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## PROPOSED HERITAGE LISTING OF 33 YOUNG STREET, WAHROONGA

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To have Council consider the proposed heritage listing of 'Wainberg House', the property known as 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, on Schedule 5 of the Ku-ring-gai Local Environmental Plan 2015 ('KLEP 2015').

**BACKGROUND:**

On 8 December 2020 Council resolved to make an Interim Heritage Order ('IHO') for 33 Young Street, Wahroonga using delegated authority, which was gazetted on 11 December 2020.

On 16 March 2021, Council resolved to undertake an internal inspection of the property, which is scheduled for Wednesday, 31 March 2021.

**COMMENTS:**

Council has commissioned architect and heritage consultant, Dr Scott Robertson of Robertson and Hindmarsh Pty. Ltd. to prepare a heritage assessment for the property known 33 Wahroonga Avenue, Wahroonga. The assessment considers that the property meets the threshold for local heritage listing.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That a Planning Proposal be prepared and submitted for the listing of 'Wainberg House', the property known as 33 Young Street, Wahroonga.

## PURPOSE OF REPORT

To have Council consider the proposed heritage listing of 'Wainberg House', the property known as 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, on Schedule 5 of the Ku-ring-gai Local Environmental Plan 2015 ('KLEP 2015').

## BACKGROUND

On Wednesday, 14 October 2020 the property known as 33 Young Street, Wahroonga was brought to the attention of Council officers by a community member who identified the house as an *almost completely intact example of the International Style of architecture, with extensive original interiors designed and crafted by Paul Kafka*. The community member expressed his concern for the property's vulnerability, which was [at the time] being advertised for sale and not within a Heritage Conservation Area ('HCA').

On Thursday, 22 October 2020, the potential vulnerability of the property was discussed with the Heritage Reference Committee ('HRC'). The HRC sought further information in relation to the dwelling before making a recommendation. On Thursday, 26 November 2020, a preliminary heritage assessment of 33 Young Street, Wahroonga (**Attachment A1**) was provided to the HRC. Based on preliminary findings of the assessment; the HRC agreed that an Interim Heritage Order ('IHO') should be invoked in this instance.

Council has delegated authority under s.25 of the *NSW Heritage Act 1977* ('Heritage Act') to make an IHO on the property. The purpose of an IHO being to provide Council with time to undertake an independent heritage assessment of the property to establish if it warrants formal heritage listing.

On 8 December 2020, the matter was raised at the OMC. At this meeting, Council resolved:

*That Council resolve to place an Interim Heritage Order under section 25 of the NSW Heritage Act 1977 on 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, Lot 32 DP12371, to enable a full and proper evaluation of the heritage significance and prevent any harm to the site in the interim. [See **Attachment A2**].*

On 11 December 2020 the IHO came into effect. The wording of the IHO is as follows:

*"This Interim Heritage Order will lapse six months from the date that it is made unless the local Council has passed a resolution before that date; and*

- (i) in the case of an item which, in the council's opinion, is of local significance, the resolution seeks to place the item on the heritage schedule of a local environmental plan with appropriate provisions for protecting and managing the item; or*
- (ii) In the case of an item which, in the Council's opinion, is of State heritage significance, the resolution requests the Heritage Council to make a recommendation to the Minister for Heritage under section 32(2) of the Heritage Act to include the item on the State Heritage Register."* (See **Attachment A3**).

## Item GB.17

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Under the above conditions of the IHO, the order will lapse on 11 June 2021 unless Council passes a resolution to list the item on the Schedule 5 of the KLEP 2015 to protect and manage the item, or it nominates the item for inclusion on the State Heritage Register. A flowchart of the IHO process can be viewed at **Attachment A4**.

On Tuesday, 16 March 2021, the matter was raised at OMC and it was deferred for a site inspection of the property.

**COMMENTS**

A site inspection has been facilitated by the property owners and is scheduled for Wednesday, 31 March 2021 to be attended by Councillors and relevant Council staff. One of the property owners is expected to be present and assist during the inspection.

**The NSW Heritage Assessment Criterion**

A heritage item is a place, which may include built structures, landscapes, moveable objects and relics, that have recognised cultural significance. In NSW, heritage items of local significance are assessed against seven (7) criterion:

- A. Historical significance – an item is important in the course, or pattern, of the cultural or natural history of the local area;*
- B. Historical association significance – an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance to the local area's cultural or natural history;*
- C. Aesthetic significance – an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in the local area;*
- D. Social significance – an item has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in the local area, for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;*
- E. Technical/Research significance – an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the local area's scientific, cultural or natural history;*
- F. Rarity – an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the local area's cultural or natural history; and*
- G. Representativeness – an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of the local area's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments.*

**33 Young Street, Wahroonga – Heritage Assessment**

The full heritage assessment for Wainberg House – 33 Young Street, Wahroonga was prepared by Robertson and Hindmarsh Pty. Ltd. Dr Scott Robertson of this firm is a registered architect, who specialises in Post-war and Modern architecture. The final draft heritage assessment was provided to Council officers on 13 February 2021 (**Attachment A5**). The assessment found that the property is of local heritage significance and should be included as a heritage item on Schedule 5 of the KLEP 2015.

The Statement of Significance prepared by Robertson and Hindmarsh Pty. Ltd. for 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, expounds this importance. It reads:

*As a good example of International style architecture, 33 Young Street Wahroonga has historic and aesthetic significance and representative value at a Local level. These same values are evident internally through the building's strong association with the designer of its high-quality interiors, Paul Kafka, as a fine and intact example of the work of the famed*

*émigré designer and furniture maker. The planning of the house is also significant at a Local level as it demonstrates the planning of a house designed to accommodate live-in servants for the wealthy immigrant Middle Class.*

*In addition to aesthetic significance, the interior of 33 Young Street Wahroonga demonstrates rarity as a particularly intact and high-quality example of the interior design of Paul Kafka still located in its original setting, of which there appear to be few comparable known examples. This significance is potentially at a State level with regard to intact post-war interiors designed/constructed by émigré designers.*

*33 Young Street, Wahroonga, has historical significance at a local level for its ability to demonstrate patterns of European immigration in the inter-war and post-war periods following the series of conflicts in Europe.*

In support of the recognised heritage value, it is recommended that Council prepare a planning proposal to include Wainberg House – 33 Young Street, Wahroonga on Schedule 5 of the KLEP 2015. To support the Planning Proposal a State Heritage Inventory form will also be prepared.

## INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING

Theme 3: Places, Spaces and Infrastructure

Community Strategic Plan Long Term Objective	Delivery Program Term Achievement	Operational Plan Task
Ku-ring-gai's heritage is protected, promoted and responsibly managed.	Strategies, plans and processes are in place to effectively protect and preserve Ku-ring-gai's heritage assets.	Implement, monitor and review Ku-ring-gai's heritage planning controls including the development of a heritage strategy.

## GOVERNANCE MATTERS

This report addresses the first stage in obtaining a Gateway Determination for a Planning Proposal which seeks to list an item of local heritage significance under an amendment to Schedule 5 of the KLEP 2015. If the Planning Proposal is supported by the Department, the Planning Proposal will be placed on exhibition seeking further State agency and stakeholder feedback prior to being reported back to Council to decide if the property should be formally listed.

The process for the preparation and implementation of planning proposals is governed by the provisions of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979*. Council will seek the plan-making delegation under Section 3.36(2) of the EP&A Act to finalise the Planning Proposal.

Under the Ministerial Direction Local Planning Panels Direction – Planning Proposals and the delegations granted to the General Manager it is proposed this matter will not be referred to Ku-ring-gai Local Planning Panel on the basis the proposed heritage listing is for an existing house within an established low density residential zone and the proposed heritage listing will not have any significant adverse impact on the environment or adjoining land.



## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

There is a community expectation that places of heritage significance within the Ku-ring-gai Council LGA will be identified and protected. There is a strategic risk of damaging the reputation of Council if these culturally significant places are not identified and considered for protection.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The cost of preparing this report is covered by the Ku-ring-gai draft Principal Local Environmental Plan - Urban Planning & Heritage Budget – Strategy and Environment Department.

## **SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The identification and protection of Ku-ring-gai's heritage places contributes to the ongoing conservation of Ku-ring-gai's community-valued historic landscape and garden suburbs.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The retention and conservation of heritage places has an important role in protecting the environment. The environmental sustainability benefits afforded by the retention of heritage places includes the substantial reduction in building demolition and new construction waste, and the conservation of embodied energy in the existing buildings.

## **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

As part of making the Interim Heritage Order for the site, the IHO was published in the NSW Government Gazette on 11 December 2020. Council advised the property owner on 11 December 2020 that the order had been approved and published in the NSW Government Gazette.

The purpose of the IHO was to enable a full assessment of the property's heritage significance to be conducted. Council representatives and Dr Scott Robertson visited the property and met with the representatives of the property owner's representative on 3 February 2021.

The property owner's representative was notified of this report going before Council and will be further notified and have the opportunity to provide feedback if Council supports its listing in a planning proposal during the formal exhibition period.

Should the Planning Proposal receive a favourable Gateway Determination, it will be exhibited in accordance with the Department's Gateway Determination requirements and with explanatory heritage information. This will involve appropriate notification and receipt of submissions on the draft Planning Proposal from the relevant State agencies and the general community, and a further report back to Council regarding this matter.

## **INTERNAL CONSULTATION**

Consultation with relevant Departments of Council has taken place in preparing this report, in particular, Development and Regulation. In addition, Council's Heritage Reference Committee has reviewed the proposed heritage item and moved a unanimous decision to support the listing.

## SUMMARY

An assessment of heritage significance supports the findings that Wainberg House – 33 Young Street, Wahroonga is worthy of inclusion on Schedule 5 of the KLEP 2015. The purpose of this report is to instigate Council's commencement of a Planning Proposal in relation to this listing.






## RECOMMENDATION:

That a Planning Proposal to list 'Wainberg House' - 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, as a local heritage item, be prepared and submitted for a Gateway Determination under section 3.34 of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979.

Vanessa Holtham  
Heritage Planner Specialist

Antony Fabbro  
Manager Urban & Heritage Planning

Andrew Watson  
Director Strategy & Environment

<b>Attachments:</b>	A1	Preliminary Heritage Assessment - 33 Young Street Wahroonga	2020/325457
	 A2	20201208 OMC OMC247 - 33 Young Street Wahroonga	2020/371471
	 A3	Government Gazette 11 December 2020 - Interim Heritage Order - 33 Young Street Wahroonga	2021/053633
	 A4	Flowchart for making an interim heritage order IHO - extract	2014/093475
	 A5	NSW Heritage Branch Local Government Handbook Guidelines	
	 A5	Heritage Assessment - 33 Young Street Wahroonga - redacted version	2021/053212

**Preliminary Heritage Assessment: 33 Young Street, Wahroonga**

***November 2020***

**Lot 32 DP12371**

**Zoned R2 under KLEP2015**

33 Young Street, Wahroonga is a c1950 two-storey International style residence with interiors designed by the renowned furniture maker and designer Paul Kafka.

The house was originally designed for Michael Wainberg, a dyer from Annandale. Wainberg and his brother Alexander immigrated from Radom, Poland sometime in the 1920s, with Michael applying for naturalisation in 1933. His brother resided elsewhere in Ku-ring-gai at the prominent residence "Meadowlea" at 22 Sydney Road, East Lindfield from 1955-1972.



October 2020 real estate images from: <https://www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-nsw-wahroonga-134579318>

**History of the site**

This land was part of an early 2000-acre crown grant to John Terry Hughes in 1842. A substantial residential subdivision of relevant land occurred in 1922 under DP11230, into large acre lots. In September 1923, the NSW Realty Co Limited acquired lots 16 to 33 of this estate, totalling over 17 acres in size. NSW Realty Co Limited promptly re-subdivided the land under the current plan, DP12371, known as the "Brundah Park Estate." The subject site officially came into being at this point, as lot 32, at a size of 39 perches.

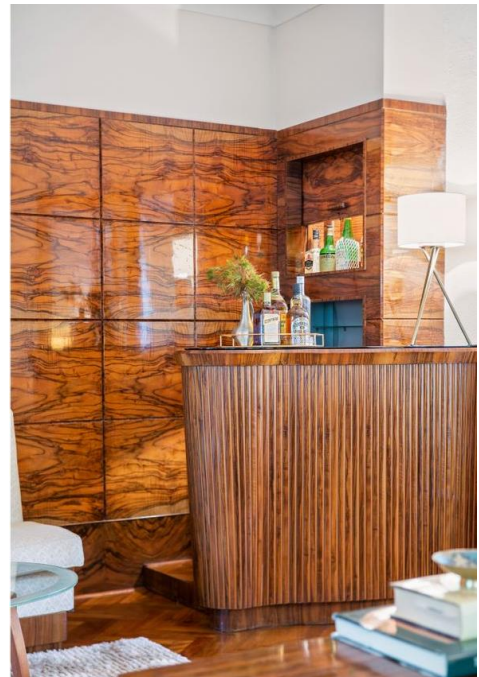
Lot 32 was not transferred to a new owner until January 1943, when it was first acquired by Alexander Wainberg and Michael Wainberg, both of Annandale, Dyers, as joint tenants. The 1943 aerials clearly show the subject lot as empty, but indicate that the sparse development around the

site was increasing. The Wainbergs, Polish-Jewish brothers immigrated from Radom, Poland in 1928, with Michael applying for naturalisation in 1933. His application for naturalisation notes his name was Mieczyslaw Wainberg, known as Michael Wainberg. In July 1949, the lot was transferred to the said Michael Wainberg of Annandale, Dyer, as sole proprietor.



In 1950, M Wainberg lodged a BA (#1713) for a brick dwelling in Young Street, Wahroonga, Lot #32.

Though the architect of this house is presently unknown, the interior designer for this residence was Paul Kafka, a highly significant designer and furniture maker.





October 2020 real estate images from: <https://www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-nsw-wahroonga-134579318>

In January 1971, the property was transferred to Terence Joseph Wilson of Mosman, Dental surgeon and Veronica Maxine Wilson, his wife as joint tenants.

In May 1974, the property was transferred to John Fisher of Wahroonga, Company Director and Gladys Cynthia Fisher, his wife as joint tenants.

In June 1979, the property was transferred to Cedric George Holden of Wahroonga, chartered accountant and Patricia Mary Holden, his wife as tenants in common. No further transfers were recorded before a new (inaccessible) certificate of title was issued in 1979.

### **Significance of the designer**

Paul Kafka was a significant interior designer and furniture designer who played an important role in the Modern Movement, through his collaboration with famed émigré architects like Harry Seidler, Hugh Buhrich, Hugo Stossel and others. The following biography of Kafka has been excerpted from the Design and Art Australian Online database:

*"The son of a Viennese furniture maker Paul Ernst Kafka was born in Vienna on 1 July 1907 [1]. Experience in his father's factory and an apprenticeship in another Viennese furniture factory gave him a good grounding in the more practical aspects of furniture making, but he is also said to have studied furniture and interior design at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna].*

*During the 1930s Kafka worked as a furniture and interior designer with a furniture retail store in Vienna and in 1939 he and his wife emigrated to Australia. Kafka worked for the redoubtable Ralph Symonds, an entrepreneurial Sydney plywood manufacturer, before establishing a small furniture factory in 187 William Street, Darlinghurst, in 1941. About 1945 Kafka moved to larger premises at 161 Botany Road, Waterloo where he employed four tradesmen, two Italians and two Australians. His company was listed in 1948 directories as a 'Manufacturer of Modern Exclusive Furniture' and from 1951 to 1967 was registered with the New South Wales Furniture Manufacturers' Guild (formed 1948) as 'Paul Kafka Exclusive Furniture Pty Ltd'.*

*In the 1950s and 60s Kafka exhibited regularly at the Ideal Homes Show and the Building Information Centre in Sydney and at the height of his business in the late 50s was employing about 40 staff]. During the 1960s, as imports competed with locally-made furniture, Kafka concentrated on work for hotels such as the Sheraton and the Chevron and for the Travelodge motel chain. He died in Sydney on 15 May 1972.*

*Kafka's clientele ranged from private home owners to architects and interior decorators to corporations, but what distinguished many of his clients were their European origins. Like Kafka, many were also Jewish refugees from war-torn Europe and there was a particular concentration of these clients in Sydney's eastern suburbs. Apart from their common European heritage what attracted many to Kafka's work was its stylishness and fine craftsmanship, qualities that were part of a strong tradition in European cabinet-making, but were less common in Australian post-war furniture.*

*Kafka produced furniture, particularly built-in cabinet work, for a number of Sydney's European-born architects, themselves amongst the small group of pioneering modernists practising in Australia at the time. Harry Seidler was a notable early client. Like Kafka, Seidler and his parents, Max and Rose, were Viennese and no doubt these shared origins, as well as a common interest in modernist concepts, helped reinforce their professional relationship.*

*Kafka completed built-in and freestanding furniture for Seidler's landmark 'Rose Seidler' house (Wahroonga, 1948-50, now managed by the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales) and for several other Seidler projects. Kafka also worked with the late Hugh Buhrich, a German-born architect whose idiosyncratic form of modernism is belatedly receiving the recognition it deserves. Henry Epstein, another of Sydney's early émigré modernists, commissioned Kafka to create furniture for a number of his houses, notably the Chaim and Florence Hillman house in Roseville in 1950 (4). Kafka's cabinet work for this radical, flat-roofed cubic design was largely intact when the house was sold in 1995 amid much media attention. Kafka's own house, a flat-roofed, concrete and glass essay in modernism in suburban Roseville, was designed about 1950 by Hungarian-born Hugo Stossel. Described as a 'functional house that is different' in the May 1952 issue of Australian House & Garden, it featured much beautifully-detailed cabinet work by Kafka.*

*According to Neil Sear, a cabinet-maker who worked for Kafka from 1948 to 1966, Kafka was a very astute businessman and played an important entrepreneurial role in the operation of the company. He was also very fastidious and insisted on traditional construction techniques and a high level of hand finishing. While Kafka had some training in design it seems he employed designer/draftsmen to produce art work for the firm and to draw up designs for interiors and individual pieces.*

*During the 1950s a Dutch designer, Alfons Worms, worked for Kafka and in the 1960s he employed George Surtees, a Hungarian-born designer. Kafka's working method, according to Surtees, was to meet with clients and then provide the designer with a rough sketch of the client's requirements for further interpretation and development.*

*While Kafka's furniture can often be identified by a company label, his distinctive use of highly-figured veneers is also a characteristic distinguishing feature. Kafka's favoured timbers included Italian walnut and burr elm, stripy zebrana, Macassar ebony and sapele wood, as well as sycamore, Queensland maple and silver ash. Borders of distinctive crossbanding were a common feature of both built-in and freestanding cabinet work with the occasional inclusion of marquetry patterns and decorative motifs, as in the Powerhouse Museum's stylish cocktail cabinet of 1954.*

*Kafka's love of patterned veneers was no doubt influenced by the strong Austrian tradition of using highly figured woods to enliven otherwise relatively plain, functional designs, a tradition that extended from the Biedermeier period of the first half of the 19th century through to furniture designed by members of the Wiener Werkstätte in the early years of the 20th century and the Art Deco style of the inter-war years. Indeed, the strongly geometric design of much of Kafka's furniture of the 1940s and 50s remained firmly rooted in the European Art Deco or 'art moderne' style prevalent during the late 1920s and 1930s when his career in Austria was just emerging. Furniture such as the cocktail cabinet and Kafka's tiered, mirror glass-topped coffee tables, and interiors like the Vaucluse dining room of the late 50s with its dramatic asymmetrical geometry [5] owe an obvious debt to the inter-war 'modernist' aesthetic. Kafka's Austrian heritage and his penchant for decorative veneers largely inured him to the fashion for the blonde timbers and organic forms of Scandinavian design in the post-war years.*

*Paul Kafka's furniture may not have reflected the latest international design trends and may have been subject to a certain 'overstatement' at times, but it nevertheless contributed immeasurably to the richness of Australia's post-war furniture industry. In a country only just beginning to emerge from its pre-war isolation, Kafka's stylish, sophisticated and well-crafted cabinet work acted as an important conduit for the transmission of European styles and standards of craftsmanship to Australia."*

**Comparative analysis with other Kafka designed interiors:**

Paul Ernst Kafka's work initially focused in the 1950s and 1960s on furniture and interior designs for residential use, as demonstrated in his regular exhibitions at the Ideal Homes Show and Building Information Centre in Sydney. Into the 1960s, Kafka began to focus more on securing work for hotels to ensure reliable business during a time when international imports made the market particularly competitive.

Given the movable and ephemeral nature of Kafka's furniture designs, it is those buildings which possess both built-in furniture and other interior designs, finishes and fittings that are of most relevance to a comparative analysis for 33 Young Street. On the basis of available information and surviving evidence of Kafka's work, it appears this property is one of only a few identified as retaining relatively intact internal designs. Pending an in-depth assessment following internal inspection of the interiors of the house, the significance of this property may be further underscored.

**40 Findlay Avenue, Roseville**, also known as "Hillman House" (located in Willoughby LGA) is a Henry Epstein designed modernist house which had significant Kafka interiors.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, substantial portions of important built-in furniture were removed prior to the heritage listing of the house. However, in June 2010, Willoughby City Council denied an application that posed further removal of significant internal elements designed by Kafka (joinery, staircase), which has set a precedent for the protection of Modernist interiors in heritage items. This item reflects the significance of the Kafka interiors (especially in conjunction with the work of an émigré architect) and the prominence of Kafka, even where extant interior designs are only partially intact. Given that 33 Young Street retains both built in furniture and significant internal elements like joinery, it is a more intact and likely more rare example.

**11 Eton Road, Lindfield**, also known as "Kafka House" (located in Ku-ring-gai LGA) is a house designed by Hugo Stossell for Paul Kafka himself, which accordingly had extensive Kafka interiors.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, by the time this modernist house was flagged to Ku-ring-gai Council, the significant interiors had been stripped. Given that this was the main reason the house was flagged to Council by the community, it was not listed after its assessment. This reflects the significance of Kafka interiors which in this case determined the fate of the building. This further underscores the significance and rarity of Kafka interiors in Ku-ring-gai given this substantial loss in the designer's own home and the hands of later owners.

**1 Ailsa Close, East Lindfield**, also known as "Fogl House" (located in Ku-ring-gai LGA) is a house built 1970-1971 to a design by Frank Lloyd Wright purchased by the owner in the USA, with extensive Paul Kafka designed interiors. This dwelling is presently not listed but will be considered in an upcoming Ku-ring-gai Post-War Heritage Study as it appears highly likely to meet the threshold for at least local listing. Though not listed, given the tight-knit ownership of this house over time, it appears to have interiors that are even more intact than those at 33 Young Street.

**71 Clissold Road, Wahroonga**, also known as Rose Seidler House (located in Ku-ring-gai LGA) is a state-listed heritage item built in 1950 to a design by Harry Seidler for his mother Rose. It is considered a highly influential, seminal work in Modernist architecture in Australia. Seidler engaged

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<sup>1</sup> "Hillman House" by Sydney Living Museums: <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/documenting-nsw-homes/hillman-house>

<sup>2</sup> Internal Ku-ring-gai Council records.

Kafka to fabricate furniture for this house based on Seidler's own designs – items included the dining table, coffee table, tray-mobile, sofa and fitted cabinetry.<sup>3</sup> Though built to Seidler's designs rather than being Kafka originals like at 33 Young Street, these are extremely significant interiors as reflected through the state listing of the item, and memorialize the significant contributions of émigré architects and designers in Sydney in this period,

**12 Serpentine Parade, Vaucluse** (located in Woollahra LGA) was refurbished by Polish Architect Henry Kurzer in 1959 with interiors (specifically custom-made furniture and cabinetry) by Paul Kafka.<sup>4</sup> The house was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Moses, retailers. The house retained the Kafka interiors until 1991 when it was refurbished, at which time several elements of the interior were auctioned and acquired by the Historic Houses Trust. Though no longer intact and not listed as a result, this case demonstrates the significance of the Kafka interior designs as reflected by the acquisition of his work by an important institution like the HHT (now Sydney Living Museums).

Other known projects of Kafka – of which evidence survives to varying extents – include 19/123 Macleay Street Potts Point, of which the Powerhouse Museum holds 7 drawings of different furniture items and lounge room elements, and 861 New South Head Road, Rose Bay, which contained some items of significant internal furniture still in 2011 when a major DA was lodged for the remodelling of the property.<sup>5</sup> It would appear that both of these addresses have since lost their Kafka designed interiors with items destroyed, resold or acquired by museums. This would also appear to be the case with the large amount of cabinetry Kafka design for hotel chains in Sydney as illustrated below, given the changeable and trend-driven nature of hotel interiors.<sup>6</sup> The above projects listed indicate the relative scarcity of intact Kafka interiors and the increasing threat that such examples of his work are under. The comparative assessment supports proceeding with a heritage listing for 33 Young Street, Wahroonga.

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<sup>3</sup> "A new way of Living" by Sydney Living Museums: <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/stories/new-way-living>

<sup>4</sup> "Serpentine Parade House" by Sydney Living Museums: <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/documenting-nsw-homes/serpentine-parade-house>

<sup>5</sup> "Furniture designs by Paul Kafka" by MAAS: <https://collection.maas.museum/object/53457> ; DA 678/2010/1 Woollahra Municipal Council Application Assessment Panel report - 861 New South Head Road, Vaucluse (online)

<sup>6</sup> "Sydney's Forgotten Mid-century Modernists" by Shelley Gare in the Australian Financial Review, 31 October 2020: <https://www.afr.com/life-and-luxury/arts-and-culture/sydneys-forgotten-midcentury-modernists-20170719-gxehcb>





Max Dupain & Associates image of Kafka cabinetry in hotel chain from AFR "Sydney's Forgotten Mid-century Modernists."

### **Preliminary heritage assessment against heritage listing criteria**

Based on an initial assessment, the dwelling is considered to have high potential to meet the threshold for listing, based on the standard criterion for listing outlined by the Heritage Council of New South Wales. In particular, the house appears likely to have significant historical, associational, aesthetic and rarity values.

- a) an item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history;

33 Young Street, Wahroonga, appears likely to have historical significance for its ability to demonstrate patterns of European immigration in the inter-war and post-war periods following the series of conflicts in the continent. The immigration of the Polish-Jewish owners of 33 Young Street in the late 1920s is indicative of Jewish immigration to Australia at the time, as a result of growing Polish nationalism and anti-Semitism. Their later engagement of a prominent emigre designer, Paul Kafka, and possibly an émigré architect, further demonstrate the immigration of European individuals to Australia and their significant contributions to a variety of artistic, architectural, intellectual and professional communities.

- b) an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history;

33 Young Street, Wahroonga, appears likely to have historic associational value with the designer of its high-quality interiors, Paul Kafka, as a fine and intact example of the work of the famed emigre designer and furniture maker.

- c) an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW;

33 Young Street, Wahroonga, appears likely to have aesthetic value as a fine and intact example of the work of Paul Kafka. It may also have aesthetic value for its International Style architecture though the architect on the project is presently unknown.

- d) an item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;

At present, it is not known whether 33 Young Street has a strong or special association with a contemporary identifiable group, however this would be the subject of further research.

- e) an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history;

At present, it is not known whether 33 Young Street has particular research or technical significance, however this would be the subject of further research.

- f) an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history;

33 Young Street, Wahroonga, appears likely to have rarity value as a particular intact and high-quality example of the interior design of Paul Kafka, of which there appear to be few comparable known examples. Kafka's own house, designed by architect Hugo Stossel, has had its original interiors stripped by a later owner due to a lack of protection.

- g) an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's  
- cultural or natural places; or  
- cultural or natural environments.

33 Young Street, Wahroonga, appears likely to have representative value as a good example of an International Style building possessing key characteristics of the style. It also has representative value for its ability to demonstrate interior design associated with significant interior designer and furniture maker, Paul Kafka.

### **Statement of Significance**

As a good example of International style architecture, 33 Young Street Wahroonga has historic and aesthetic significance and representative value. These same values are evident internally through the building's strong association with the designer of its high-quality interiors, Paul Kafka, as a fine and intact example of the work of the famed emigre designer and furniture maker.

The building appears likely to demonstrate rarity as a particularly intact and high-quality example of the interior design of Paul Kafka, of which there appear to be few comparable known examples.

33 Young Street, Wahroonga, appears likely to have historical significance for its ability to demonstrate patterns of European immigration in the inter-war and post-war periods following the series of conflicts in the continent.

### **Summary**

The property was brought to Council's attention in mid-October however there has been difficulty with identifying the architect, which is still unknown. It was recently sold (12 October 2020) and is not identified as a heritage item or located within a Heritage conservation area. The recent real estate campaign promoted the property as "*an excellent opportunity to renovate or rebuild and capitalise on the excellent location*" and therefore its potential heritage value, particularly its

interiors, are considered vulnerable to harm.

### **Conclusion**

That an interim heritage order be placed on the property to enable further research to take place.

### **Sources / Further reading:**

The Sydney Morning Herald - Thu 19 Jan 1933 - Page 1 – Advertising:

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/16946301>

“Paul Ernst Kafka” by Michael Bogle. Entry in the Design and Art Australia online database:

<https://www.daa.org.au/bio/paul-ernst-kafka/biography/>

## FOR ACTION

### ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL – 8/12/2020

TO: Governance Support Officer (Srbinovska, Rebecca)

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**Subject:** OMC247 - 33 Young Street Wahroonga  
**Minute Number:** 247  
**Notes:**  
**File Reference:** S10066

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247 **33 Young Street, Wahroonga**

File: S10066

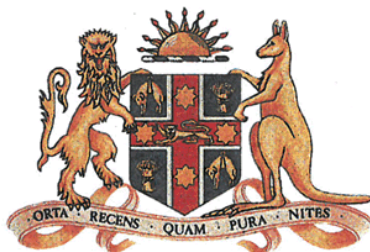
*Vide: BWN1*

**Resolved:**

(Moved: Councillors Szatow/ Spencer)

That Council resolve to place an Interim Heritage Order under section 25 of the NSW Heritage Act 1977 on 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, Lot 32 DP12371, to enable a full and proper evaluation of the heritage significance and prevent any harm to the site in the interim.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**



# *Government Gazette*

of the State of

New South Wales

**Number 370—Local Government  
Friday, 11 December 2020**

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The New South Wales Government Gazette is the permanent public record of official NSW Government notices. It also contains local council, non-government and other notices.

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NSW Government Gazette No 370 of 11 December 2020

**Ku-ring-gai Council NSW Heritage Act 1977. Interim Heritage Order No 11**

Notice is hereby given, under Section 25 of the *Heritage Act 1977*, that Ku-ring-gai Council does by this order.

- i. make an interim heritage order to cover the item of the environmental heritage specified or described in Schedule "A"; and
- ii. declare that the Interim Heritage Order shall apply to the curtilage or site of such item, being the land described in Schedule "B".

This Interim Heritage Order will lapse six months from the date that it is made unless the local Council has passed a resolution before that date; and

- (i) in the case of an item which, in the council's opinion, is of local significance, the resolution seeks to place the item on the heritage schedule of a local environmental plan with appropriate provisions for protecting and managing the item; or
- (ii) In the case of an item which, in the Council's opinion, is of State heritage significance, the resolution requests the Heritage Council to make a recommendation to the Minister for Heritage under section 32(2) of the Heritage Act to include the item on the State Heritage Register.

John McKee General Manager Ku-ring-gai Council  
Sydney 9 December 2020

**Schedule "A"**

The property known as 33 Young Street, Wahroonga on land described in Schedule B.

**Schedule "B"**

All those pieces or parcels of land known as Lot 32 DP12371 in Parish of Gordon, County of Cumberland.

**FLOWCHART 5  
PROCESS FOR THE MAKING OF  
AN IHO BY LOCAL COUNCILS**



## **HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT DRAFT**

Potential Heritage Item:

"Wainberg House"

33 Young Street, Wahroonga



33 Young Street, Wahroonga (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh Pty Ltd, 3 February 2021)

for  
**Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council**

Prepared by  
**Robertson & Hindmarsh Pty Ltd**  
**Architects**

ABN 47 000 915 622  
Phone: 02 9439 7779  
Email: [rharch@ozemail.com.au](mailto:rharch@ozemail.com.au)

13 February 2021



Heritage Assessment Report  
"Wainberg House", 33 Young Street, Wahroonga  
13 February 2021

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Note: All Robertson & Hindmarsh Pty Ltd photographs were taken on 3 February 2021

This draft report contains interior photographs that have been redacted to maintain the privacy of the home owner.

Heritage Assessment Report  
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13 February 2021

## **1.0 Introduction**

Robertson & Hindmarsh Pty Ltd, Architects was engaged by Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council on 23 December 2020 to undertake a heritage assessment of, and prepare a heritage assessment report for, the single family residence at 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, known as the Wainberg House. The house was inspected by Dr Scott Robertson on 3 February 2021, in the company of Council officers, Mr Antony Fabbro & Ms Vanessa Holtham.

The Real Property description of the subject site is Lot 32 DP 12371.

The scope of the project is to include:

- Review and assess the existing information on 33 Young Street, Wahroonga.
- Undertake any additional appropriate historical research as required.
- Undertake necessary site inspections (internal access subject to prior approval from owner).
- Undertake a detailed heritage assessment report assessing the heritage significance of the property against the criteria gazetted by the NSW Heritage Council and using its guidelines. This report is to include a comparative analysis of the building to relevant information and provision of final recommendations.

## **2.0 Report author**

The author of this report is:

Dr Scott Robertson, BSc (Arch), BArch (Hons), M Built Environment (Building Conservation), PhD – Architect, Heritage Consultant

## **3.0 Referenced documents**

This report is to be read in conjunction with the following report in addition to the references listed in the Bibliography:

- Heritage Research 33 Young Street, Wahroonga prepared by Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council,

## **4.0 Documentary Evidence**

### **4.1 History – the site**

This land was part of an early 2000-acre (809 ha) Crown grant to John Terry Hughes in 1842. A substantial residential subdivision of land around the subject site occurred in 1922 under DP 11230, into large acre lots. In September 1923, the NSW Realty Co Limited acquired lots 16 to 33 of this estate, totalling over 17 acres (6.9 ha) in size. NSW Realty Co Limited re-subdivided the land under the current deposited plan, DP 12371, known as the "Brundah Park Estate." The subject site officially came into being at this point, as lot 32 DP 12371, at a size of 39 perches (986.42m<sup>2</sup>) (see **Figure 4.1**).

Lot 32 was not transferred to a new owner until January 1943, when it was first acquired by brothers Alexander and Michael Wainberg, both of Annandale, Dyers, as joint tenants<sup>1</sup>.

The 1948 aerial photograph (**Figure 4.2**) shows the vacant site and the sparse development in the vicinity of the site. In July 1949, the lot was transferred to the said Michael Wainberg of Annandale, Dyer, as sole proprietor.

In 1950, M. Wainberg lodged a Building Application (No. 1713) for a brick dwelling on Lot 32 Young Street, Wahroonga. The Building Application gave the following information:

Owner and applicant: M. Wainberg,  
Owner's address: 5 Oliver Street, Roseville,  
Cost of building: £9,200,  
Date application lodged: 23/11/50,  
Date application approved: 30/11/50,  
Material of outer walls: brick,  
Material of roof: tiles.  
No builder's name was given.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Certificate of title 5371-66 dated 1943

<sup>2</sup> Building application card on microfiche, Ku-ring-gai Council Library – Local Studies

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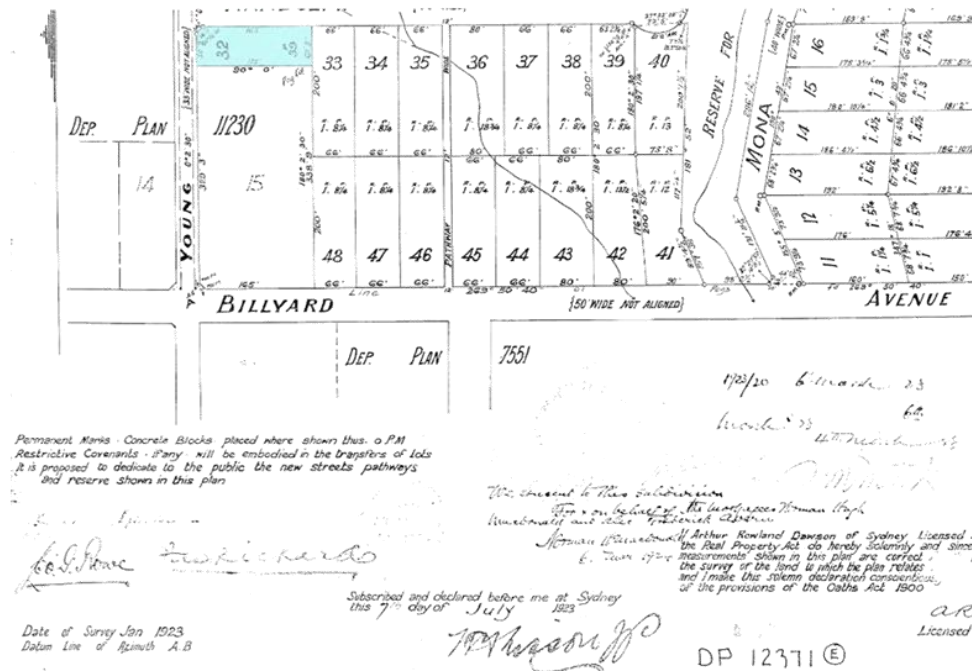


Figure 4.1: The 1923 "Brundah Park Estate" DP 12371 with the subject lot (Lot 32) on the corner of Young & Randolph Streets coloured blue (Courtesy Ku-ring-gai Council with Robertson & Hindmarsh overlay 2021)



Figure 4.2: The site of the Wainberg House (coloured blue) in 1943 with the 2020 subdivision lot boundaries (Source: SixMaps with Robertson & Hindmarsh overlay 2021)

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The drawings relating to this 1950 Building Application are no longer in Council's archives.

In March 1951 the Metropolitan Water Sewerage & Drainage Board noted the construction of a "Brick residence and garage, Young Street, [Ku-ring-gai] M. Wainberg"<sup>3</sup> which indicates the house was under construction at that time.

Although the architect of this house is presently unknown, the manufacturer (and possible designer) of the interior joinery and built-in furniture for this residence was Paul Kafka, a highly significant designer and furniture maker.

In January 1971, the property was transferred to Terence Joseph Wilson of Mosman, Dental Surgeon and Veronica Maxine Wilson, his wife as joint tenants. In 1972 application was made to Council to erect the current brick and timber double carport. The application noted that the construction of the carport was tied to the construction of pool safety fence around the existing pool, implying that the pool fence was either inadequate or non-existent.<sup>4</sup> In May 1974, the property was transferred to John Fisher of Wahroonga, Company Director and Gladys Cynthia Fisher, his wife as joint tenants. In June 1979, the property was transferred to Cedric George Holden of Wahroonga, chartered accountant and Patricia Mary Holden, his wife as tenants in common. No further transfers were recorded before a new (inaccessible) certificate of title was issued in 1979.

#### **4.2 History – the Wainbergs**

The Wainberg brothers migrated from Radom, Poland; Solomon Alexander Wainberg in about 1926<sup>5</sup> and Michael Wainberg in 1928. Alexander applied for naturalisation in 1931 (naturalised on 31/12/31)<sup>6</sup> and Michael (Mieczyslaw) applied for naturalisation in 1933 (naturalised on 3/5/33)<sup>7</sup>.

No wedding notice has been uncovered for Mr & Mrs Michael Wainberg. A wedding notice has been uncovered for Michael's brother, Alexander, who married Naomi Boardman in 1936 and they are later recorded as living in "Maybank", Junction Road, Wahroonga.<sup>8</sup> They had no children and their marriage ended in divorce in 1941 when Mrs Wainberg committed adultery.<sup>9</sup>

In 1949 Mr & Mrs Michael Wainberg lived in Roseville, as indicated by the Birth Notice of their son: "On 3 January 1949 a son, Ronald Paul, was born to Mr & Mrs Michael Wainberg of Roseville".<sup>10</sup> On 3 June 1952 a daughter, Nicole Kathleen, was born to Mr & Mrs Michael Wainberg.<sup>11</sup>

In the early 1950s, Mrs M. Wainberg appeared a number of times in the social pages of Sydney newspapers and was singled out and photographed for her high-style fashion sense (**Figure 4.3**). She also featured in a *Pix* magazine article on 'Australia's Riviera' Surfer's Paradise in Queensland (**Figure 4.4**). Surfers Paradise was stated as being where the "wealth of Australia [was] concentrated during the southern states' winter months."<sup>12</sup>

The Wainberg brothers were dyers and had established a dyeing firm, Wainberg & Co, in Annandale. In 1931 the firm was awarded a contract by the Commonwealth Department of Defence for the dyeing of greatcoats and jackets.<sup>13</sup> There are intermittent reports of their business activities in newspapers, including court cases. In 1939 an explosion damaged machinery and severely scalded a worker in the Wainberg Textile Co's Annandale factory.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>3</sup> "MWS&DB Return of Building Operations within the area served by the Board's watermain as notified during the week ended 16<sup>th</sup> March, 1951", *Construction*, 21 March 1951, p.14

<sup>4</sup> Letter from T.J. Wilson to Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council dated 2/11/72 regarding BA 2112/72. Council had wanted the carport set back from the Randolph Street boundary by 6 feet

<sup>5</sup> *Daily Telegraph* – Mon, 2 Nov 1931, Page 1 – Public Notices

<sup>6</sup> *Daily Telegraph* – Mon, 2 Nov 1931, Page 1 – Public Notices, and Commonwealth Government Gazette, 14 Jan 1932 (No.4 p.31)

<sup>7</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald* – Thu 19 Jan 1933, Page 1 – Public Notices, and Commonwealth Government Gazette, 18 May 1933 (No.33 p.752)

<sup>8</sup> NSW Government Gazette, Fri 8 Aug 1947 (No.90, p.1805)

<sup>9</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, Tues 20 May 1941, p.7, and *Truth*, Sun 25 May 1941, p.15

<sup>10</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald* – Sat 22 Jan 1949 – Page 38 – Births

<sup>11</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald* – Sat 7 Jun 1952 – Page 34 – Births

<sup>12</sup> "Surfers Paradise now the playground of the wealthy", *Pix*, 19 September 1953, p.8

<sup>13</sup> Department of Defence Contracts Accepted, Commonwealth Government Gazette, Thurs 2 July 1931 (No.56, p.1115)

<sup>14</sup> "Steam Press Explodes: Man Badly Scalded", *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, Sat 6 May 1939, p.13

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Figure 4.3: "Ocelot coat and matching hat worn by Mrs W. [actually M.] Wainberg, of Wahroonga made heads turn when she lunched during the week at the Pickwick Club." (Source: *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 July 1953, p.8)



Figure 4.4: "Beachlovers quickly develop tan after few days in Queensland sun. Visitors Mrs M. Wainberg, Sydney, Mr Maurice Copolov, Melbourne, Mrs H. Gostin enjoy the beach." (Source: *Pix*, 19 September 1953, p.9)

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In 1939 Jeanette Underwear Mills Pty Ltd was established with a capital of £15,000 divided amongst the three first directors Alexander Wainberg, Michael Wainberg and George A. Bond.<sup>15</sup> Jeanette Manufacturing Co had been established in 1928 by Jeanette Bond (d.1937), wife of George Alan Bond (1876-1950) who had established George A. Bond Co. Ltd in 1914 to manufacture hosiery and, in 1923, to spin and weave cotton at his mill in Wentworthville.<sup>16</sup> Bond's companies failed in the Great Depression and were forced into liquidation. The losses amounted to £700,000 which was the largest manufacturing failure up to that point-in-time. The liquidators sold Bond's companies in 1930 to Bond's Industries Ltd (an unrelated company) and Bond was declared bankrupt in 1931.<sup>17</sup>

The Wainbergs were involved in the Sydney Jewish community and in philanthropic organisations. In 1940 both Alexander and Michael Wainberg became Life Governors of the Sir Moses Montefiore Home, a charitable institution for the aged and needy as well as poor and orphaned children.<sup>18</sup> Mrs M. Wainberg was a member of the Ladies Guild of the Northern Sydney Hebrew Congregation.<sup>19</sup>

Prior to 1943 Alexander and Michael Wainberg had become the owners of "Mount Henry", a dairy farm at Mulgoa. It was noted that, "On this property, which contains roughly 800 acres, money has been spent lavishly, thus placing it in the forefront of dairy farms. New cottages have been built for the employees, and light, water, modern overhead silos, dairy bails, and bull pens provided, so that as a dairy farm Mount Henry is equal to any in the County of Cumberland. At present they are milking about 120 cows on the estate, and the number is expected to go up to 200."<sup>20</sup>

In 1954, Michael's brother, Alexander, was appointed to the board of Stirling Henry Ltd. Stirling Henry had been established as an importing business in 1924 but soon expanded into cotton milling in NSW and Queensland. Alexander Wainberg was also the Managing Director of Jeanette Underwear Mills Pty Ltd and had "more than 25 years' experience in the business in which Stirling Henry engages."<sup>21</sup> By 23 June 1954 Alexander Wainberg was appointed Chairman of Stirling Henry Ltd and Michael Wainberg had joined the board.<sup>22</sup> This was the result of the secret purchase of shares on behalf of the Wainberg Family by the then current board member, A.D. Bridges. Bridges' purchased the shares but, as reported in the press, the identity of the ultimate owners of the shares was not immediately known but the mystery buyers of the shares were the Wainberg brothers, who were the owners of Jeanette Underwear Mills. A.D. Bridges resigned from the board to make way for Alexander Wainberg and then, with the resignation of H.R. Feather as Chairman, the Wainbergs' ascension to, and control of, the Stirling Henry board was complete. H.R. Feather was the owner of the Feather & White hosiery business which was located next door to the Wainbergs' Jeanette Underwear Mills factory and it appears he had no idea that his neighbours were taking control of Stirling Henry.<sup>23</sup>

In 1955, whilst the Wainberg brothers were on the board of Stirling Henry Ltd, the company bought the Wainbergs' Jeanette Underwear Mills Pty Ltd and its associated business Wainberg and Co., textile dyers for £674,500. The two Wainberg companies had averaged an annual profit of £100,000. Because the owners of the two purchased companies were on the board of the purchaser, the Stirling Henry board "arranged for Messrs. Smith, Johnson, and Co. chartered accountants, to report on the proposal. The board also sought legal opinion on the question of authority and procedure. The company's auditors, Messrs. Priestly and Morris, and the company's financial consultant, Mr. A. S. Hawley, concurred with the report, which the directors adopted unanimously."<sup>24</sup> The sale proceeded.

<sup>15</sup> "New Registrations", *Sydney Morning Herald*, Fri 30 June 1939, p.9

<sup>16</sup> Colin Forster, "George Alan Bond (1876-1950)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bond-george-alan-5285/text8913>, published first in hardcopy 1979, accessed online 8 January 2021

<sup>17</sup> Colin Forster, "George Alan Bond (1876-1950)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bond-george-alan-5285/text8913>, published first in hardcopy 1979, accessed online 8 January 2021

<sup>18</sup> "Sir Moses Montefiore Home: 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting", *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, Thurs 27 Feb 1941, p.1

<sup>19</sup> *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, Thurs 29 June 1950, p.6

<sup>20</sup> "Property Changes: Mount Henry Leased", *Nepean Times*, Thurs 30 March 1944, p.1

<sup>21</sup> "Board Changes", *Daily Telegraph*, Sat 19 June 1954, p.23

<sup>22</sup> "Appointments", *Daily Telegraph*, Wed 23 June 1954, p.20

<sup>23</sup> "Some Hints About Investments", *Sun-Herald*, Sun 4 April 1954, p.66

<sup>24</sup> "Textile Co.'s earnings", *Argus*, Fri 25 March 1955, p.15

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### **4.3 The designers**

#### **4.3.1 The architect**

The identity of the architect of the house is currently not known but, because of the commissioning client's Central European background, the use of Paul Kafka for the joinery, and the design of the house itself, it would appear that the architect was most likely an émigré from either Central Europe or Eastern Europe.

#### **4.3.2 The interior joinery and furniture maker: Paul Ernst Kafka (1907-1972)**

The interior joinery and built-in furniture was manufactured by Paul Kafka. The following biography of Paul Kafka by Michael Bogle has been excerpted from the *Design and Art Australia* online database<sup>25</sup>:

The son of a Viennese furniture maker Paul Ernst Kafka was born in Vienna on 1 July 1907<sup>1</sup>. Experience in his father's factory and an apprenticeship in another Viennese furniture factory gave him a good grounding in the more practical aspects of furniture making, but he is also said to have studied furniture and interior design at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna<sup>2</sup>.

During the 1930s Kafka worked as a furniture and interior designer with a furniture retail store in Vienna and in 1939 he and his wife emigrated to Australia. Kafka worked for the redoubtable Ralph Symonds, an entrepreneurial Sydney plywood manufacturer, before establishing a small furniture factory in 187 William Street, Darlinghurst, in 1941. About 1945 Kafka moved to larger premises at 161 Botany Road, Waterloo where he employed four tradesmen, two Italians and two Australians. His company was listed in 1948 directories as a 'Manufacturer of Modern Exclusive Furniture' and from 1951 to 1967 was registered with the New South Wales Furniture Manufacturers' Guild (formed 1948) as 'Paul Kafka Exclusive Furniture Pty Ltd'.

In the 1950s and 60s Kafka exhibited regularly at the Ideal Homes Show and the Building Information Centre in Sydney and at the height of his business in the late 50s was employing about 40 staff<sup>3</sup>. During the 1960s, as imports competed with locally-made furniture, Kafka concentrated on work for hotels such as the Sheraton and the Chevron and for the Travelodge motel chain. He died in Sydney on 15 May 1972.

Kafka's clientele ranged from private home owners to architects and interior decorators to corporations, but what distinguished many of his clients were their European origins. Like Kafka, many were also Jewish refugees from war-torn Europe and there was a particular concentration of these clients in Sydney's eastern suburbs. Apart from their common European heritage what attracted many to Kafka's work was its stylishness and fine craftsmanship, qualities that were part of a strong tradition in European cabinet-making, but were less common in Australian post-war furniture.

Kafka produced furniture, particularly built-in cabinet work, for a number of Sydney's European-born architects, themselves amongst the small group of pioneering modernists practising in Australia at the time. Harry Seidler was a notable early client. Like Kafka, Seidler and his parents, Max and Rose, were Viennese and no doubt these shared origins, as well as a common interest in modernist concepts, helped reinforce their professional relationship.

Kafka completed built-in and freestanding furniture for Seidler's landmark 'Rose Seidler' house (Wahroonga, 1948-50, now managed by the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales) and for several other Seidler projects. Kafka also worked with the late Hugh Bunnich, a German-born architect whose idiosyncratic form of modernism is belatedly receiving the recognition it deserves. Henry Epstein, another of Sydney's early émigré modernists, commissioned Kafka to create furniture for a number of his houses, notably the Chaim and Florence Hillman house in Roseville in 1950 (4). Kafka's cabinet work for this radical, flat-roofed cubic design was largely intact when the house was sold in 1995 amid much media attention. Kafka's own house, a flat-roofed, concrete and glass essay in modernism in suburban Roseville, was designed about 1950 by Hungarian-born Hugo Stosself<sup>26</sup>. Described as a 'functional house that is different' in the May 1952 issue of *Australian House & Garden*, it featured much beautifully-detailed cabinet work by Kafka<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> "Paul Ernst Kafka" by Michael Bogle. Entry in the *Design and Art Australia* online database: <https://www.daa.org.au/bio/paul-ernst-kafka/biography/>

<sup>26</sup> Note, that Henry Epstein's job list also includes the Kafka House at 11 Eton Road, Pymble, but for 1959. The Henry Epstein drawings are no longer extant so it is not possible to determine the actual extent of Epstein's involvement with the house at that date. The Epstein office job list was reproduced in the Appendices to A. Lowden's dissertation on Dr Henry Epstein.



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According to Neil Sear, a cabinet-maker who worked for Kafka from 1948 to 1966, Kafka was a very astute businessman and played an important entrepreneurial role in the operation of the company. He was also very fastidious and insisted on traditional construction techniques and a high level of hand finishing. While Kafka had some training in design it seems he employed designer/draftsmen to produce art work for the firm and to draw up designs for interiors and individual pieces.

During the 1950s a Dutch designer, Alfons Worms, worked for Kafka and in the 1960s he employed George Surtees, a Hungarian-born designer. Kafka's working method, according to Surtees, was to meet with clients and then provide the designer with a rough sketch of the client's requirements for further interpretation and development.

While Kafka's furniture can often be identified by a company label, his distinctive use of highly-figured veneers is also a characteristic distinguishing feature. Kafka's favoured timbers included Italian walnut and burr elm, stripy zebrawood, Macassar ebony and sapele wood, as well as sycamore, Queensland maple and silver ash. Borders of distinctive crossbanding were a common feature of both built-in and freestanding cabinet work with the occasional inclusion of marquetry patterns and decorative motifs, as in the Powerhouse Museum's stylish cocktail cabinet of 1954.

Kafka's love of patterned veneers was no doubt influenced by the strong Austrian tradition of using highly figured woods to enliven otherwise relatively plain, functional designs, a tradition that extended from the Biedermeier period of the first half of the 19th century through to furniture designed by members of the Wiener Werkstätte in the early years of the 20th century and the Art Deco style of the inter-war years. Indeed, the strongly geometric design of much of Kafka's furniture of the 1940s and 50s remained firmly rooted in the European Art Deco or 'art moderne' style prevalent during the late 1920s and 1930s when his career in Austria was just emerging. Furniture such as the cocktail cabinet and Kafka's tiered, mirror glass-topped coffee tables, and interiors like the Vaucluse dining room of the late 50s with its dramatic asymmetrical geometry<sup>5</sup> owe an obvious debt to the inter-war 'modernist' aesthetic. Kafka's Austrian heritage and his penchant for decorative veneers largely inured him to the fashion for the blonde timbers and organic forms of Scandinavian design in the post-war years.

Paul Kafka's furniture may not have reflected the latest international design trends and may have been subject to a certain 'overstatement' at times, but it nevertheless contributed immeasurably to the richness of Australia's post-war furniture industry. In a country only just beginning to emerge from its pre-war isolation, Kafka's stylish, sophisticated and well-crafted cabinet work acted as an important conduit for the transmission of European styles and standards of craftsmanship to Australia.

Footnotes to quotation:

1. Kafka's biographical details are based on information gathered from the author's interview with Kafka's widow, Mrs J Hocking, in 1981.
2. This information was supplied by Mrs Hocking. However Kafka is not listed as a student in the files of the former Kunstgewerbeschule (now University of Applied Arts) in Vienna.
3. Information relating to Kafka's business activities has been drawn from an interview by the author with a former Kafka employee, Neil Sear, in the early 1980s.
4. Vicky Masters, 'The home of furniture designer, Paul Kafka', *Australian House and Garden*, May 1952, pp32-33.
5. Kafka's late 1950s built-in and freestanding furniture for this house at 12 Serpentine Parade, Vaucluse, was auctioned by Lawsons, October, 1991. One of the distinctive dining chairs was acquired from the auction by the Historic Houses Trust of NSW.



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#### 4.4 Historical themes

The property falls within the following national and NSW historical themes.

National historical theme	State historical theme	How the historical theme is demonstrated in this building
2. Peopling Australia	Ethnic Influences	European sensibility of Modernism in design of house, and Art Deco in interior fitout
4. Building settlements, towns and cities	Towns, suburbs and villages	Subdivision of larger estates creating closer settlement
4. Building settlements, towns and cities	Accommodation	Single family suburban house on large block. Planning of house demonstrates the planning of a wealthy family's house with live-in servant (physical separation of served and server spaces)
5. Working	Labour	Planning of house demonstrates the separation of the servant's quarters and work area from the family areas of the house
8. Developing Australia's cultural life	Creative endeavour	Work of a creative, much-awarded designer and furniture maker; Influence of international architectural and design styles such as Moderne and Art Deco

#### 5.0 Physical Evidence

##### 5.1 Description of the property

###### 5.1.1 The site

The site is a corner allotment on the south-east corner of Young and Randolph Streets (Young Street on the west and Randolph Street along the north boundary of the site) and falls from the high point along Young Street down to the east end of the site. The site has an area of 980.9m<sup>2</sup>. The main pedestrian entry to the site is from the corner of the site at the intersection of the two streets, giving access to a sandstone-paved path leading to the front porch (also paved in sandstone) and front door (**Cover photo & Figure 5.1**). The original vehicle entry was on the south end of the Young Street frontage and gave access to the steeply sloping driveway (bounded by sandstone retaining walls) leading down to the original tandem double garage (the door of which has now been replaced with a glazed window wall) (**Figure 5.4**). The current vehicle access is from the north of the site with a double carport accessed from Randolph Street (**Figure 5.9**).

The site has no boundary fencing along the two street frontages but has sandstone gate pillars at the driveway and a sandstone box flanking the tradesman's entrance that contains the gas meter (**Figure 5.4**). In lieu of a fence, the two street boundaries are defined by sandstone flagging mounted on edge used as a haphazard garden bed edging.

There is a side yard along the north side of the house with a terrace outside the Lounge Room windows. Along the south side of the house is a concrete path leading to a set of stairs up to the tradesman's entry porch. From the porch level the concrete stairs descend to the continuation of the concrete side path leading down to the lower level of the rear yard (**Figures 5.5 & 5.6**).

At the rear of the house there is a sandstone terrace accessed from the Kitchen and Lounge Room. The terrace is paved in regular sandstone paving and there is a steel post-supported clear fibreglass roof over the terrace. Whilst the current terrace is not original it would appear that some form of paving existed outside the Kitchen & Lounge Room doors. The site slopes steeply down from the terrace to the rear lawn and swimming pool and this slope would appear to be original as it is retained along its south edge by a rendered, painted retaining wall that is continuous with the lower masonry balustrade at the south end of the terrace which is, in turn, continuous with the south wall of the house. The steep slope is negotiated by a couple of informal paths and sets of garden steps of unequal height (**Figure 5.6**).

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Figure 5.1 Entry to site. Note lack of gates or fences (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.3 Drive down to original garage. Note sandstone gas meter enclosure on right (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

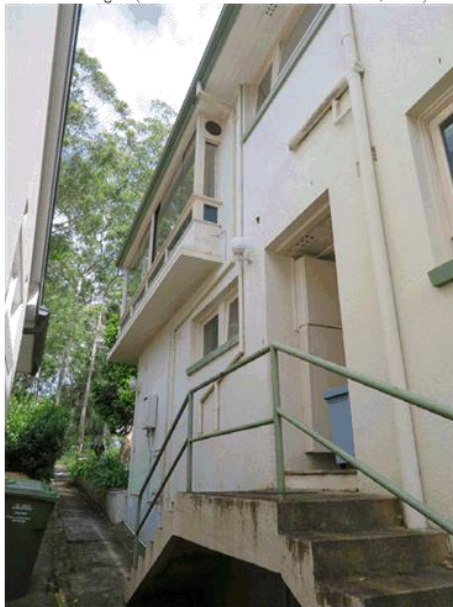


Figure 5.5 View of service entry to house on south side (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.2 Entrance porch. Note rendered window architrave at left & stair hall window on right (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L)



Figure 5.4 View of house from south-west in Young Street (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.6 View of house from south-east. Note the sloping retaining wall retaining slope from terrace (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



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Figure 5.7 View of house from the east in the garden  
 (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.8 View of the rear garden from the First Floor  
 (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.9 (left) Carport in rear yard accessed from Randolph Street  
 (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.10 North side of house with Lounge window on left  
 (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.11 North side of house with Office window below Bathroom window. Large Bedroom 4 window on the right above the Entrance Porch (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

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#### **5.1.2 Building – construction and design**

The house is a two-storey Post-War International Style rendered brick residence with a tile roof and timber windows and doors. There is a Lower Ground Floor level under the south part of the house containing the original Garage and Laundry, with concrete floor slabs, and concrete slab ceiling with supporting beams that displays the grain and imprint of the timber boards of the original concrete formwork.

The windows are an important design feature of the house and they comprise large timber casement-hung sashes with no central meeting mullion. This allows the windows to be thrown open to create large openings that connect the interior to the exterior. The casement sashes are hung on Whitco friction stays and the sashes are held closed by casement window catches. The windows in the former Basement Garage & WVC are new replacement aluminium windows and the windows of the First Floor Living Room are frameless glass sliding sashes on steel guide tracks.

The large windows of Bedroom 4 on the First Floor have a much lower sill height than the other First Floor windows and the window is further emphasised and given importance by the protruding rendered "architrave" around the exterior of the window (**Figures 5.2 & 5.11**). The double-height window wall illuminating the Entry Foyer and Stair Hall is the major feature of the west façade (**Figures 5.1 to 5.4**). The original First Floor verandah has been enclosed to form a Living Room and its mullion-less and frameless Cowdroy sliding glass sashes are a prominent feature of the front façade. There is a low rendered wall forming what was probably the base of the original verandah balustrade and there would appear to be a small drainage hole at the east end of the verandah, indicating that the Living Room was intended to be an open verandah (**Figures 5.2 to 5.5**).

One original exterior wall light fitting remains above the landing of the service entrance on the south side of the house (**Figure 5.5**).

The Ground Floor floor finishes are:

Polished hardwoods floor boards in the Entry/Stair Hall, clear-finished timber parquet in the Lounge and Dining Rooms, carpet on hardwood boards in the office/Study, carpet on pine boards in Bedroom 5, vinyl on the Hall floor, non-original parquet in the Kitchen and ceramic tiles in the WC and Ensuite off Bedroom 5. The ceilings are sheeted with fibrous plaster with scotia plaster cornices.

The First Floor floor finishes are:

The First Floor Bathroom and WC comprise tiles on concrete slabs, the Living Room (former open verandah) is paved with terrazzo tiles of three colours (black, cream and a lighter cream), and the other rooms are finished with carpet on timber boards. The owner states that the floors had never been clear-finished which would indicate that they have always been carpeted. The ceilings are sheeted with fibrous plaster with scotia plaster cornices.

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### **5.1.3 Plan**

#### **5.1.3.1 Plan division**

The plan of the house has been arranged around a division between the family portion of the house and a servant area and is reminiscent of well-to-do Middle Class interwar houses designed to accommodate live-in help. This separation of servants and family is also reminiscent of European house planning (perhaps reflecting the brief by the Wainbergs to their architect as well as their social standing within the Sydney Jewish and business communities). Refer to **Figure 5.12**.

#### **5.1.3.2 Ground Floor**

The Ground Floor family part of the house comprises the Entrance Foyer/Stair Hall with its double height west-facing window wall (**Figures 5.13 & 5.14**). The Foyer gives access to the Office/Study on the north side of the Foyer and, via a doorway under the stairs on the south side, to the servant's section of the house (**Figure 5.19**). The Office (**Figure 5.20**) has a timber dado on the east and west walls and built-in book shelves beside the door on the south wall (**Figure 5.21**). There is a timber-sheeted bulkhead running around the cornice level of the room (with plaster scotia cornice sections on its underside as well as at the junction between the bulkhead and the main ceiling) (**Figure 5.21**). The bulkhead is wider along the north side above the windows and has hinged panels to permit access to the bulkhead (**Figure 5.20**). One of the First Floor bathrooms is directly above the Office and this wider bulkhead provides space for the drainage pipes from the bathroom as well as providing space for those pipes to access the stack located in the north-west corner of the Office. It should be noted that the concealment of drainage pipes within ducts was not usually permitted in Australia at that time and many European émigré architects railed against this archaic practice of mounting the pipework on the exterior of the building. Of course, in Europe, the external mounting of pipes was prohibited in order to prevent water in the pipes freezing in the extreme winters and this also produced crisp lines to the exterior of the buildings. At 33 Young Street, the concealment of the drainage pipes from the bath and basin in the north bathroom maintained the clean, unobstructed north wall of the house facing Randolph Street. Perhaps the absence of a VVC pan in the north bathroom enabled the concealment of the less vulnerable and smaller pipes from the bath and basin.

One of the distinctive features of the interior joinery is the veneer wall panels and doors (**Figure 5.22**). The doors are expertly Quarter Matched with the veneer matched horizontally and vertically. The timber species has not been identified but it could be a burl Silky Oak.

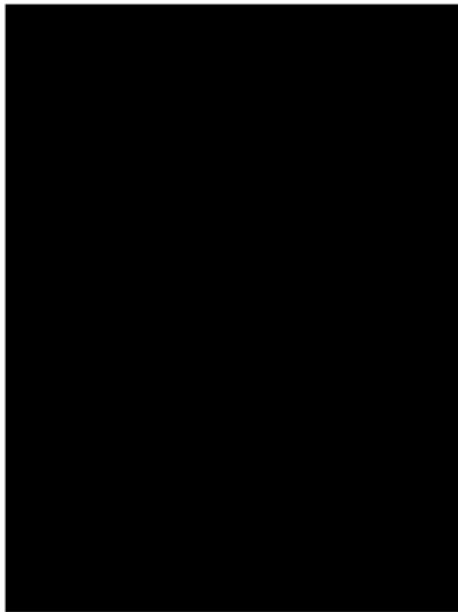


Figure 5.13 Entry Foyer (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

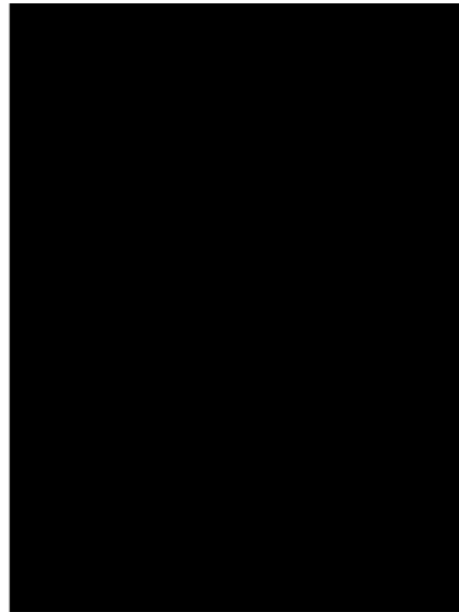


Figure 5.14 Entry Foyer (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

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Figure 5.15 Entry Foyer (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.16 Stair rail and balusters  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

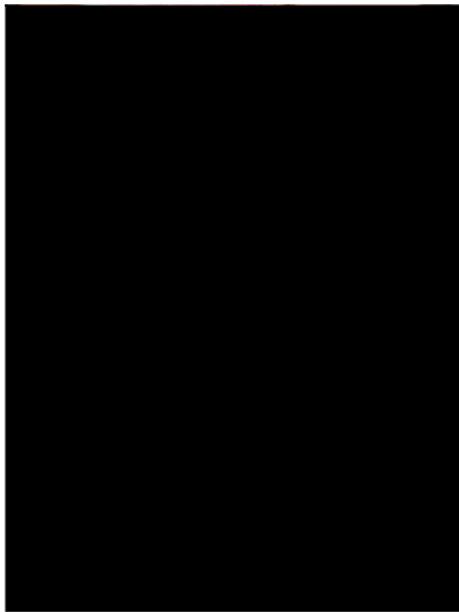


Figure 5.17 Entry door & sidelights  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

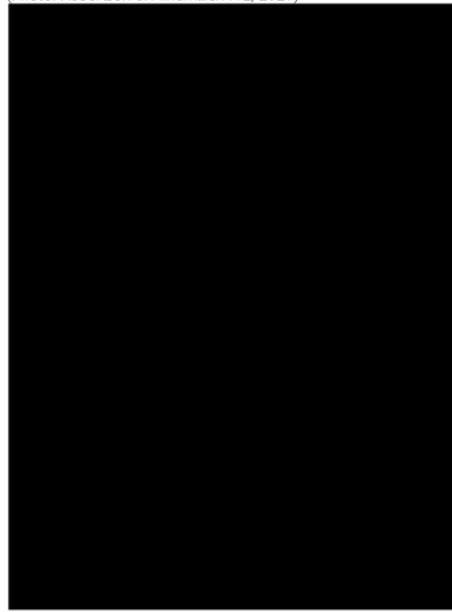


Figure 5.18 Entry door original door pull handle and backplate  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

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Figure 5.19 Door under the stairs from the Foyer to the Servant's corridor (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

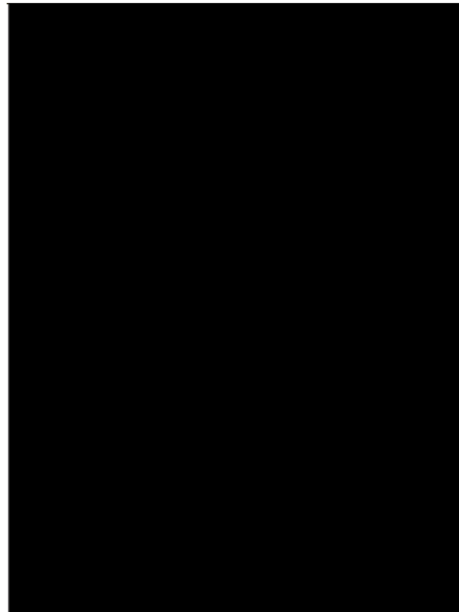


Figure 5.20 Office/Study with services bulkhead and duct in corner adjacent to window (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.21 Built-in bookcase in the Office/Study with services bulkhead above (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



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Figure 5.22 Door to the Office/Study with its superbly executed Quarter Matched veneer on the solid core door (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

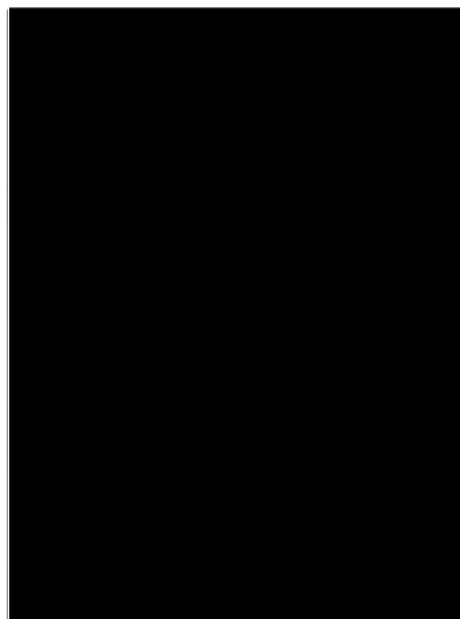


Figure 5.23 Door handle and key escutcheon to the Office/Study in an historicist reproduction style. Such incongruities were not uncommon (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

The Foyer then gives access through a hinged glazed door with fixed glazed sidelights (glazed with bevelled edge glass) at its east end (**Figures 5.15 & 5.24**) to the split level Lounge Room. The upper level of the room contains a bar (with concealed bar sink), built-in upholstered banquette (with attached upholstered-front cupboard), and built-in cupboards (**Figures 5.27 & 5.28**). The wall panels are gloss-finished Quarter Matched timber veneer of an unidentified timber species (**Figures 5.25 & 5.27**). The bar has a ribbed timber front and a built in bar sink (**Figures 5.25 & 5.26**). The lower section of the Lounge Room contains a built-in upholstered corner couch with another upholstered-front attached cupboard facing the non-original room heater (**Figures 5.30 & 5.31**). The lack of a masonry hearth suggests that the original room heater was either gas or electric although there is an ash pit under the fireplace that is emptied through a cast iron "Metters" door (although the door appears to have been a later insert into the rendered masonry wall). The rear garden Terrace is accessed from the lower level of the Lounge Room (**Figure 5.32**).

From the upper level of the Lounge Room access is gained through sliding glass doors (again with bevelled edge glass) to the Formal Dining Room of the house (**Figures 5.29, 5.34 & 5.35**). There is a built-in Kafka-constructed sideboard unit along the north wall of the Dining Room with slide out serving rests topped with black glass heat stands (**Figures 5.39-5.41**). Behind the cupboard drawers are varying configurations of drawers (**Figure 5.41**). On the south wall there is a wall-mounted display cabinet (**Figure 5.38**).

The architraves (**Figure 5.24**) and skirtings throughout the Ground Floor and First Floor primary rooms consist of veneered hardboard. The architraves have an added timber batten to create a simple moulding (**Figure 5.19**). The service rooms and Maid's area have painted solid timber skirtings and architraves of a small and simple design (**Figure 5.45**).

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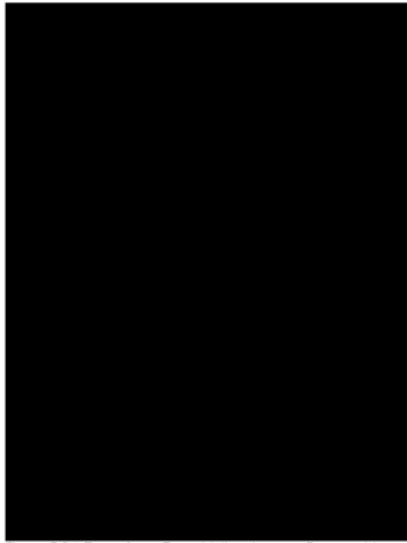


Figure 5.24 Door from Entry Hall to Lounge Room with hardwood timber floorboards giving way to parquetry (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

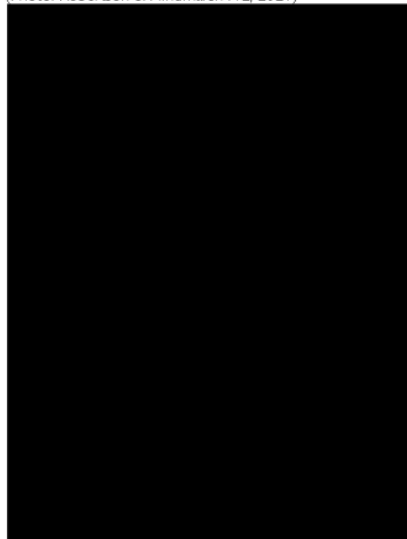


Figure 5.26 Cupboards and built-in bar sink (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

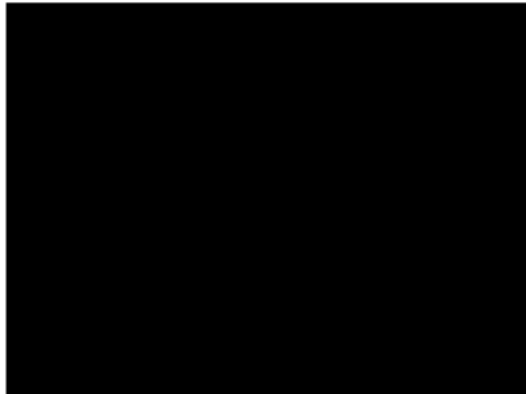


Figure 5.25 Lounge Room ribbed front bar with built-in shelving and sink as well as the timber wall panelling (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

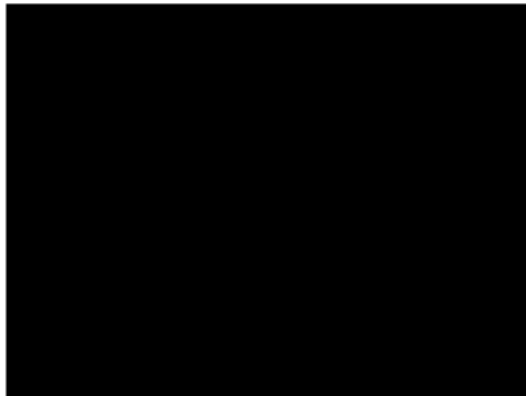


Figure 5.27 Built-in upholstered banquette and upholstered-front cupboard adjacent to the bar in the upper Lounge Room with timber wall panelling behind (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

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Figure 5.28 Built-in upholstered banquette and upholstered-front cupboard adjacent with the sliding glass doors to the Dining Room on the left (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

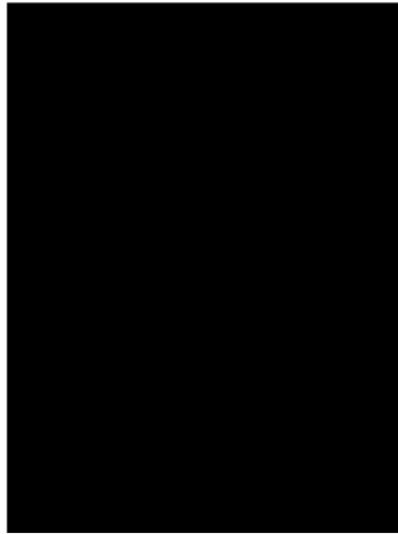


Figure 5.29 Original barley twist pull handles on the sliding glass doors to the Dining Room (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.30 Lower Lounge Room with non-original heater viewed from upper Lounge Room (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

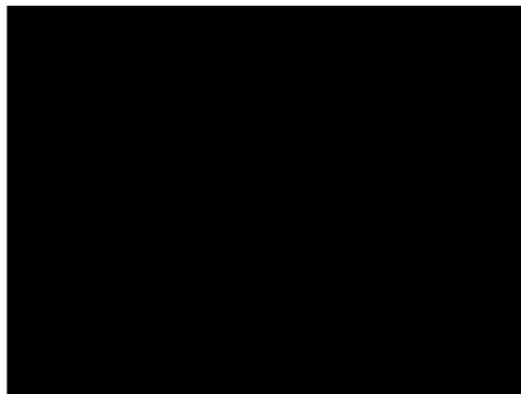


Figure 5.31 Upper Lounge Room viewed from lower Lounge Room (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

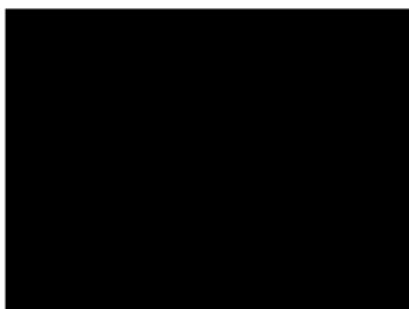


Figure 5.32 East end of lower Lounge Room with door to rear Terrace (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.33 Detail of parquetry and veneered hardboard skirtings (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

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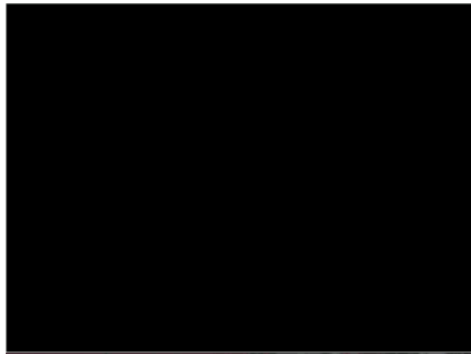


Figure 5.34 Sliding glass Dining Room doors  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

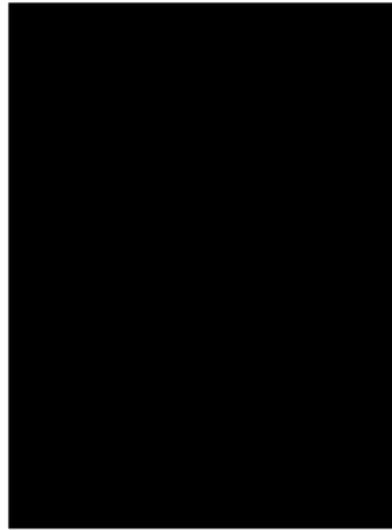


Figure 5.35 Barley twist door handles to the sliding glass Dining  
Room doors (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

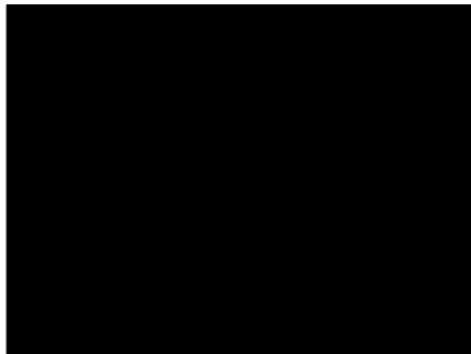


Figure 5.36 Dining Room showing the built-in sideboard  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.37 Dining Room showing the door to the Kitchen and the  
built-in wall shelf unit. (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

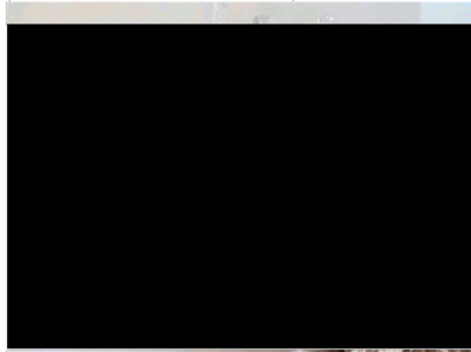


Figure 5.38 Dining Room built-in wall shelf unit  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.39 Dining Room built-in sideboard  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

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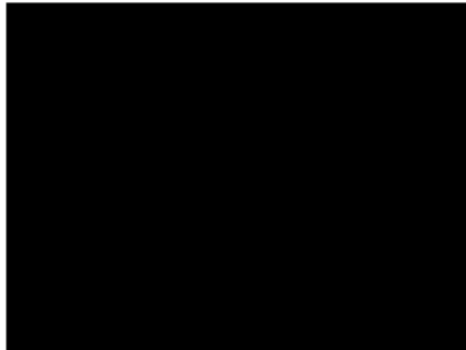


Figure 5.40 Dining Room built-in sideboard pull-out serving shelf (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.41 Dining Room built-in sideboard drawers behind the cupboard doors (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

The servant's section of the house contains the Kitchen with a small meal area overlooking the rear garden (**Figure 5.42**). The meal area gives access to the Formal Dining Room (**Figure 5.37**) in order to facilitate meal service. There is also access from the meal area to the rear Terrace.

There is a separate WC/Powder Room (**Figures 5.48 & 5.49**) and a servant's Bedroom with an Ensuite Bathroom (**Figures 5.50 & 5.51**). Both the Powder Room and Ensuite still retain their original fixtures and wall and floor finishes. The Powder Room floors are tiled with 100x100mm mottled ceramic tiles but the walls are tiled with highly glazed rectangular glass tiles with a creamy white colouring resembling the swirls of sandstone "blocks". The vitreous china fixtures (WC pan and cistern, wall basin, towel rail supports, and toilet roll holder) are all black. The external angles of the walls and the wall shelf behind the door are trimmed with black listello ceramic tiles. The Ensuite bathroom off Bedroom 5 (the former Maid's Room) is finished more plainly with the original cream wall tiles and cream vitreous china WC pan and cistern. The mirrored shaving cabinets in both rooms are original.

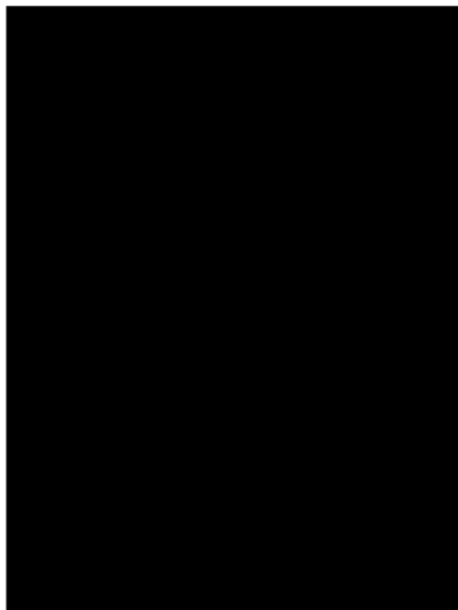


Figure 5.42 Kitchen (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.43 Hall looking west from Kitchen to Bedroom 5 (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

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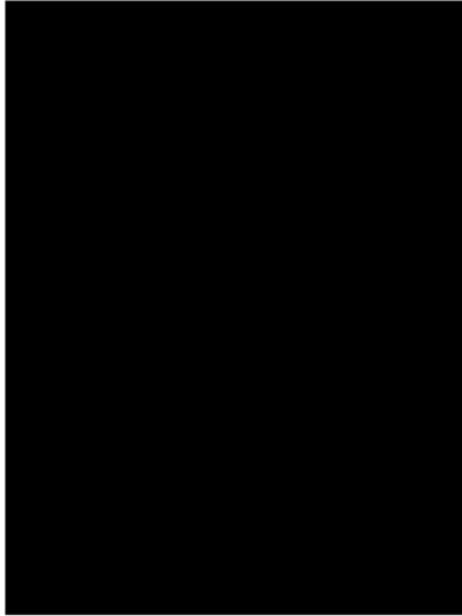


Figure 5.44 Looking from service hall to the Entry Hall  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

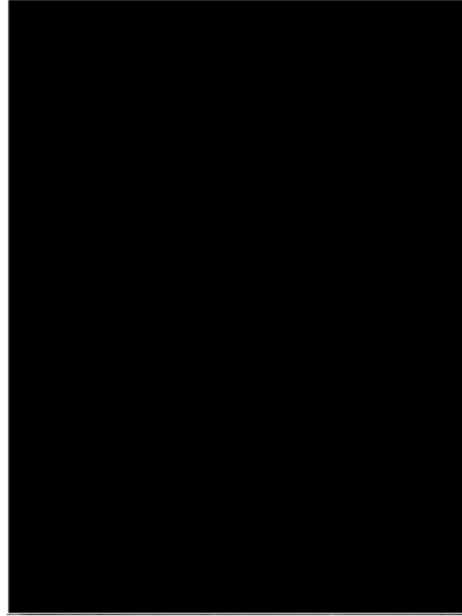


Figure 5.45 Bell in service hall between doors to the Entry Hall and  
the Garage (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.46 Stairs from the service hall down to the original Garage  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.47 Back porch at tradesman's entrance with meter box and  
storage cupboards (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

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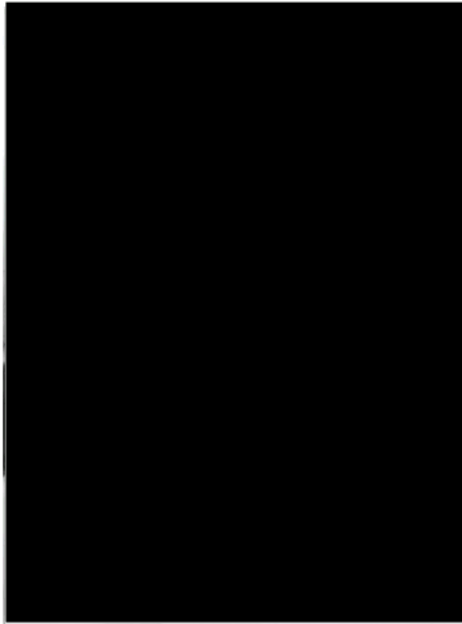


Figure 5.48 Powder Room with original fixtures, fittings and wall and floor finishes (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

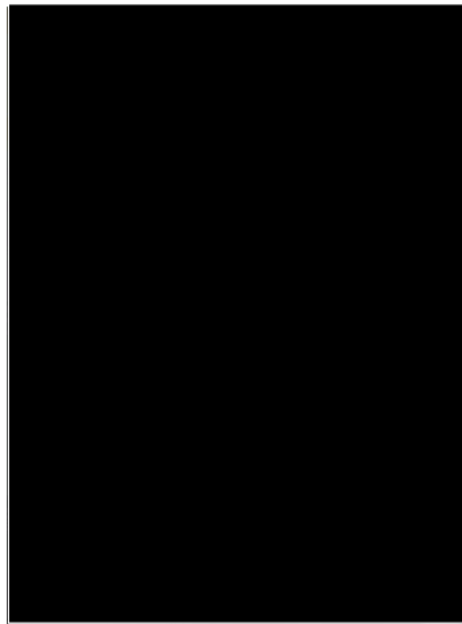


Figure 5.49 Original black tile shelf behind the door of the Powder Room (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

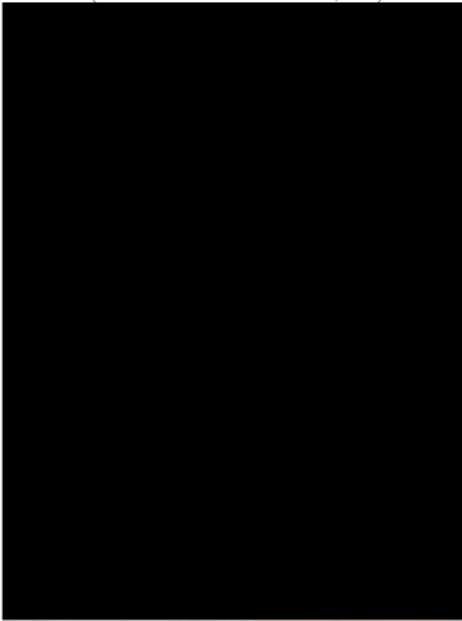


Figure 5.50 Bedroom 5 (original Maid's Room)  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.51 Ensuite Bathroom off Bedroom 5 (original Maid's Room)  
with its original fixtures, fittings and wall and floor finishes  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



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#### **5.1.3.3 First Floor**

The First Floor contains four bedrooms, a separate WC, a Shower Room with WC and a Bathroom without a WC as well as a Living area (a former open verandah), and a large stair landing (labelled Casual Retreat on the real estate plans). The main staircase is carpeted with painted timber stringers, balusters and handrail (**Figure 5.16**). Opposite the staircase are floor to ceiling cupboards (**Figure 5.52**). The thin doors are painted and could be constructed of either hardboard or veneered plywood. The meeting, lock edges of the doors are rebated (**Figure 5.53**). These cupboards and doors appear to date from the construction of the house.

To the left (north) of the stair landing are two bedrooms and a bathroom accessed from a short, narrow hall (**Figure 5.54**). The eastern bedroom (Bedroom 2) has a large casement window in the north-east corner of the room (**Figure 5.55**). The casement sashes are mounted on friction stays and there is no central mullion. In the north wall is a small square recess/shelf immediately above the Ground Floor Lounge Room heater, the original use of which is not clear. It may have housed an electric space heater or it may have been connected to the space surrounding the chimney and enabled the warm air to be ducted into the bedroom. In the centre of the south wall is a tall narrow cupboard (**Figure 5.56**). At the west end of the north side of the house is Bedroom 4 (**Figure 5.58**). The window in the north wall of this bedroom is a large window-wall with a low sill. In the west wall of the room there is a built-in wardrobe with original doors (matching those of the stair landing cupboards) (**Figure 5.59**). Between these two bedrooms is a bathroom with a bath and vanity unit (**Figure 5.57**). The pink spa bath and the vanity unit and the floor and wall tiles in this room are not original.

This north wing of the house would appear to have been the original domain of the Wainberg's two children.

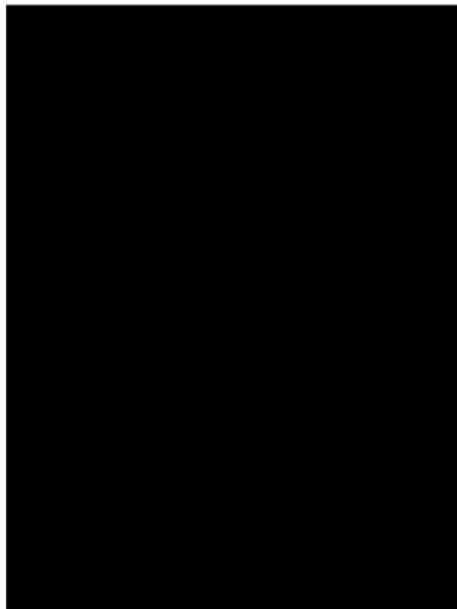


Figure 5.52 First Floor stair landing with original storage cupboards and doorway into the south hall  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

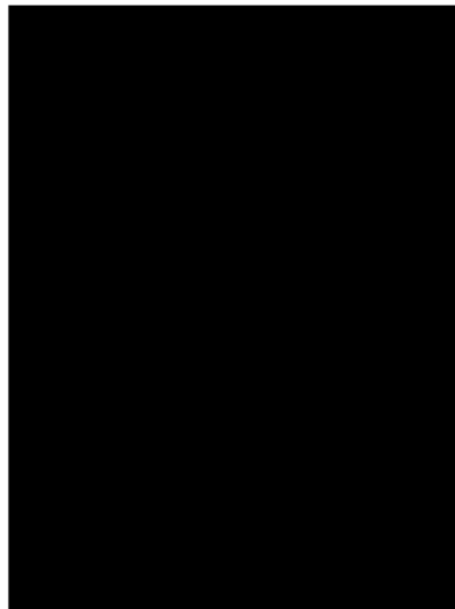


Figure 5.53 First Floor stair landing storage cupboards with rebated meeting stiles (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

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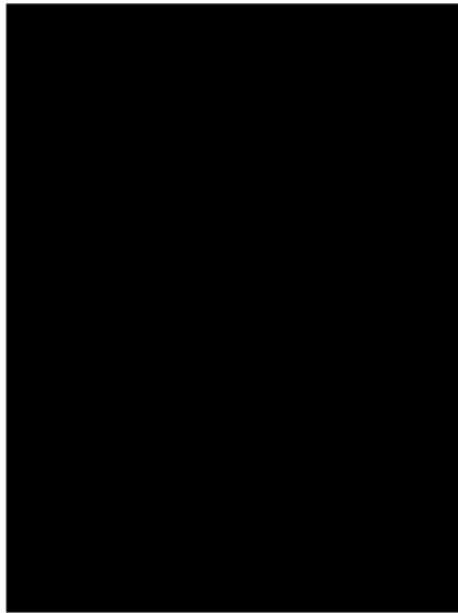


Figure 5.54 First Floor north hall looking east to Bedroom 2  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

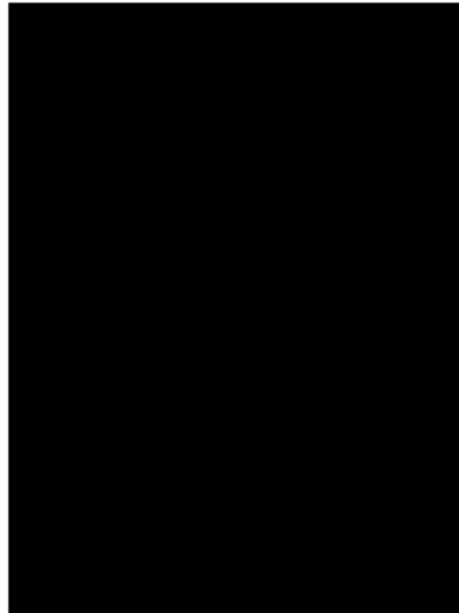


Figure 5.55 First Floor Bedroom 2  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.56 First Floor Bedroom 2 storage cupboard in south wall  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.57 First Floor north Bathroom with non-original fixtures,  
fittings and finishes (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

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Figure 5.58 First Floor Bedroom 4  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

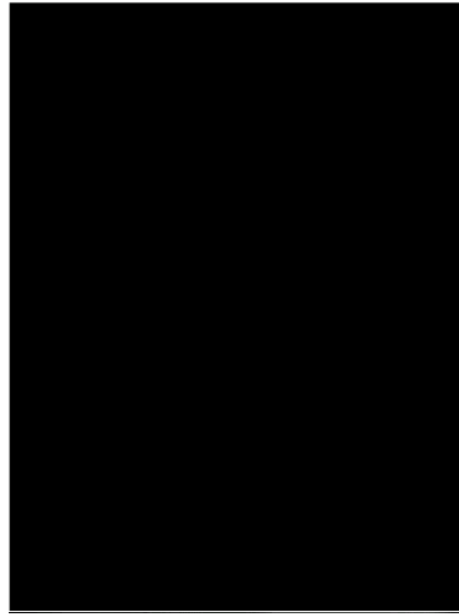


Figure 5.59 Wardrobe in First Floor Bedroom 4  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

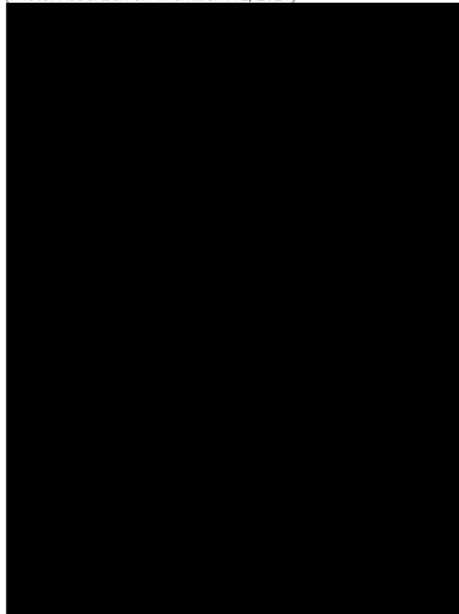


Figure 5.60 First Floor Bedroom 4 original window catch  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

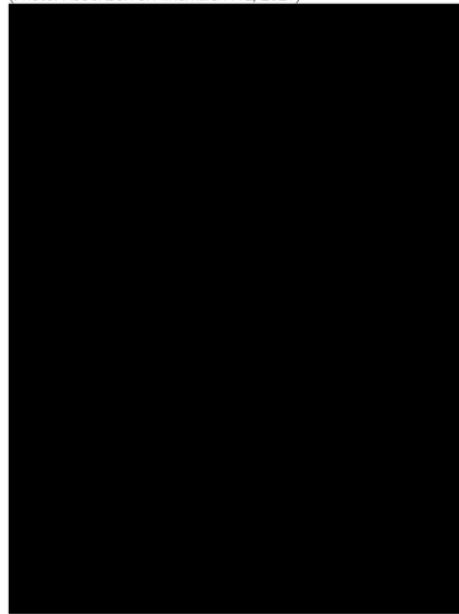


Figure 5.61 First Floor Bedroom 4 original Whitco Manufacturing  
Co (Brisbane) frictionless stay  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

To the right of the stair landing (**Figure 5.52**) is wider hall (**Figure 5.62**) giving access to the Master Bedroom suite, Bedroom 3, the south Shower Room, separate WC room and the First Floor Living area (enclosed former Verandah).

At the west end of the hall is the enclosed former Verandah (**Figures 5.64-5.69**). The floor is paved with square tiles; black and two shades of cream that is one step lower than the general floor level of the First Floor (**Figures**

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**5.66-5.69).** There appears to be the remnant of a drainage outlet at the east end of the verandah (as discerned from outside). The north and east walls and the ceiling of the room are sheathed with timber sheeting faced with fluted timber beads (**Figures 5.64-5.67**). The south-west corner of the roof is supported on a column that is also sheathed in the same fluted timberwork. This timberwork is painted. The west and south walls are enclosed with frameless sliding glass windows mounted above fixed panes of blue glass which are, in turn, located above built-in cupboards with sliding timber doors (**Figures 5.64 & 5.67**). The cupboards at the west end of the room are taller and conceal the blue glass panels (**Figures 5.64 & 5.65**).

On the south side of the hall are the WC room (**Figures 5.70-5.73**) and the Bathroom. The WC room still retains its original fixtures and wall and floor finishes as well as the original ceiling light fitting. The WC room floors are tiled with 100x100mm mottled ceramic tiles but the walls are tiled with highly glazed rectangular glass tiles with a creamy white colouring resembling the swirls of sandstone "blocks". The vitreous china fixtures (WC pan and cistern, wall basin, and toilet roll holder) are all cream. The external angles of the walls are trimmed with cream listello ceramic tiles. The bevelled edge wall mirror above the basin and the corner mirrored shaving cabinet are original, as is the chromed towel rail.

The original south Bathroom now contains a vanity unit, toilet suite and a shower recess. The fixtures and finishes are modern and not original (**Figure 5.74**).

At the east end of the First Floor, accessed from the south hall, is the Master Bedroom suite and Bedroom 3.

Bedroom 3 has a large bank of casement window sashes in its east wall and a modern built-in wardrobe along the west wall adjacent to the door to the room (**Figure 5.75**).

The Master Bedroom suite comprises three spaces; the first being an anteroom containing a built-in wardrobe along the north wall (**Figures 5.76 & 5.77**). The wardrobe has three doors constructed of veneered hardboard, the east one of which is curved. One of the doors contains the metal label indicating the cupboard was constructed by Paul Kafka. This appears to be the only Kafka label on any of the built-in furniture (**Figure 5.79**). The main space is the Master Bedroom which has a large bank of casement window sashes in the east wall (**Figures 5.76 & 5.80**). On the north wall is a large mirror set above a veneered panel (**Figures 5.76 & 5.81**). There are fixing holes and differences in the sun-affected veneers that indicates that shelves or a low cupboard were fixed to the panel. Completing the mirror feature on the north wall is a rectangular mirrored door. The door is detailed as a part of the mirrored and panelled wall with a moulding drawing the elements together. The mirrored door gives access to a room lined with wardrobes and vanity table under the window at the north end (**Figures 5.84-5.86**). This sumptuous room is a much more elaborate set-up than the similar cupboard and vanity unit in the Hillman House by Henry Epstein (**Figures 6.3 & 6.4**). The difference in style between these two houses that were constructed at a similar time illustrates that the design of the joinery was probably heavily influenced by either the client and/or the architect of the respective house, although the selection of veneers and skill of workmanship indicate a common hand in the detail design and construction.

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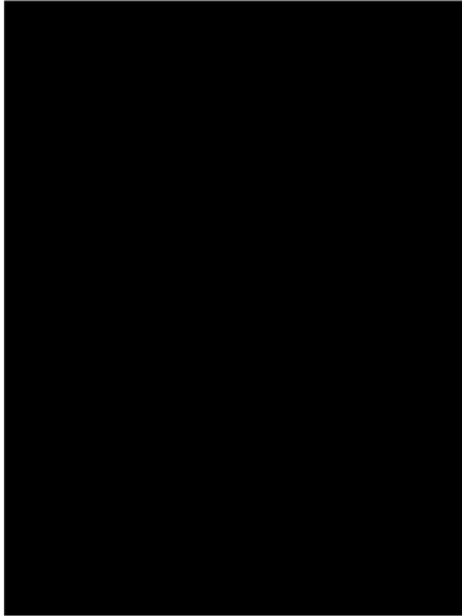


Figure 5.62 First Floor south Hall looking west to Living Room (former Verandah) (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

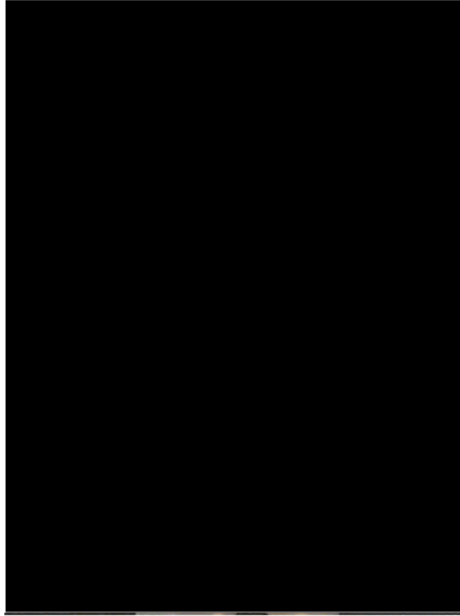


Figure 5.63 East end of First Floor south Hall showing door to laundry chute (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.64 First Floor Living Room (enclosed former Verandah) (Photo: 2020 sale photograph from Real Estate.com)

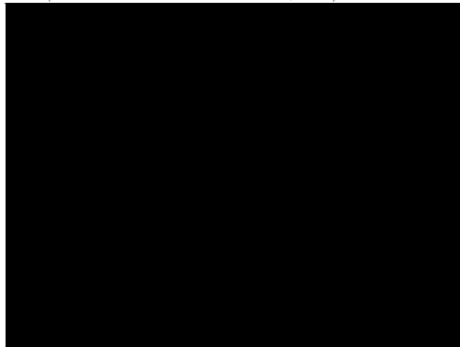


Figure 5.65 First Floor Living Room showing timber panelled walls & ceiling (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

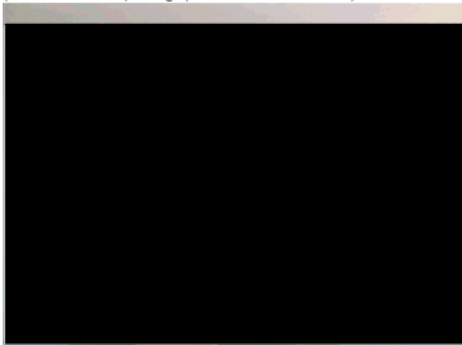


Figure 5.66 First Floor Living Room showing timber panelled walls & ceiling (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.67 First Floor Living Room showing built-in cupboards under windows and blue glass in lower panel (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

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Figure 5.68 First Floor Living Room showing step up to general floor level (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.69 First Floor Living Room showing the three colours of the original floor tiles (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.70 First Floor WC room showing original fixtures, fittings and wall and floor finishes (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.71 First Floor WC room showing original ceiling light fitting and corner mirrored cabinet (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



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Figure 5.72 First Floor WC room showing original corner mirrored cabinet (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.74 First Floor original Bathroom (now Shower Room) showing non-original fixtures, fittings and wall and floor finishes (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.73 First Floor WC room original glass wall tiles (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.75 First Floor Bedroom 3 (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

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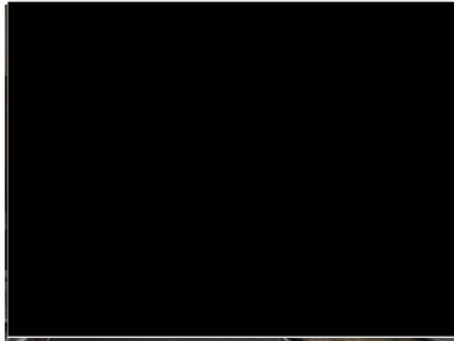


Figure 5.76 First Floor Master Bedroom with anteroom  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.77 Paul Kafka wardrobe unit in First Floor Master Bedroom  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

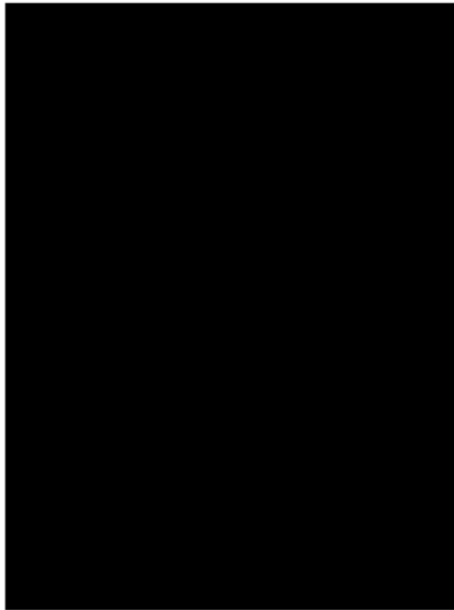


Figure 5.78 Quarter Matched veneer on the inside of the door to  
the Paul Kafka wardrobe unit in First Floor Master Bedroom  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

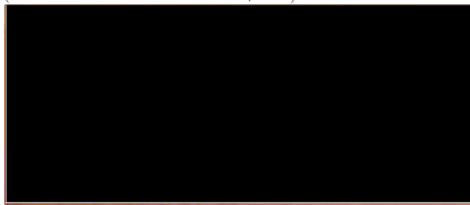


Figure 5.79 Paul Kafka label ("Paul E. Kafka, Modern Exclusive Furniture  
161 Botany Road Waterloo, MX 1300, MX 4117") on inside of door of  
wardrobe unit in First Floor Master Bedroom. Note the numbers "MX  
etc" are telephone numbers  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

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Figure 5.80 First Floor Master Bedroom  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

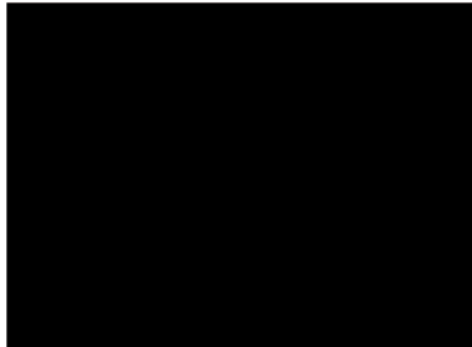


Figure 5.81 Mirrored door, mirror & panel ensemble on the north wall of the First Floor Master Bedroom. (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

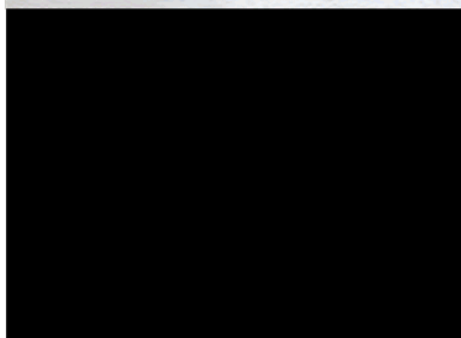


Figure 5.82 Bakelite plate on the south skirting of the First Floor Master Bedroom (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

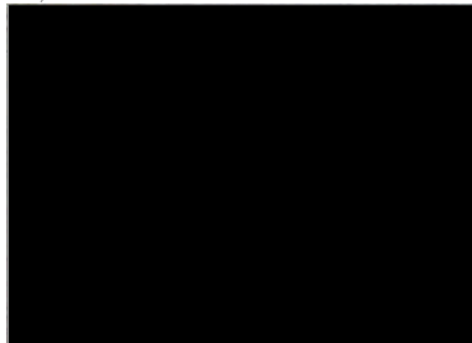


Figure 5.83 Service bell on the south wall of the First Floor Master Bedroom (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

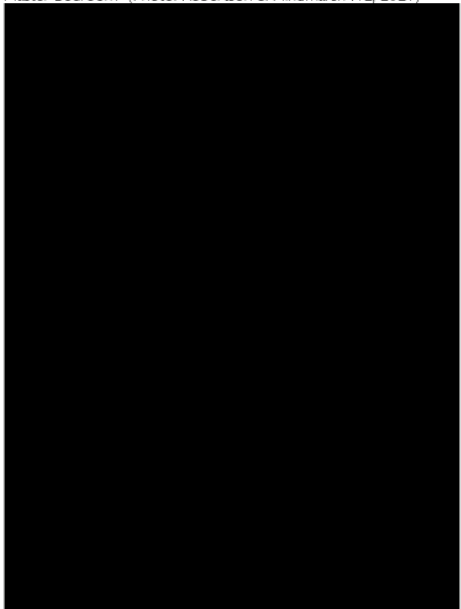


Figure 5.84 Walk-in-Robe accessed from the First Floor Master Bedroom (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

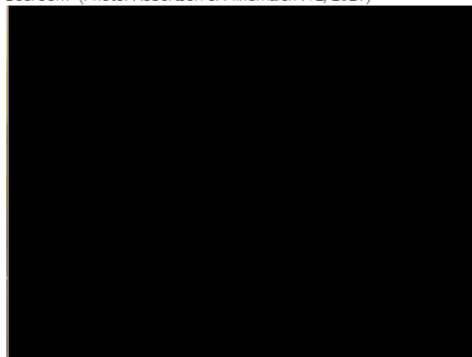


Figure 5.85 Vanity table at the north end of the Walk-in-Robe accessed from the First Floor Master Bedroom (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

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Figure 5.86 Detail of door handle and lock on one of the cupboards in the Walk-in-Robe accessed from the First Floor Master Bedroom (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

#### **5.1.3.4 Basement**

Accessed via steep, lino-covered internal stairs located under the main staircase (**Figure 5.87**), the Lower Ground Floor contains a workshop/storage area (the former tandem double garage) (**Figures 5.88 & 5.89**), a storage cupboard under the stairs, the Laundry (**Figures 5.91 & 5.92**), a separate WC room (**Figure 5.93**) and an underground room labelled 'Billiard Room' (**Figure 5.94**). From the 'Billiard Room' access is gained to the underfloor space of the house. Greater depth under the floor has been created by excavating down below the base of the brick floor piers. The concrete walls supporting the excavated areas is marked with timber formwork and it is possible that the greater depth was created early in the history of the house.

The floor of the former garage is concrete and the floors of the Laundry and WC have been tiled in modern tiles (as have the walls of those rooms). The ceiling of the former Garage, Laundry & WC is painted board-marked concrete and the ceiling of the 'Billiard Room' is sheeted on the underside of the timber floor joists.

The original Basement rooms were the garage, under-stair storage, the Laundry and the WC room. The 'Billiard Room' may have been an original underfloor space used as a cellar.

The former Garage is the location of the original laundry chute that commences on the First Floor (**Figure 5.63**). The chute is constructed of Masonite (**Figure 5.90**).

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Figure 5.87 Stairs from Ground Floor south Hall to the Basement  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.88 View of original garage door opening, driveway and stairs  
to Ground Floor (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

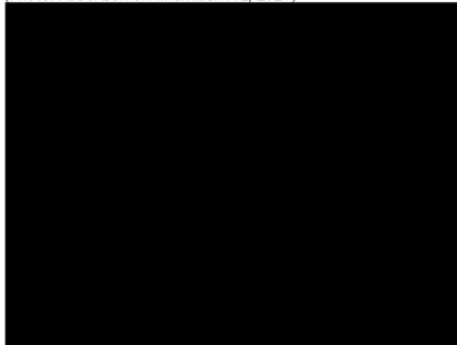


Figure 5.89 View of original garage and pipes from Bathrooms  
above. Note removed original door from upstairs  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

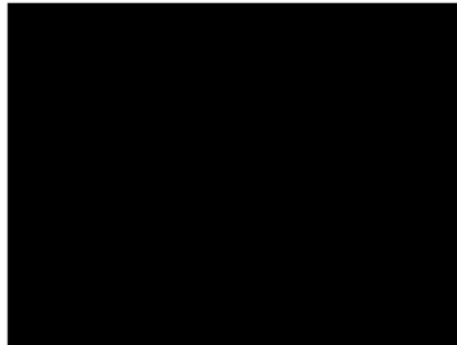


Figure 5.90 Base of laundry chute from the First Floor  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

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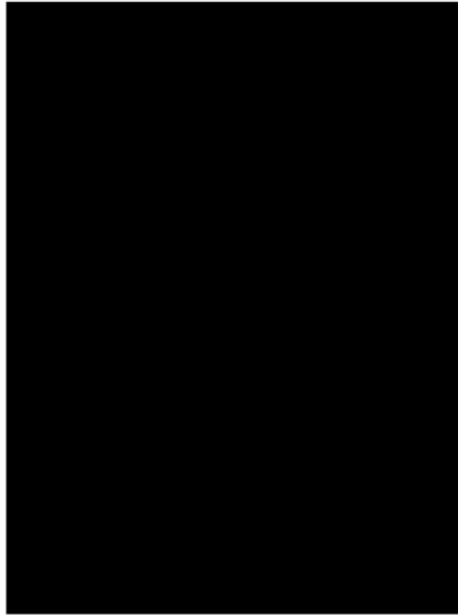


Figure 5.91 Laundry (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)

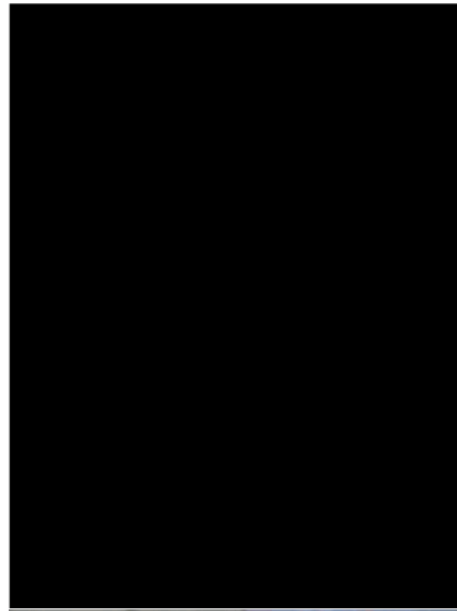


Figure 5.92 Laundry and door to south passage that connects front and rear yards (Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.93 WC off Laundry  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



Figure 5.94 Converted underfloor space ('Billiard Room')  
(Photo: Robertson & Hindmarsh P/L, 2021)



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## **6.0 Comparative Analysis**

### **6.1 The importance of modern architecture in Ku-ring-gai:**

The Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area contains a series of residential buildings, including award-winning designs, that demonstrate the development of most of the interwar and post-war architectural styles such as Art Deco, Moderne, International Modernism, Functionalist and the stream of regional Modernism known by some as the "Sydney School". There is a large number of modern houses in the LGA by well-known architects that represent the best of mid-twentieth century Sydney architecture and which are worthy of preservation for future generations to appreciate and understand the development of post-World War 2 residential architecture. Ku-ring-gai Municipality contains a cross-section of Modernism from the 1930s to the 1970s and beyond.

Some of these Ku-ring-gai houses still retain intact, or substantially intact, interiors that reflect the wealth, social status and taste of the commissioning owners; the Wainberg House being one.

### **6.2 The architecture of the house:**

At this stage, the architect of the house is not known. However, the design of the house, the Polish origins of the owners and the use of Paul Kafka to construct the furniture indicate that the architect was possibly of Central or Eastern European origin.

In addition, the architectural drawing of the street elevation of an earlier, unrealised façade for Paul Kafka's own house in Roseville bears similarities to the Wainberg House (**Figure 6.10**) with its hipped roof and casement windows. Did Kafka use the Wainberg House's architect for the first scheme of his Roseville house before engaging Hugo Stossel for the house that was eventually constructed? This is purely speculative and no documentary evidence has been uncovered to support this hypothesis other than the similarity of the elevational drawing. Whilst it has also been speculated that the Wainberg House could have been designed by Hugo Stossel the design of the house and Stossel's identified works are different. Stossel's usual designs emphasised the horizontal planes with long strip windows and flat roofs. In this respect his designs resembled those of another émigré architect, Henry Epstein, who also employed strip windows, flat roofs and parapets (**Figure 6.1**) as well as engaging Paul Kafka to construct the built-in furniture, joinery and some of the free-standing furniture (**Figures 6.2-6.6**).

### **6.3 Paul Kafka interiors:**

Paul Ernst Kafka's work initially focused in the 1950s and 1960s on furniture and interior designs for residential use, as demonstrated in his regular exhibitions at the Ideal Homes Show and Building Information Centre in Sydney. Into the 1960s, Kafka began to focus more on securing work for hotels to ensure reliable business during a time when international imports made the market particularly competitive.

Given the movable and ephemeral nature of Kafka's furniture designs, it is those buildings which possess both built-in furniture and other interior designs, finishes and fittings that are of most relevance to a comparative analysis for 33 Young Street, Wahroonga. On the basis of available information and surviving evidence of Kafka's work, it appears this property is one of only a few identified as retaining relatively intact internal designs in their original setting. Moreover, the quality of the fitout is such that it demonstrates the wealth and taste of the Wainbergs within Sydney society.

**40 Findlay Avenue, Roseville**, also known as "Hillman House" 1948-1950 (located in Willoughby LGA) was designed by Henry Epstein (1909-1968) and is a modernist house which had significant Kafka interiors.<sup>27</sup> The only remaining elements of Kafka's interior finishes and joinery are the extant Hall seat, Telephone table/Cloak cupboard unit in the entry hall (**Figure 6.2**) and the solid timber stair balustrade connecting the Ground Floor to the First Floor which Willoughby Council required to be kept. The remaining Kafka joinery and built-in furniture had been removed by the third owner of the house before any stop-work order could be issued. It consisted of a deep (window head to ceiling), heavily-grained dark timber pelmet above the steel strip windows of the Living Room, the built-in side board of the Dining Room, the kitchen cupboards, the double-sided wardrobe unit of the main bedroom that concealed the vanity table behind, the main bedroom built-in double bed base and side tables, and the built-in beds, desks and wardrobes of the children's bedrooms.

The June 2010 refusal by Willoughby City Council to remove the original Kafka-designed staircase and the Entry Hall built-in Telephone table/Seat/Cloak cupboard set a precedent for the protection of Modernist interiors in heritage items. This item reflects the significance of the Kafka interiors (especially in conjunction with the work of an émigré architect) and the prominence of Kafka, even where extant interior designs are only partially intact.

<sup>27</sup> "Hillman House" by Sydney Living Museums: <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/documenting-nsw-homes/hillmanhouse>

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Given that 33 Young Street retains both built in furniture and significant internal elements like joinery, it is a more intact and likely rarer example of Kafka's holistic interior furniture and joinery designs.

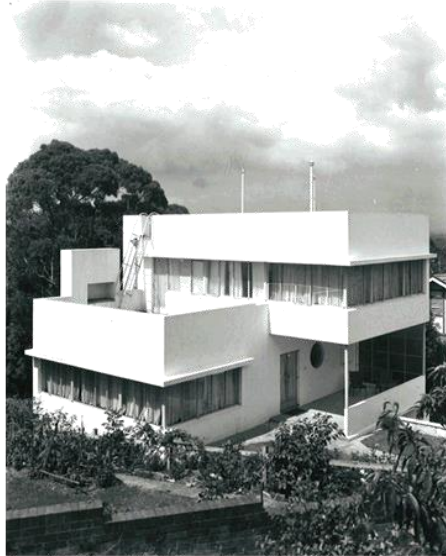


Figure 6.1: View of the Hillman House (1948-1950), 40 Findlay Avenue, Roseville designed by Henry Epstein. Photo by Max Dupain (Courtesy Max Dupain & Associates, Robertson & Hindmarsh Pty Ltd archives)



Figure 6.2: Front Hall stand, cloak cupboard & telephone table Hillman House designed by Henry Epstein & Paul Kafka - extant. Photo by Max Dupain (Courtesy Max Dupain & Associates, Robertson & Hindmarsh Pty Ltd archives)



Figure 6.3: Main bedroom double-sided wardrobe, Hillman House designed by Henry Epstein & Paul Kafka - removed. Photo by Max Dupain (Courtesy Max Dupain & Associates, Robertson & Hindmarsh Pty Ltd archives)



Figure 6.4: Main bedroom vanity table behind double-sided wardrobe, Hillman House by Henry Epstein & Paul Kafka - removed. Photo by Max Dupain (Courtesy Max Dupain & Associates, Robertson & Hindmarsh Pty Ltd archives)

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Figure 6.5: Free-standing drinks cabinet, Hillman House designed by Henry Epstein & Paul Kafka – location unknown. Photo by Max Dupain (Courtesy Max Dupain & Associates, Robertson & Hindmarsh Pty Ltd archives)

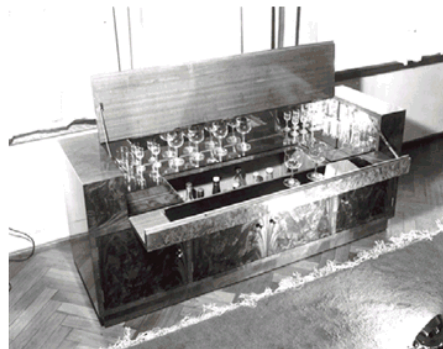


Figure 6.6: Free-standing drinks cabinet, Hillman House designed by Henry Epstein & Paul Kafka – location unknown. Photo by Max Dupain (Courtesy Max Dupain & Associates, Robertson & Hindmarsh Pty Ltd archives)

**11 Eton Road, Lindfield**, also known as "Kafka House" 1948 (located in Ku-ring-gai LGA) is a house designed by Hugo Stossel (1905-2002) for Paul Kafka, which had extensive Kafka interiors.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, by the time this modernist house was flagged to Ku-ring-gai Council, the significant interiors had been stripped. Given that this was the main reason the house was flagged to Council by the community, it was not listed after its assessment. This reflects the significance of Kafka interiors which, in this case, determined the fate of the building. This further underscores the significance and rarity of Kafka interiors in Ku-ring-gai given this substantial loss in the designer's own home at the hands of later owners. The Sydney Living Museum's collection regarding the Kafka House also contains an elevation of a possible proposed, but rejected, scheme for the site, which may be of relevance to identifying the architect of the Wainberg House.

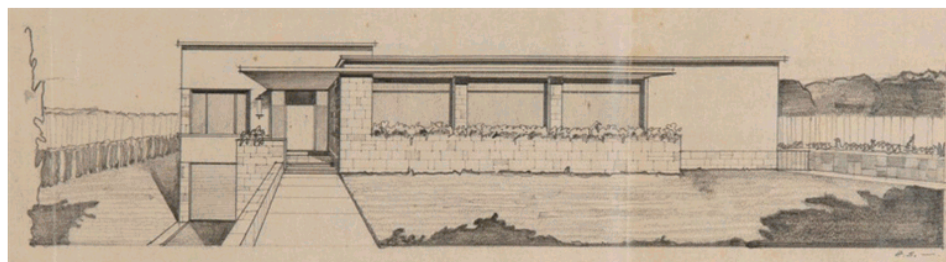


Figure 6.7: Kafka House, 11 Eton Road, Pymble perspective signed by Hugo Stossel.  
 (Source: Sydney Living Museums record no HHT 35743\_005)



Figure 6.8: Main bedroom built-in wardrobe, built-in bed base and side tables designed by Hugo Stossel & Paul Kafka - removed. Photo by Phil Ward  
 (Source: Sydney Living Museums record no HHT 35743\_008)



Figure 6.9: Kitchen built-in cupboards designed by Hugo Stossel & Paul Kafka - removed. Photo by Phil Ward  
 (Source: Sydney Living Museums record no HHT 35743\_007)

<sup>28</sup> Internal Ku-ring-gai Council records.

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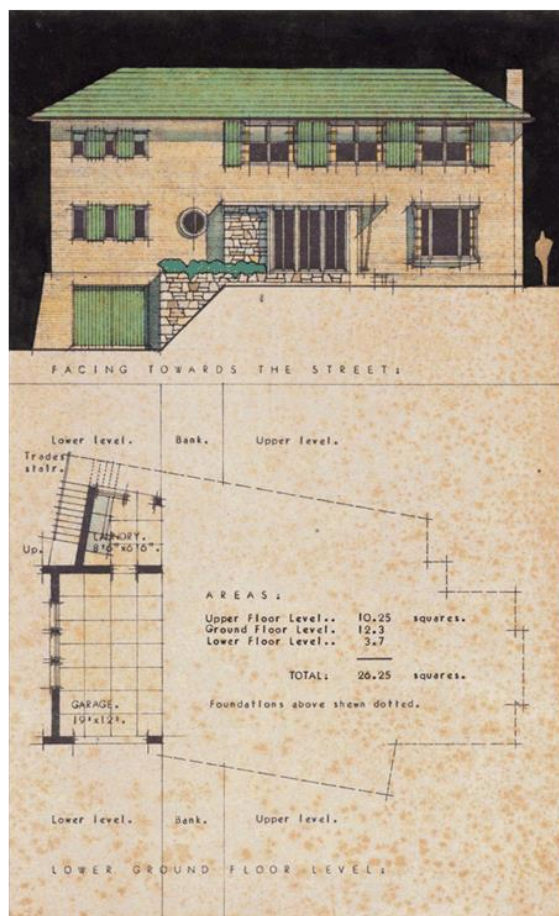


Figure 6.10: Unsigned and undated architectural drawing in the Kafka collection at SLM which may relate to an earlier plan for the Eton Road house. This may be by the same architect who designed the Wainberg House given the similarities between the two schemes of the pitched roof and the casement windows  
 (Source: Sydney Living Museums record no HHT 35743\_003)

**I Ailsa Close, East Lindfield**, also known as "Fogl House" (located in Ku-ring-gai LGA) is a house built 1970-1971. The original owner, Dr Henry Fogl, according to family oral history, purchased a design by Frank Lloyd Wright whilst in the USA and then had the design modified by a local architect. The Fogls also commissioned Paul Kafka Exclusive Furniture Pty Ltd to design and construct the built-in furniture throughout the house as well as some of the moveable furniture.

In November 2020 the house was sold out of the Fogl Family for the first time since it was built. This dwelling is presently not listed but will be considered in an upcoming Ku-ring-gai Post-War Heritage Study. Given the tight-knit ownership of this house over time, it appears to have reasonably intact interiors that were photographed by Sydney Living Museums in May 2020 prior to its sale (**Figures 6.11-6.13**).



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Figure 6.11: | Ailsa Close, East Lindfield, rear facades in May 2020. Photo by Brenton McGeachie (Source: Sydney Living Museums website accessed 12 January 2021)



Figure 6.12: | Ailsa Close, East Lindfield, Living Room in May 2020 with built-in bookcase by Paul Kafka. Photo by Brenton McGeachie (Source: Sydney Living Museums website accessed 12 January 2021)



Figure 6.13: | Ailsa Close, East Lindfield, Dining Room in May 2020 with built-in sideboard by Paul Kafka. Photo by Brenton McGeachie (Source: Sydney Living Museums website accessed 12 January 2021)

**71 Clissold Road, Wahroonga**, also known as "Rose Seidler House" (located in Ku-ring-gai LGA) is a state-listed heritage item built in 1950 to a design by Harry Seidler for his mother Rose. It is considered a highly influential, seminal work in Modernist architecture in Australia. Seidler engaged Kafka to fabricate furniture for this house based on Seidler's own designs – items included the dining table, coffee table, tray-mobile, sofa and fitted cabinetry.<sup>29</sup> Built to Seidler's designs, these are extremely significant interiors as reflected through the listing of the house on the NSW State Heritage Register, and memorialize the significant contributions of émigré architects, designers and tradespeople in Sydney in this period (**Figures 6.14-6.18**).



Figure 6.14: Rose Seidler House, 71 Clissold Road, Wahroonga. Photo by Max Dupain (Source: Philip Drew, "Indesign Luminary: Harry Seidler", Indesignlive accessed 12 January 2021)

<sup>29</sup> "A new way of Living" by Sydney Living Museums: <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/stories/new-way-living>

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Figure 6.15: Rose Seidler House, Dining Room and Kitchen beyond with dining table designed by Harry Seidler and built by Paul Kafka. Photo by Jamie North  
(Source: Sydney Living Museums accessed 12 January 2021)



Figure 6.16: Rose Seidler House, Kitchen designed by Harry Seidler. Photo by Jamie North  
(Source: Sydney Living Museums accessed 12 January 2021)



Figure 6.17: Rose Seidler House, Living Room with cantilevered sideboard designed by Harry Seidler and built by Paul Kafka. Photo by Jamie North  
(Source: Sydney Living Museums accessed 12 January 2021)

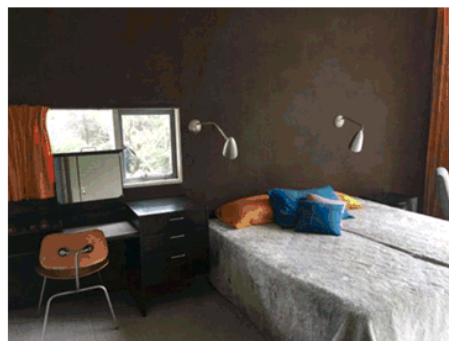


Figure 6.18: Rose Seidler House, main bedroom with bedside drawers/vanity table designed by Harry Seidler and built by Paul Kafka. Note hinged lid of vanity table with mirror on underside of lid. Photo by Jamie North  
(Source: Sydney Living Museums accessed 12 January 2021)

**12 Serpentine Parade, Vacluse** (located in Woollahra LGA) was refurbished by Polish Architect Henry Kurzer in 1959 with interiors (specifically custom-made furniture and cabinetry) by Paul Kafka (**Figures 6.19-6.22**).<sup>30</sup> The house refurbishment was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Moses, retailers. The house retained the Kafka interiors until 1991 when it was refurbished, at which time several elements of the interior were auctioned and acquired by the Historic Houses Trust of NSW. Although no longer intact, and not listed as a result, this case demonstrates the significance of the Kafka interior designs and built-in furniture as reflected by the acquisition of some of the Kafka furniture from the Moses House by an important public institution; the Historic Houses Trust of NSW (now known as Sydney Living Museums).

<sup>30</sup> "Serpentine Parade House" by Sydney Living Museums: <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/documenting-nsw-homes/serpentine-parade-house>



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Figure 6.19: Moses House, 12 Serpentine Parade, Vaucluse, Living Room with built-in and loose furniture made by Paul Kafka. House refurbished by architect Henry Kurzer, 1959. Photo by Louise Lister, 1991 (Source: Sydney Living Museums accessed 12 January 2021)



Figure 6.20: Moses House, Dining Room with built-in and loose furniture made by Paul Kafka. House refurbished by architect Henry Kurzer, 1959. Photo by Louise Lister, 1991 (Source: Sydney Living Museums accessed 12 January 2021)



Figure 6.21: Moses House, Hall stand made by Paul Kafka. House refurbished by architect Henry Kurzer, 1959. Photo by Louise Lister, 1991 (Source: Sydney Living Museums accessed 12 January 2021)



Figure 6.22: Moses House, Couch made by Paul Kafka. Photo by Louise Lister, 1991 (Source: Sydney Living Museums accessed 12 January 2021)

Other known projects of Kafka – of which evidence survives to varying extents – include 19/123 Macleay Street Potts Point, of which the Powerhouse Museum holds 7 drawings of different furniture items and lounge room elements, and 861 New South Head Road, Rose Bay, which contained some items of significant internal furniture in 2011 when a major DA was lodged for the remodelling of the property.<sup>31</sup> It would appear that both of these addresses have since lost their Kafka-designed interiors with items destroyed, resold or acquired by museums. This would also appear to be the case with the large amount of cabinetry Kafka designed for hotel chains in Sydney as illustrated below, given the changeable and trend-driven nature of hotel interiors (Figure 6.23).<sup>32</sup> The above-listed projects indicate the relative scarcity of intact Kafka interiors and the increasing threat that such examples of his work are under.

The comparative assessment supports proceeding with a heritage listing for 33 Young Street, Wahroonga.

<sup>31</sup> "Furniture designs by Paul Kafka" by MAAS: <https://collection.maas.museum/object/53457>; DA 678/2010/1 Woollahra Municipal Council Application Assessment Panel report - 861 New South Head Road, Vaucluse (online)

<sup>32</sup> "Sydney's Forgotten Mid-century Modernists" by Shelley Gare in the Australian Financial Review, 31 October 2020: <https://www.afr.com/life-and-luxury/arts-and-culture/sydney-s-forgotten-mid-century-modernists-20170719-gxehecb>

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Figure 6.23: Max Dupain & Associates image of Kafka cabinetry in Hugo Stossel-designed Travelodge Wynyard room, nd  
(Source: Shelley Gare, "Sydney's Forgotten Mid-century Modernists", *Australian Financial Review*, 31 October 2020)

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## **7.0 Assessment of Heritage Significance**

### **7.1 Assessment Criteria**

The criteria used to assess the significance of this property are the criteria contained within the 2001 NSW Heritage Office publication, *Assessing Heritage Significance*, which were gazetted in April 1999. Contained within that publication are guidelines to assist in determining whether an item or place could be included or should be excluded from listing as a heritage item at either the State or Local levels. Those guidelines are for guidance and are not prescriptive.

The application of the criteria should be based on the physical and documentary evidence, informed by the comparison of buildings and places of a similar type, or by the same architect. The step from the evidence to the conclusions regarding significance is conditioned by either lay or professional opinion and is often conditioned by the level of experience of the person making the assessment. It is important that professional opinion is based on the appropriate experience of the professional assessor (ie buildings assessed by architects, archaeological sites assessed by archaeologists, etc). Multi-disciplinary teams making assessments is the best way of obtaining a comprehensive, balanced assessment of significance.

### **7.2 Application of the Assessment Criteria to 33 Young Street, Wahroonga**

The following section analyses the elements of No. 33 Young Street, Wahroonga that do and do not meet the NSW Heritage Council's criteria for heritage listing.

**Criterion (a) An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).**

#### **Guidelines for INCLUSION**

- shows evidence of a significant human activity
- is associated with a significant activity or historical phase
- maintains or shows the continuity of a historical process or activity

#### **Guidelines for EXCLUSION**

- has incidental or unsubstantiated connections with historically important activities or processes
- provides evidence of activities or processes that are of dubious historical importance
- has been so altered that it can no longer provide evidence of a particular association

#### **Discussion:**

33 Young Street, Wahroonga, appears likely to have historical significance for its ability to demonstrate patterns of European immigration in the inter-war and post-war periods following the series of conflicts in the continent. The immigration of the Polish-Jewish owners of 33 Young Street in the late 1920s is indicative of Jewish immigration to Australia at the time, as a result of growing Polish nationalism and anti-Semitism. Their later engagement of a prominent émigré designer, Paul Kafka, and possibly an émigré architect, further demonstrate the immigration of European individuals to Australia and their significant contributions to a variety of artistic, architectural, intellectual and professional communities.

#### **Significance:**

The Wainberg House is of local historical significance in demonstrating the patterns of European immigration in the inter-war and post-war periods and the successful integration of those migrants into the business community and into Australian society.

#### **Conclusion:**

No. 33 Young Street, Wahroonga meets the requirements for the criterion of historical significance because it:

- shows evidence of a significant human activity
- is associated with a significant activity or historical phase
- maintains or shows the continuity of a historical process or activity

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**Criterion (b): An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).**

**Guidelines for INCLUSION**

- shows evidence of a significant human occupation
- is associated with a significant event, person, or group of persons

**Guidelines for EXCLUSION**

- has incidental or unsubstantiated connections with historically important people or events
- provides evidence of people or events that are of dubious historical importance
- has been so altered that it can no longer provide evidence of a particular association

**Discussion:**

33 Young Street, Wahroonga, appears likely to have historic associational value with the designer of its high-quality interiors, Paul Kafka, as a fine and intact example of the work of the famed emigre designer and furniture maker.

**Significance:**

The Wainberg House at 33 Young Street, Wahroonga is of at least local associative significance because of its strong association with renowned furniture designer and maker, Paul Kafka, and its owners, Mr & Mrs Michael Wainberg for their participation in the Jewish and business communities of Sydney.

**Conclusion:**

No. 33 Young Street, Wahroonga meets the requirements for the criterion of historical association significance because it:

- is associated with a significant person and group of persons

**Criterion (c): An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area).**

**Guidelines for INCLUSION**

- shows or is associated with, creative or technical innovation or achievement
- is the inspiration for a creative or technical innovation or achievement
- is aesthetically distinctive
- has landmark qualities
- exemplifies a particular taste, style or technology

**Guidelines for EXCLUSION**

- is not a major work by an important designer or artist
- has lost its design or technical integrity
- its positive visual or sensory appeal or landmark and scenic qualities have been more than temporarily degraded
- has only a loose association with a creative or technical achievement

**Discussion:**

33 Young Street, Wahroonga, appears likely to have aesthetic value as a fine and intact example of the work of Paul Kafka. It also has aesthetic value for its International Style architecture though the architect on the project is presently unknown.

**Significance:**

The Wainberg House is of local aesthetic significance as its design exhibits the features of the European Modernism translated to the Australian context and climate. The interior timber joinery and built-in furniture is possibly the best extant example of Paul Kafka's work still in its original context.

**Conclusion:**

No. 33 Young Street, Wahroonga meets the requirements for the criterion of aesthetic significance because it:

- shows or is associated with, creative achievement
- is the inspiration for a creative achievement
- is aesthetically distinctive
- exemplifies a particular style

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**Criterion (d): An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.**

- Guidelines for INCLUSION
- is important for its associations with an identifiable group
  - is important to a community's sense of place
- Guidelines for EXCLUSION
- is only important to the community for amenity reasons
  - is retained only in preference to a proposed alternative

**Discussion:**

The Wainbergs were prominent manufacturers in Sydney's cloth and clothing industry (as well as dairying) and prominent members of the Sydney Jewish community. They were philanthropists and undertook charity work within the Jewish and wider Sydney community.

**Significance:**

The Wainbergs were prominent members of Sydney cloth and clothing manufacturing business community as well as being prominent philanthropists within Sydney's Jewish community.

**Conclusion:**

No. 33 Young Street, Wahroonga meets the requirements for the criterion of associative significance because it:

- is important for its associations with an identifiable group (clothiers and the Jewish community)

**Criterion (e): An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).**

- Guidelines for INCLUSION
- has the potential to yield new or further substantial scientific and/or archaeological information
  - is an important benchmark or reference site or type
  - provides evidence of past human cultures that is unavailable elsewhere
- Guidelines for EXCLUSION
- the knowledge gained would be irrelevant to research on science, human history or culture
  - has little archaeological or research potential
  - only contains information that is readily available from other resources or archaeological sites

**Discussion:**

The house was constructed for a wealthy Jewish clothier and businessman with an active socialite wife and it is not known how this house compares with other houses designed for this community. Until larger comparative studies are undertaken it cannot be ascertained if the Wainberg House meets any of the guidelines for inclusion under this criterion. A study of the émigré community and its involvement in industry and Modernism is required. Rebecca Hawcroft's excellent study on the émigré architects and designers of Sydney undertakes part of this work.

**Criterion (f): An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).**

- Guidelines for INCLUSION
- provides evidence of a defunct custom, way of life or process
  - demonstrates a process, custom or other human activity that is in danger of being lost
  - shows unusually accurate evidence of a significant human activity
  - is the only example of its type
  - demonstrates designs or techniques of exceptional interest
  - shows rare evidence of a significant human activity important to a community
- Guidelines for EXCLUSION
- is not rare
  - is numerous but under threat

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**Discussion:**

33 Young Street, Wahroonga, has rarity value as a particular intact and high quality example of the interior design of Paul Kafka, of which there appear to be few comparable known extant examples. Kafka's own house, designed by architect Hugo Stossel, has had its original interiors stripped by a later owner due to a lack of protection.

**Significance:**

The Wainberg House has rarity value as possibly the most intact, high quality Kafka interior still in its original setting.

**Conclusion:**

No. 33 Young Street, Wahroonga meets the requirements for the criterion of meeting the principal characteristics of NSW's cultural places because it:

- demonstrates designs or techniques of exceptional interest
- shows rare evidence of a significant human activity important to a community

**Criterion (g): An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's**

- cultural or natural places; or
- cultural or natural environments

**(or a class of the local area's**

- cultural or natural places; or
- cultural or natural environments).

**Guidelines for INCLUSION**

- is a fine example of its type
- has the principal characteristics of an important class or group of items
- has attributes typical of a particular way of life, philosophy, custom, significant process, design, technique or activity
- is a significant variation to a class of items
- is part of a group which collectively illustrates a representative type
- is outstanding because of its setting, condition or size
- is outstanding because of its integrity or the esteem in which it is held

**Guidelines for EXCLUSION**

- is a poor example of its type
- does not include or has lost the range of characteristics of a type
- does not represent well the characteristics that make up a significant variation of a type

**Discussion:**

33 Young Street, Wahroonga, has representative value as a good example of an International Style building possessing key characteristics of the style. It also has representative value for its ability to demonstrate interior design associated with significant interior designer and furniture maker, Paul Kafka.

**Significance:**

The Wainberg House demonstrates the key characteristics of European Modernism for well-to-do Middle Class business people. It has a relatively stark exterior but a richly decorated interior along the lines espoused by Adolf Loos.

**Conclusion:**

No. 33 Young Street, Wahroonga meets the requirements for the criterion of meeting the principal characteristics of NSW's cultural places because it:

- is a fine example of its type
- has the principal characteristics of an important class or group of items

**7.3 Statement of Significance**

As a good example of International style architecture, 33 Young Street Wahroonga has historic and aesthetic significance and representative value at a Local level. These same values are evident internally through the building's strong association with the designer of its high-quality interiors, Paul Kafka, as a fine and intact example of the work of the famed émigré designer and furniture maker. The planning of the house is also significant at a Local level as it demonstrates the planning of a house designed to accommodate live-in servants for the wealthy immigrant Middle Class.

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In addition to aesthetic significance, the interior of 33 Young Street Wahroonga demonstrates rarity as a particularly intact and high-quality example of the interior design of Paul Kafka still located in its original setting, of which there appear to be few comparable known examples. This significance is potentially at a State level with regard to intact post-war interiors designed/constructed by émigré designers.

33 Young Street, Wahroonga, has historical significance at a local level for its ability to demonstrate patterns of European immigration in the inter-war and post-war periods following the series of conflicts in Europe.

#### **8.0 Significance of elements, spaces, materials and finishes**

The form of the house should not be altered by additions to the house or alterations to the roof forms, heights and shapes. The existing non-original rear Terrace roof and supporting columns could be rebuilt in a more sympathetic manner that relates to the architecture of the house. Any reconstruction of the carport should also relate to the architecture of the house and not detract from the style of the house.

The materials of the exterior of the house should not be altered as the external form of the house, and the materials with which it is constructed, is of Exceptional significance. No new openings should be made and no original windows or doors should be removed. Door and window furniture (such as door knobs, pulls, backplates, escutcheons, window catches) and hardware (door and window hinges – including the original friction stays) should be retained and maintained in good working order.

The significant interior elements such as the joinery (skirtings, architraves, doors, door furniture), built-in furniture (benches, cupboards, wardrobes, sideboards and wall units), wall panelling, floor finishes are of Exceptional significance and should be retained in-situ. Clear and/or stained finishes should not be painted. The cupboard and drawer handles and hardware (such as door locks) should be retained.

Original light fittings should also be kept as well as original electrical fittings such as Bakelite wall plates. It is noted that the light switches and power points have been recently replaced.

The remaining original Bathroom spaces with original fixtures, fittings and wall and floor finishes should be retained in their original condition (ie the Ground Floor Powder Room and the Ensuite Bathroom off the former Maid's Room and the First Floor WC Room). However, the photographs reveal that some spaces have been altered and no longer retain original features (eg the kitchen, the First Floor north bathroom and the First Floor south Shower Room).

#### **9.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

It is our opinion that No. 33 Young Street, Wahroonga meets the criteria for listing as a Local item of environmental heritage under the Ku-ring-gai LEP under the following criteria:

- Historical significance
- Associative significance
- Aesthetic significance
- Rarity

The significant elements of the house as identified in this report (especially in Section 8) should be retained in order to maintain the significance of the house to the heritage of Ku-ring-gai Municipality.

#### **10.0 Bibliography**

Hawcroft, Rebecca (ed), 2017, *The Other Moderns: Sydney's forgotten European design legacy*, Sydney: NewSouth Publishing

Lowden, Andrew Paul, 1995, *Who Is Dr Henry Epstein?* A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Bachelor of Architecture University of Technology, Sydney

Taylor, Jennifer, 1972, *An Australian Identity: Houses for Sydney 1953-63*, Sydney: Department of Architecture, University of Sydney



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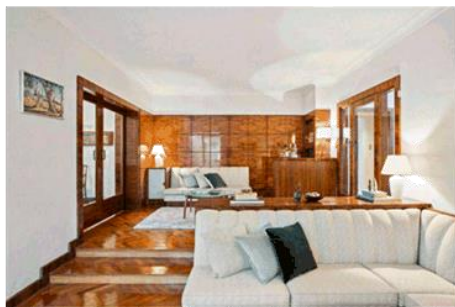
**Addendum: Interior photographs in the public domain**



Addendum Figure 1: 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, Entrance Hall (labelled 'Foyer' on plans)  
 (Photo: 2020 sale photograph from Real Estate.com)



Addendum Figure 2: 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, Bar at end of upper Living Room (labelled 'Lounge' on floor plans)  
 (Photo: 2020 sale photograph from Real Estate.com)



Addendum Figure 3: 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, Looking from lower to upper Living Room (labelled 'Lounge' on floor plans)  
 (Photo: 2020 sale photograph from Real Estate.com)



Addendum Figure 4: 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, Looking from upper to lower Living Room (labelled 'Lounge' on floor plans)  
 (Photo: 2020 sale photograph from Real Estate.com)



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Addendum Figure 5: 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, Formal Dining Room  
(Photo: 2020 sale photograph from Real Estate.com)



Addendum Figure 6: 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, First Floor Living Room  
(Photo: 2020 sale photograph from Real Estate.com)



Addendum Figure 7: 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, First Floor Main Bedroom  
(Photo: 2020 sale photograph from Real Estate.com)

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**Proposed Heritage Listing of 33 Young Street, Wahroonga**

File: S10066

*Vide: GB.17*

To have Council consider the proposed heritage listing of 'Wainberg House', the property known as 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, on Schedule 5 of the Ku-ring-gai Local Environmental Plan 2015 ('KLEP 2015').

**Resolved:**

(Moved: Councillors Greenfield/Smith)

That a Planning Proposal to list 'Wainberg House' - 33 Young Street, Wahroonga, as a local heritage item, be prepared and submitted for a Gateway Determination under section 3.34 of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**