

Heritage inventory sheet

Based on the NSW Heritage Office State Heritage Inventory sheet

ITEM DETAILS			
Name of Item	"Lapin House" – house and interiors		
Former name			
Item type	Built		
Address	Number 2C	Street Dumaresq Road	Suburb Rose Bay
Property description	Lot A		DP 33652
Use	Current Dwelling house		Former Dwelling house
Statement of significance	<p>2C Dumaresq Road, Rose Bay is significant because of its strong associations with prominent architect Neville Gruzman. His first commission, it was his initial foray into the exploration of fulfilling client needs and the relationship between interior and exterior spaces and demonstrates principal aspects of his later work. The importance of the house in Gruzman's oeuvre is underlined by its inclusion in several exhibitions between 1954 and 1983 and in the book <i>Gruzman: an architect and his city</i>. The house is also associated with Dr Mollie Lapin, Neville Gruzman's aunt, a medical practitioner of some note who commissioned him to design the house.</p> <p>2C Dumaresq Road is an important and uncommon Modernist house in the Woollahra local government area showing the direct influence of European Modernism. It is also a rare surviving example of the work of Neville Gruzman showing direct European Modernist influence, particularly that of Le Corbusier. The House is notable for its technical interest, demonstrated by the use of reinforced concrete floors and roof and by the wide expanses of glazing in the western elevation. It is also notable for its aesthetic qualities and is distinguished by its exploitation of the views from the site and its spatial complexity. It has important shared visual associations with the contemporary Bursill House at 2B Dumaresq Road, which was also designed by Neville Gruzman.</p>		
Level of significance	State: Potential	Local: Yes	
Heritage listings			
DESCRIPTION			
Designer	Neville Gruzman		
Builder	William Bursill		
Construction years	1951-52		

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<p>Physical Description</p>	<p>2C Dumaresq Road is a two storey detached residence with a flat roof. It is constructed of brick, with a concrete raft slab at ground floor level and concrete flat slab floors at other levels – the ground floor is split level, reflecting the fall across the site. External wall surfaces are lined with cement render. The house demonstrates many characteristics of Modernist architecture, or what has also been termed the Post-War International style. Characteristics of the style seen in the house include a sleek prismatic form with uninterrupted surfaces and an emphasis on large glass areas, plain smooth wall surfaces. The massing of the building is rectangular, oriented to the west. A cantilevered section containing the main bedroom projects to the west on one side of the first floor. The original free form swimming pool has been retained on the western side of the house, as has the barbecue on the eastern side of the house.</p> <p>The overall form of the house, along with the pattern of fenestration, are intact. External paving around the house consists of terrazzo, which is consistent with the drawings prepared for Michael Kirby in 1980 and is likely to be early, if not original.</p> <p>The internal layout of the house on both levels is essentially the same as originally documented. The interior of the house, as described by Neville Gruzman, is oriented towards the view west across Rose Bay and Sydney Harbour. The ground and first floors are lined with terrazzo (carpet in bedrooms) as described by Gruzman. Stair risers and treads are also lined with terrazzo.</p>
<p>Physical condition</p>	<p>The house appears to be in generally good condition, with some minor damage visible to the internal floor finishes.</p>
<p>Modification and Dates</p>	<p>Changes to the exterior of the house include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of several original timber window sashes with metal sashes. • Original timber transoms and mullions appear to have been retained in some locations. Original window sashes and doors have been retained in some locations. • Glass blocks have been installed on the first floor on the northern side of the building, enclosing the narrow balcony. • A new window has been installed in the western wall of the cantilevered section of the first floor. • The open ground floor level court along the northern side of the house has been roofed over with a lightweight translucent glazed roof and enclosed. • Pool fencing has been installed along the eastern side of the swimming pool. • A lightweight canopy has been installed above the shallow balcony on the eastern side of the house. • Replacement or boxing in of the tubular steel pipe columns supporting the cantilevered section of the first floor. • Construction of the steps and terrace to the west of the swimming pool. <p>The main internal alterations are the kitchen and bathrooms on the ground and first floors. What appears on early drawings as joinery elements separating the kitchen from dining area have been removed. The balcony on the northern side of the first floor has been retained rather than incorporated into bathroom and wardrobe spaces as indicated on the Kirby plans. Original internal doors and door hardware have been retained, although light fittings appearing in the photograph of the living Room taken by Max Dupain in 1954 have been removed.</p>
<p>Archaeological potential</p>	<p>Identified as low.</p>

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HISTORY

The coastal regions of Sydney between Port Jackson and Botany Bay are the ancestral territories of the Eora people. The traditional owners of the land now within the Woollahra Council area were the Cadigal (Gadigal) and the Birrabirragal people. In common with other tribes living by Sydney Harbour, the Gadigal lived in harmony with the natural resources within their country, fishing from canoes or hunting the animals that lived in surroundings. The tribe appears to have moved within their territory in response to the seasons and family connections. Shell middens and other archaeological remains in the area provide material evidence of many centuries of sustained connection to the land that also sustained them. The arrival of white settlers caused the wholesale disruption of traditional life and the cultural practices of the Eora people generally. Despite enormous challenges, today many Indigenous people identify as Eora and maintain cultural practices and a connection to Country.

The site on which 2C Dumaresq Road stands was part of 24.28 hectares formally granted to Samuel Breakwell on 8 March 1831. Breakwell (died circa 1847) was a free settler who sailed to Australia from Cork in Ireland aboard the Atlas, arriving at Port Jackson in July 1802. Sir Henry Browne Hayes (1762-1832), who has been described as a convict adventurer, was also on board the Atlas. Hayes won an influential place in Cork's community but was transported to New South Wales after kidnapping a wealthy heiress in 1797. Samuel Breakwell served as Hayes' valet. After a decade in NSW the two men advertised their intention to "proceed to Europe" at the beginning of October 1812.

Hayes acquired farms formerly belonging to Captain Thomas Dennett in August 1803, which he named "Vaucluse" and where he subsequently resided. Breakwell remained in his employ and whilst in Sydney served as land steward and manager of Hayes' farm. Breakwell's grant, although formalised in 1831, was promised to him by Governor Macquarie in June 1811. It was conveniently close to "Vaucluse" and Breakwell named the property "Tivoli", apparently after the village and grand house at Tivoli near Cork. At the time he and Hayes departed from Sydney, Breakwell was in possession of both "Tivoli" and "Vaucluse". Once he returned to Ireland, Breakwell settled in Cork. In July 1830, Breakwell gave Hayes' nephew, Attwell Adam Hayes, power of attorney to sell both the Vaucluse and Tivoli estates and the following year the Tivoli estate was sold to Thomas Horton James of Sydney. The Vaucluse estate passed to John Piper and then in 1829 to William Charles Wentworth.

Thomas James was a merchant, landowner and sometime author who was sometimes known as a "tobacco merchant". Although it has not been ascertained when James arrived in Sydney, he left it during 1837. James offered the Tivoli estate for sale on 29 December 1831. 7.28 hectares were subsequently sold to merchant Peter Haydon at the end of 1834. This property was then acquired by soldier and civil engineer William John Dumaresq (1793-1868), who became a member of the first Parliament in NSW. He represented several districts in the Legislative Council between 1843 and 1848 and between 1851 and 1856. Following re-election in 1856 he resigned and, after his wife died at "Tivoli" in May 1868, moved to Queensland. Following his death "Tivoli" passed to his eldest son William Alexander Dumaresq, a barrister and grazier who was prominent in the affairs of the Glenn Innes community. William Alexander Dumaresq died in May 1880 and "Tivoli" passed into the jurisdiction of his estate's trustees.

The trustees sold "Tivoli" to Morrice Alexander Black, actuary to the AMP Society and the property title was conveyed to him on 24 June 1881. On 6 July 1889 "Tivoli" and its grounds were mortgaged to Elizabeth Onslow. Morrice Black applied to bring some 8 hectares of land onto Torrens Title in March 1888. The subject property included land from Breakwell's grant and a section of land originally granted to W C Wentworth. Morrice Black died in August 1890. The 8 hectare property was then subdivided as DP 2538 and offered for sale as the Tivoli Estate. The subject site represented part of lot 6 of this estate. The subject Dumaresq Road, and associated Dumaresq Reserve, were formed and named at this time honouring their previous owner.

In June 1904, Elizabeth Onslow exercised her power of sale as mortgagee to sell a large section of the estate to Ralph Leigh of Sydney, Conveyancer, and Ned Harry Scott of Newtown, Merchant, comprising whole lots 4-12, 19-23, 35-48, 65-66 and part lots 1-3, and 13-16. Between 1906 and 1907, Leigh and Scott sold the land to builder Edward Horne of Forest Lodge. Horne began to sell off the lots as individual holdings from 1908, with the subject site contained in Lots 5 and 6 of DP 2538 sold to Bertram Murray, a Sydney financial agent, in

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March 1908. Together the lots were 2 rood, 17 ½ perches in size (approx. 2475 sqm). It appears that Bertram Murray had been seeking to purchase land in the Tivoli Estate as early as December 1904, when he was taken to court by Leigh and Scott for trespassing on land and removing hewn stone from the estate, which he believed he was entitled to after a transaction with a third party. Around a decade later, Murray built a residence across the eastern section of his property. He lodged a building application for a house and garage with Council in 1919, followed by additions in 1921. In October 1920, Murray placed an advertisement for ‘fifty loads of filling required’ at his property in Dumaresq Road suggesting earthworks were taking place at this time. He had previously resided elsewhere in Rose Bay (at Villa Rose in Newcastle Street from at least 1911) and moved into “Villa Rose” at 4 Dumaresq Road in 1921. Murray retained the property until his death in April 1933, and in July 1934 the property passed via an application by transmission to the Permanent Trustee Company of New South Wales Limited and Clifford Winter of Sydney, Solicitor. Murray’s estate was valued at £100,000, indicative of his substantial wealth and holdings.

In August 1934, the property title was transferred to Winifred Aurora Olive Davies, wife of mercer Enoch John Davies of Sydney. A mortgage was taken out with the Mutual Life and Citizens Assurance Company Limited in the same month and discharged in May 1946. A new certificate of title was issued to Winifred Davies in July 1935.

In June 1946, the Davies sold the property to Charles Lapin of Rose Bay, whose occupation was recorded as an investor, and Mollie Amelia Ginsburg Lapin, his wife as joint tenants.¹ In 1949, Mollie Ginsburg Lapin commissioned her nephew, Neville Gruzman, then a third-year architecture student, to design a house on her property (now known as 2C Dumaresq Road). A building application was lodged for the work in 1951.² In September 1951, when the Lapin’s residence was nearing completion, the Lapins set about subdividing their land into three separate holdings, retaining lot A (the site of 2C Dumaresq Street) and selling the southern (Lot B) and eastern (Lot C) titles.³ Separate right of carriageway accesses were designated. Lot B was sold to builder Samuel William Bursill in September 1951. Bursill also commissioned Neville Gruzman to design his residence on Lot B (now known as 2B Dumaresq Road). In June 1953, Charles and Mollie mortgaged the property to the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Limited.

In 1959 the Lapins lodged a building application with Woollahra Council to convert the house built on Lot C for Bertram Murray into a block of flats. Today that building, known as No. 4 Dumaresq Road, is currently operating as 6 flats. In 1960, Charles and Mollie Lapin applied for alterations to 4 Dumaresq Road. Lot C was retained by the Lapins until the second half of 1960, when its title was transferred to Margaret Cleary and Valda Rebecca Goldberg.⁴

Following Mollie Lapin’s death in August 1974 (her husband assumed to have predeceased her), the property was eventually conveyed to solicitor Peter Robert Murphy of Bondi Junction in April 1976, who appears to have been managing her estate. The house was subsequently sold to the Honourable Mr Justice Michael Donald Kirby in September 1976. Kirby and his partner retained the property until 2014, when it was sold on 23 November that year. The site was purchased by the current owners in March 2020.

HISTORICAL THEMES

Australian Theme	State theme	Local theme
4 Building settlements, towns and cities	Towns suburbs and villages	Post-war development of Rose Bay
8 Developing Australia’s cultural life	Creative Endeavour	The work of Neville Gruzman

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HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT	
<p>Historic significance SHR criteria (a)</p>	<p>2C Dumaresq Road is not considered to fulfil this criterion. It is not associated with significant historical events within Woollahra or with important cultural phases or movements. While its construction is evidence of the consolidation of population in Woollahra after World War II, there are many buildings across the local government area that provide similar evidence.</p> <p>2C Dumaresq Road does not meet the State or Local significance threshold for Criterion A.</p>
<p>Historical association SHR criteria (b)</p>	<p>2C Dumaresq Road is associated with Dr Mollie Lapin, Neville Gruzman's aunt, who commissioned him to design the house. A medical practitioner of some note who enjoyed a productive and varied career, she was the youngest medical graduate to have emerged from the University of Sydney when she graduated.</p> <p>2C Dumaresq Road has strong associations with prominent and influential architect Neville Gruzman. It was his first commission and a seminal building for him. It was his initial foray into his ongoing exploration of the relationships between inside and outside space, an essential aspect of the architect's residential work. The house also demonstrates three principal aspects of his later work - the site as a major determinant in the development of his design; moulding and shaping space through planar surfaces and overlapping and interpenetrating space; and rapport with clients, reflected in their long tenure in houses he designed for them (Mollie Lapin was still living in the house in the year she died). Inclusion in several exhibitions between 1954 and 1992 and in the book <i>Gruzman: an architect and his city</i> is indicative of its significance in Gruzman's body of work. Gruzman is significant locally because of the buildings that he designed in the local government area, which contribute to its architectural heritage, and his involvement in local government. Gruzman's contribution to architecture was recognized by his receipt of the Order of Australia in 1985.</p> <p>2C Dumaresq Road has associations with Justice Michael Kirby, who with his partner occupied the house from 1976 to 2014. This period represents a large part of his significant legal career during which he was chairman of the Australian Law Reform Commission (1975 to 1984), appointment as a judge in the Federal Court of Australia (1983), appointment as President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal (1984), Chancellor at Macquarie University (1984-1993) and Justice of the High Court of Australia (1996-2009), amongst other important appointments. However, his occupation in the house is unlikely to have influenced his legal career.</p> <p>2C Dumaresq Road meets the State significance threshold for Criterion B because of its associations with Neville Gruzman, who made an important contribution to the history of NSW.</p> <p>2C Dumaresq Road meets the Local significance threshold for Criterion B because of its associations with Neville Gruzman and with Mollie Lapin. Gruzman made an important contribution to the history of the local area through his architecture and his active involvement in Woollahra Council. Mollie Lapin is significant because of her associations with the house, thus making an important contribution to the local area.</p>

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<p>Aesthetic significance SHR criteria (c)</p>	<p>2C Dumaresq Road is an important Modernist house in the Woollahra local government area. Although significant Modern Movement houses were built in the local government area during the 1930s, such as 6 Graylind Place, Vauclose and the Prevost House at 65 Kambala Road, Bellevue Hill, 2C Dumaresq Road is notable for its spatial, structural and aesthetic qualities. These include the vertical interpenetration of space at ground and first floor levels, use of reinforced concrete floor slabs in a residential building, expansive glazed western façade and convincing Modernist expression.</p> <p>The house has important visual associations with the Bursill House at 2B Dumaresq Road. The two houses were both designed by Neville Gruzman around the same time and share stylistic similarities.</p> <p>2C Dumaresq Road meets the Local significance threshold for Criterion C. It has critical acclaim of a place as a notable local example by a prominent architect, is unusual in its application of Modernist architectural design within its local context and is of particular interest in a local comparison of similar places and has a notable or distinctive construction response to local constraints.</p>
<p>Social significance SHR criteria (d)</p>	<p>2C Dumaresq Road is unlikely to fulfil this criterion. However, further investigation is required to confirm this.</p>
<p>Technical/Research significance SHR criteria (e)</p>	<p>2C Dumaresq Road is unlikely to fulfil this criterion. The information that it can yield can also be obtained from other sites in the local government area. However, further investigation is required to confirm this.</p>
<p>Rarity SHR criteria (f)</p>	<p>2C Dumaresq Road is an uncommon surviving example of a house in the Woollahra local government area demonstrating the direct influence of European Modernism on local domestic architecture in the middle third of the twentieth century. It is distinguished by its exploitation of the views from the site and its spatial complexity when compared to pre-war Modernist houses such as 6 Graylind Place and the Prevost House.</p> <p>2C Dumaresq Road is a rare surviving example of the work of Neville Gruzman showing direct European Modernist influence, particularly that of Le Corbusier. His work evolved quickly after visiting Europe in 1953-54, Japan in 1955 and the United States of America circa 1956, absorbing a wider range of influences.</p> <p>2C Dumaresq Road meets the Local significance threshold for Criterion F. It demonstrates a distinctive attribute that is rare within the local area.</p>
<p>Representativeness SHR criteria (g)</p>	<p>2C Dumaresq Road is representative of early and experimental forays into European Modern Movement architecture in Woollahra and other parts of NSW between the second half of the 1930s and the first half of the 1950s.</p> <p>2C Dumaresq Road meets the Local significance threshold for Criterion G. It is a particularly fine example of a Modernist house in the local area, demonstrating a range of characteristics that are typical of the class.</p>
<p>Integrity</p>	<p>Notwithstanding some modifications undertaken to it in the past, 2C Dumaresq Road retains a high degree of integrity, including the key aspects of its original design.</p>

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RECOMMENDATIONS				
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The residence should be retained and conserved. – The surviving original external form, interior configuration and original spaces, fabric and finishes including original timber framed windows, doors and door hardware should be retained and conserved in any future development. – External features including the swimming pool, barbecue, original or early external paving including terrazzo paving and the paving in the rear yard spaces, and the sandstone rock face at the rear of the site should be retained and conserved. The pattern of landscaping should also be retained. – Later additions including the glazed enclosure to the northern court, glass brick balcony infill, metal balustrading and canopy to the eastern balcony are intrusive. Consideration should be given to their removal. – Consideration should be given to replacing aluminium framed window sashes with more appropriately detailed sashes. – All conservation and new works should be undertaken in accordance with the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter). – It is recommended that a Conservation Management Plan or Conservation Management Strategy be prepared to guide future works and conservation at the place. – Consideration should be given for nominating the Lapin House for inclusion in the State Heritage Register. 			
INFORMATION SOURCES				
Type	Author/Client	Title	Year	Repository
Study	TKD Architects for Woollahra Municipal Council	Lapin House 2C Dumaresq Road, Rose Bay – Heritage Assessment	2023	Woollahra Council records
Study	Danny O'Brien for Proponents	Aboriginal Heritage Due Diligence Assessment Report: Proposed Alterations & Additions to Existing Dwelling at No. 2C & Demolition of all Existing Structures in No. 4 Dumaresq Road, Rose Bay	2023	Woollahra Council records
AUTHOR OF THIS REPORT				
Name				Date
Tristan Ryan – Senior Strategic Heritage Officer, Woollahra Council (largely copied from TKD Architects' Heritage Assessment, 2023, prepared by Roy Lumby and Olivia Turner)				August 2023

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IMAGES			
Image Caption	Left: The western side of Lapin House showing the original configuration and close relationship with Bursill House. Right: Bursill House, viewed from the south, with Lapin House beyond (Source: Heritage Assessment by TKD Architects, August 2023, pp. 16-17, from SLNSW ON 558/Box 3/nos. 416-422, Max Dupain photographs)		
			
Image Year	1954	Image author and Copyright Holder	Max Dupain, State Library of New South Wales

IMAGES	
Image Caption	Interior of 2C Dumaresq Road, Rose Bay, looking south. Left by Max Dupain, 1954, right by TKD Architects, 2023. TKD Architects notes that “Notwithstanding the installation of tracks and sliding doors [at left, background] (which can be removed), the space has retained much of its original character.”
	

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Image Year	Left: 1954, right: 2023	Image author and Copyright Holder	Left: Max Dupain, State Library of New South Wales; right Roy Lumby, TKD Architects
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IMAGES

Image Caption	Lapin House, 2C Dumaresq Road, Rose Bay, 12 July 2023. The pool, foreground, has had a cover placed over the top.
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Image Year	2023	Image author and Copyright Holder	Tristan Ryan, Woollahra Council
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