The Heritage Guidelines adopted under s27 of the *Heritage Act* 2004 are applicable to the conservation of 42, 44, 46 Vasey Crescent, Campbell.

The guiding conservation objective is that 42, 44, 46 Vasey Crescent, Campbell, shall be conserved and appropriated managed in a manner respecting its heritage significance and the features intrinsic to that heritage significance, and consistent with a sympathetic and viable use or uses. Any works that have a potential impact on significant fabric (and / or other heritage values) shall be guided by a professionally documented assessment and conservation policy relevant to that area or component (i.e. a Statement of Heritage Effects – SHE).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Draft provisional registration entry was released for public comment on 22 April 2008 and period for public comment closes on 22 May 2008.

2. REFERENCES

Apperly, R, R Irving and P Reynolds 1989 *Identifying Australian Architecture Styles and Terms from 1788 to Present*, pp 218-221, Angus & Robertson.

Australian Home Beautiful, December 1963: 5-11.

Grounds, Romberg & Boyd, 1960 Original Working Drawings & Specifications

Metcalf, A 2003 *Canberra Architecture*, Landmark Press, Item Q15,42

Miles, M 2008 www.canberrahouse.com/houses/1960s-house-profiles/42-44-and-46-vasey-crescent-campbell-1960/

Royal Australian Institute of Architects Register of Significant Twentieth Century Buildings, Citation No. R057.

Taylor, J 1990 *Australian Architecture Since 1960*, RAI.A.

3. PHOTOGRAPHS AND PLANS

Figure 1. Front view of 42 Vasey Cres, Campbell



(www.canberrahouse.com/houses/1960s-house-profiles/42-44-and-46-vasey-crescent-campbell-1960)

Figure 2. Location of 42, 44, 46 Vasey Cres, Campbell

