



Lapin House
2C Dumaresq Road, Rose Bay

Heritage Assessment



Prepared for Woollahra Municipal Council

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Cover

Cross Section, September 1954 (Max Dupain photograph).

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the report

This Heritage Assessment report for the house at 2C Dumaresq Road, Rose Bay has been prepared by Tanner Kibble Denton Architects (TKD) on behalf of Woollahra Municipal Council.

2C Dumaresq Road was designed by prominent architect Neville Gruzman while still studying architecture for his aunt, Dr Mollie Ginzburg Lapin and her husband Charles Lapin. The Modernist house was completed in 1952. It is also known as the Lapin House.

Woollahra Municipal Council is seeking a heritage assessment to resolve whether the property meets the threshold for inclusion on Schedule 5 of Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 2014 (LEP).



1 The Lapin House, 2C Dumaresq Road, Rose Bay viewed from Lyne Park.

1.2 Report methodology and structure

This report has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013. The Burra Charter is widely acknowledged as the principal guiding document to conservation work and practices of places of cultural significance. The Burra Charter has been adopted widely as the standard for best practice in the conservation of heritage places in Australia.

The content and format of the report also follows the guidelines contained in Assessing heritage significance: Guidelines for assessing places and objects against the Heritage Council of NSW criteria (State of NSW and Department of Planning and Environment, 2023).

1.3 Author identification

This document was prepared by Olivia Turner, Heritage Specialist and Dr Roy Lumby, Senior Heritage Specialist of Tanner Kibble Denton Architects. It was reviewed by George Phillips, Principal of Tanner Kibble Denton Architects.

1.4 Acknowledgements

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- Tristan Ryan, Woollahra Municipal Council.
- Kristy Wellfare, Woollahra Municipal Council.
- The occupants of 2C Dumaresq Road.

1.5 Study area

2C Dumaresq Road is located on the western side of the street, close to its intersection with New South Head Road. The site is a battle axe block bounded to the west by Rose Bay and by detached residential development on the north, east and south. Access to the site is via a right of way from Dumaresq Road. The site is identified as Lot A Deposited Plan 33652.



- 2 Location aerial plan, not to scale. 2C Dumaresq Road is outlined and shaded.
Source: SIX Maps with TKD Architects overlay.



- 3 Detail aerial site plan, not to scale. 2C Dumaresq Road is outlined and shaded.
Source: SIX Maps.

2 Historical analysis

2.1 Site history

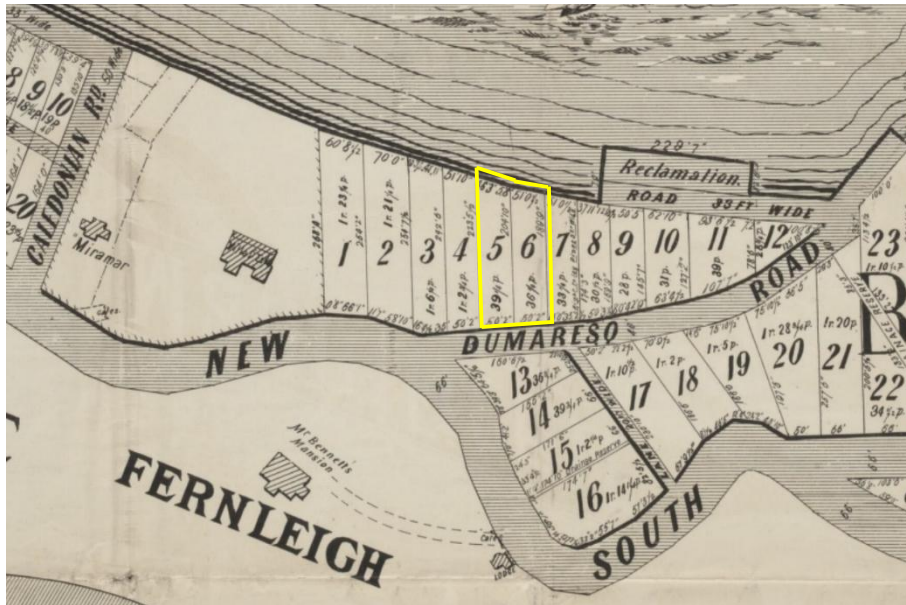
The Woollahra Local Government is the traditional land of the Gadigal and Birrabirragal clans of the Dharug language group.

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.



4 Detail from an auction notice for the sale of allotments in the Tivoli Estate
Source: NLA.

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 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.

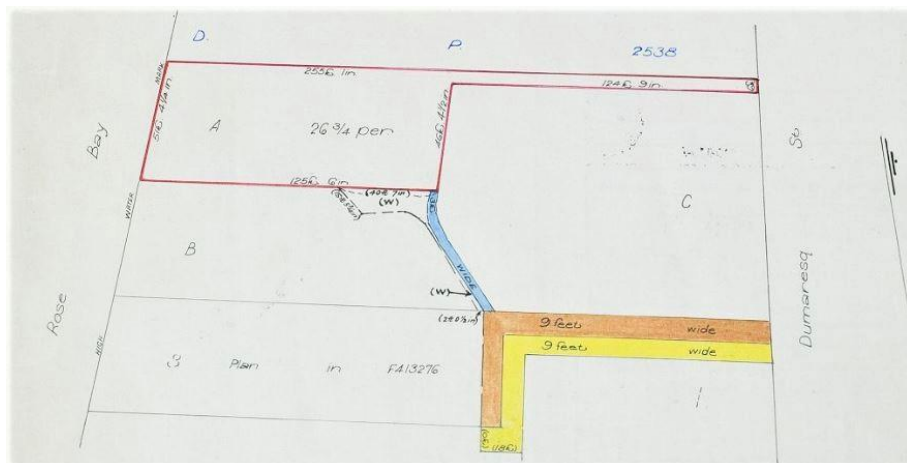
Around a decade later, Murray built a residence across the eastern section of his property. He lodged a building application for a house and garage with Council in 1919, followed by additions in 1921. In October 1920, Murray placed an advertisement for 'fifty loads of filling required' at his property 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.



- 5 Aerial photograph from 1943 showing development on the site of 4 Dumaresq Road.
Source: SIX Maps with TKD overlay.

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.



- 6 Subdivision of Lots 5 and 6 DP 2538 into Lots A, B and C DP 33652.
Source: HLRV NSW Certificate of Title Volume Folio 6517 Folio 136.

¹ <https://hlrv.nswlrs.com.au/>, Certificate of Title 4950-211

² Woollahra Building Application Index - Building Application 202/51

³ <https://hlrv.nswlrs.com.au/>, Certificate of Title 4950-211, 6517-136



- 7 4 Dumaesq Road (arrowed) around the time it was acquired by the Lapins, circa 1948-1950. The block of flats under construction at right was constructed by William Bursill, who later built 2C Dumaesq Road (refer to Section 2.5)
Source: SLNSW ON 447/Box 175, Milton Kent photograph.



- 8 Aerial photograph of buildings in DP 33652, 1955. 2C Dumaesq Road is indicated.
Source: https://www.spatial.nsw.gov.au/products_and_services/aerial_and_historical_imagery

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 Dumaesq Road, is currently operating as 6 flats. In 1960, Charles and Mollie Lapin applied for alterations to 4 Dumaesq 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 pre-deceased 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.

⁴ <https://hlrv.nswlrs.com.au/>, Certificate of Title Volume 6512 Folio 126.

2.2 Dr Mollie Amelia Ginsburg Lapin, MBBS

Mollie Amelia Ginsburg was born around 1907 to Abraham and Brindle Ginsburg.⁵ She was the sister of Neville Gruzman's mother Rosalind. Her birth was not recorded in Australia, suggesting she was born overseas. Her parents were originally from Russia but lived for several years in England. The Ginsburgs had made their home in Sydney in Castlefield Street, Bondi by 1921.⁶ Attaining her leaving certificate in 1924, Ginsburg promptly began studies in medicine at the University of Sydney.⁷ Ginsburg was the youngest female graduate at Sydney University (in her cohort), and her success and capability was demonstrated in her achievement of a University Exhibition for her work.⁸ By 1928 the Ginsburgs were living in Marian Street, Newtown.

The engagement of Miss Ginsburg and Mr Charles Lapin of Enmore, a fellow medical student, was announced in June 1928, when Miss Ginsburg was studying for her fifth-year finals in June 1928, and Mr Lapin was pursuing pharmaceutical honours. The wedding date was set for the following year once the pair had finished their medical examinations.⁹ The pair married in January 1930, and took up residence at 5 Malvern Court, Croydon Avenue, Croydon.¹⁰ By September 1930 Mrs Ginsburg-Lapin had passed her exams, and it was recorded that Dr Ginsburg-Lapin was the youngest female doctor in Australia, being only 22 at the time.¹¹

In March 1932, Dr Mollie Ginsburg Lapin was appointed to the medical staff of Mater Misericordiae Hospital, North Sydney.¹² Later that year in October, Dr Ginsburg-Lapin was appointed to a hospital in Queensland, relocating with her husband.¹³ In January 1935 Dr Ginsburg-Lapin was registered with the Medical Board of South Australia and appears to have practiced in the state for at least that year.¹⁴ Dr Ginsburg-Lapin appears to have begun the year in the town of Freeling, where she was on the local Hospital Board, as well as a founding patron of the Freeling Golf Club.¹⁵ She and her husband won the local Monte Carlo dance competition in August 1935.¹⁶ Later in the year she was appointed as the medical officer to Morgan in South Australia. An overview of her career to that time is given in the local newspaper, helping to fill in some of the gaps in her career:

Dr. Mollie A. Ginsburg-Lapin, M.B., B.S., who is the new medico at Morgan, is a graduate of Sydney University. Since qualifying as a doctor she has held the following appointments: House surgeon Lewisham Hospital, Sydney, Royal Hospital for Women, Sydney, Royal Alexandria Hospital for Children; and Mater Misericordia Hospital, Sydney, superintendent at Manly District Hospital, Sydney, and St. Joseph's Hospital Sydney.



9 Mollie Ginsburg, photographed in August 1926 while an undergraduate student.
Source: *The Sun*, 19 August 1926, p.24, Elizabeth Mahony photograph.

- 5 *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 'Social and General,' 11 October 1929, Page 7.
- 6 *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 'News and Views,' 20 May 1921, Page 10.
- 7 *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 'News and Views,' 1 February 1924, Page 11.
- 8 *Murray Pioneer and Australian River Record*, 'The Murray Pioneer – Personal,' 28 Nov 1935, Page 10.
- 9 *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 'Women's Page,' 8 June 1928, Page 8.
- 10 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 'Lapin-Ginsburg,' 3 January 1930, Page 5; *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 'Dr Mollie A Ginsburg,' 12 September 1930, Page 6.
- 11 *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 'Dr Mollie A Ginsburg,' 12 September 1930, Page 6; *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 'Social and General,' 19 Sep 1930, Page 7.
- 12 *The Sun*, 'Men and Women,' 5 March 1932, Page 4.
- 13 *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 'Social and General,' 28 October 1932, Page 5.
- 14 *Chronicle*, 'Medical Board of South Australia,' 17 January 1935, Page 26.
- 15 *Bunyip*, 'Freeling Hospital Board,' 3 May 1935, Page 9; *Bunyip*, 'Golf,' 3 May 1935, Page 10.
- 16 *Kapunda Herald*, 'Freeling News,' 9 August 1935, Page 3.

*Dr. Lapin has also been associated with the Cancer Research Committee, Sydney, and Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney. She has also practised and is registered in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Dr. Lapin, who was the youngest woman graduate at Sydney University, gained a university exhibition. The Morgan and Cadell district is to be congratulated in having acquired such a brilliant young medico.*¹⁷

In April 1938, Dr Ginsburg-Lapin was appointed Government Medical Officer at Branxton in the Hunter Region of NSW, having practiced in the area since late 1937.¹⁸ In 1940, she was practicing in Riverstone.¹⁹ By the mid-1940s Dr Ginsburg-Lapin and her husband appeared to have settled in Sydney. In June 1946, they purchased Lots 5 and 6 of DP2538 in Rose Bay, off Dumaresq Road. Dr Ginsburg-Lapin commissioned her nephew, Neville Gruzman, to design a house on part of Lot 5 in 1949. A building application was lodged with Woollahra Council during 1951.²⁰

Mollie Ginsburg-Lapin died in August 1974. She is understood to have occupied the house at 2C Dumaresq Road from the time it was completed.

2.3 Justice Michael Kirby

Michael Kirby AC CMG was born in Surry Hills in 1939 to Donald and Jean Kirby. After completing secondary schooling he attended the University of Sydney, attaining several degrees - Bachelor of Arts (1959), Bachelor of Laws (1962), Bachelor of Economics (1965), and Master of Laws (First-Class Honours) (1967). Kirby commenced his legal career as an articled clerk at the Sydney firm M. A. Simon & Co. After graduation, he worked for Hickson, Lakeman & Holcombe and was a partner there from 1963 to 1967. Kirby was admitted to the New South Wales Bar in 1967. He was appointed Deputy President of the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in 1975, becoming the youngest man to that time appointed to federal judicial office. Kirby also served as chairman of the Australian Law Reform Commission between 1975 and 1984. In 1983, Kirby was appointed a judge in the Federal Court of Australia, followed by appointment as President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal in 1984. From 1984 until 1993 Kirby held the position of Chancellor at Macquarie University.

Kirby served as President of the Court of Appeal of Solomon Islands in 1995 and 1996. Kirby was the UN Special Representative for Human Rights in Cambodia from 1993 to 1996 and President of the International Commission of Jurists between 1995 and 1998. In February 1996 he was appointed a Justice of the High Court of Australia, a position he held until February 2009.

After his retirement, Kirby was appointed to several honorary academic roles at Australian universities. He has served on many other boards and committees, notably the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) and the CSIRO. He is Patron of the Friends of Libraries Australia (FOLA) and many other bodies, and has held roles with UNESCO, UNHCR, the OECD and other organisations on issues such as human rights



10 Justice Michael Kirby in court chambers, Sydney, 1990
Source: NLA PIC Online access #PIC/15413/23, Reece Scannell photograph.

17 *Murray Pioneer and Australian River Record*, 'The Murray Pioneer – Personal,' 28 Nov 1935, Page 10.

18 *The Maitland Daily Mercury*, 'News of the Day,' 18 April 1938, Page 4.; *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 'At High Speed,' 1 Dec 1937, Page 11.

19 Riverstone Historical Society, 'Shops In Riverstone Up Till 1960 – Doctors' (2010). Accessed online at: https://www.riverstonehistoricalsociety.org.au/blog/?page_id=513; Windsor and Richmond Gazette, 'Alleged Assault,' 2 Feb 1940, Page 3.

20 Woollahra Council Green Cards Building Application 202/51.

and HIV/AIDS. An advocate for LGBTIQ+ rights, animal welfare and the arts, his many civilian honours include the Australian Human Rights Medal (1991) and the UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education (1998).²¹

2.4 Neville Gruzman

Neville Bruce Gruzman (1925-2005) was born in Sydney to Ichel (Samuel) and Rosalind Gruzman. He grew up in Bondi and Bellevue Hill. His father died in 1933 when he was aged 8, leaving his mother to raise him and his two brothers. Gruzman attended Sydney Boys High School before enrolling in the Architecture School at the University of Sydney in 1946.

He found the first three years of study difficult and repeated third year three times. At this time he was invited to design the house for his aunt and her husband. In his fourth year at university he studied under George Molnar, who had been employed by Professor Leslie Wilkinson in 1945. Hungarian-born Molnar graduated from Budapest Technical University in 1932. His practice, in the town where he was born (ceded to Romania in 1919), included houses and apartment buildings. He left Romania for London in 1938 then migrated to Australia in 1939. At the University of Sydney Molnar introduced his students to European Modernism and used Bauhaus teaching methods. He was also a renowned cartoonist, his work appearing regularly in the *Daily Telegraph* and then the *Sydney Morning Herald*.²² Molnar became a major influence on Gruzman while at the University of Sydney, as did major painter Lloyd Rees.

Gruzman graduated from university and then registered as an architect in 1952. He travelled through Europe during 1953 and 1954. On his return Gruzman entered into private practice in Sydney. After visiting Japan for several months in 1955 (one of several Australian architects who did so during the 1950s), Gruzman drew extensively on traditional Japanese architecture in his work. (refer to Section 4.3). Gruzman shared studio space with other significant and influential architects Ruth Harvey, Bill Lucas and Tony Moore. According to Gruzman,

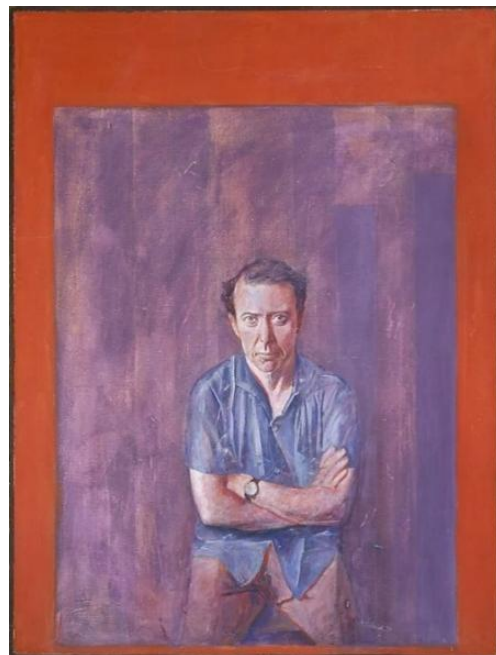
*... Bill Lucas ... called into the studio. 'This is too much space for you', he pronounced, 'Ruth (Cotter Harvey) and I are moving in'. Bill, an ex-serviceman and designer of an important 'glass' house at Castlecrag and Ruth had graduated with me. We then shared the studio for many years, formed the 'Design Group' and did one or two buildings together.*²³

In the second half of the 1950s Gruzman travelled to the United States of America, where he explored the architecture of New York and of Frank Lloyd Wright. This proved as influential as his experience of Japanese architecture and was followed by a return to the United States in 1963 focussing on Wright's work. In addition to travel and running an architectural practice, Gruzman undertook a Masters Degree in Town and Country Planning at the University of Sydney.

21 <https://www.hcourt.gov.au/justices/former-justices/former-justices/michael-donald-kirby-ac-cmg> Reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press Australia, from The Oxford Companion to the High Court of Australia, by Tony Blackshield, Michael Coper and George Williams (eds), 2001, © Oxford University Press, www.oup.com.au

22 Philip Goad, Molnar, George" in Philip Goad and Jullie Willis, *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, pp.467-468.

23 Goad and Willis, p.275.



11 Neville Gruzman (second from left) with other members of the Royal Art Society Junior Auxiliary, June 1947 (left); Eric Smith's Archibald winning portrait of Neville Gruzman, 1970 (right).

Sources: *The Sun*, 23 June 1947 p.8;

<https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/146.1971/>.

Gruzman was elected foundation board president of the newly formed Craft Association of Australia in 1964. From 1965 until 2002 he taught at the Town Planning at Department University of NSW for several years and remained active teaching at universities after that. Artist Eric Smith's portrait of Gruzman was awarded the Archibald Prize for portraiture in 1970. Smith (1919-2017) was a client of Gruzman's in the mid-1950s and after. His work in turn was commissioned for several of Gruzman's projects.

In July 1984 Gruzman wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald* affirming that his sole concern was "solving human problems in terms of shelter in the best way possible, using every available appropriate contemporary material and technique." It was "the total environment that concerned him, from local microclimate to the needs of his clients."²⁴

Gruzman was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 1985 for his services to architecture. Between 1991 and 1996 he served as a board member with the National Trust of Australia (NSW). During the same period he decided to get into politics as a way of improving the environment as he considered that teaching and writing had been unsuccessful at achieving this. Following an abortive attempt to enter state politics, in 1991 he entered into local politics and became a member of Woollahra Municipal Council. Gruzman was mayor of Woollahra during 1995 and 1996 before retiring from the council in 1999.

24 Cited in John Haskell, "Towards an Australian Idiom: the architecture of Neville Gruzman", *Art and Australia*, Volume 23 Number 2, Summer 1985, p.231.

According to associate professor Davina Jackson,

In addition to his career as an architect, Gruzman was an active furniture designer of built-in cabinetry, chairs, tables, benches and seating for the 1957 South Head Synagogue (Rose Bay NSW), the Montrose Apartments (1954), North Sydney, Parnell Motors, Arncliffe (1955) and many of his domestic commissions. He also had associations with furniture-maker Paul Kafka and formed the "Furniture Design Group" in 1956.²⁵

Numerous architects and students worked in his practice, perhaps most notably 2002 Pritzker Architecture Prize winning Glenn Murcutt, who worked in his office as a student during the 1950s. Here "he learnt of the need for harmony between the man-made structure and nature and the importance of design for climate".

Neville Gruzman closed his practice in 2002. He died on 1 May 2005. A memoir was published posthumously in *Neville Gruzman: an architect and his city*, in 2006.

2.5 The Lapin House, 2C Dumaresq Road, Rose Bay

The Lapin and neighbouring Bursill Houses were both constructed by builder William Bursill. According to Neville Gruzman, Bursill purchased the site adjacent to 4 Dumaresq Road, subdivided it and undertook the development of a block of flats on one of the allotments. He approached Mollie Lapin and offered to buy half of the harbourside frontage of 4 Dumaresq Road "on the basis that he would build her house for a set money sum on the other half of the site."²⁶ Bursill, on seeing the proposed Lapin House, asked Gruzman to design his house, next door to it.

However, the Lapins and Bursill fell out – "amidst a flurry of legal actions, the construction of the Lapin House was protracted and only finally completed in 1952." Gruzman found Bursill to be difficult. He argued over Gruzman's detailing and "almost immediately" took over supervision of his own house's construction.²⁷

The design of the Lapin and Bursill Houses were directly informed by the work of master Modernist architect Le Corbusier, the only two buildings by Gruzman so influenced.²⁸

Only very recently just before this time, I had discovered Le Corbusier, through books of a fellow student ... Le Corbusier's approach of putting aside decoration, form follows function and structural efficiency appealed to me. Automatically the design followed these principles, yet my approach to this house, as with all my buildings since, was to match the client's personalities in contemporary terms.²⁹

A detailed description of the Lapin House by Neville Gruzman is included in the book *Gruzman: an architect and his city*, highlighting its importance in his body of work:

25 Davina Jackson, "Neville Gruzman b.1925" at <https://www.daa.org.au/bio/neville-gruzman/biography/>, accessed 19 July 2023.

26 Philip Goad, *Gruzman: an architect and his city*, p.268.

27 Goad, pp.19, 268.

28 Goad, p.275.

29 Goad and Willis, p.268.

The Lapin House site was quite narrow; just 16 metres with the disadvantage that the wonderful views were to the west. At the rear of the site was a beautiful cliff face and to the north stretched a small beach. Except for the view being to the west the site was idyllic. Although my aunt and uncle entertained friends I knew that when they were alone they usually sat in that one small room with the living spaces closed, even to the view. I knew that it was essential for me to design a dwelling place for them that encouraged them to use the whole space and to enjoy the view. I wanted them to have to pass through this space to reach any other part of the building and most of all, experience the harbour.

I began to design the new house to solve this problem. Slowly the space became more than one level as I wanted my aunt's study to be part of the space, though private, and I wanted a sitting space, informal but still part of the major space to also enjoy the view. The final form was of three level living spaces, a gallery study and corridor opening onto the harbour view through a two-storey modulated glass wall, which allowed the view into all areas.

The glass wall of the main living space faced the view, which was also seen from the upper gallery corridor and the study. The dining room and kitchen faced the north beach view. At the end of the beach was a splendid cliff face mostly unnoticed because your eyes were drawn to the harbour and the bridge. I oriented the main bedroom glazing to highlight this charming vista so the harbour facing bedroom wall was solid, with the bed against it, so as the curtains were drawn in the morning my romantic cliff face was revealed.

I laboured for months on the design grappling with the problem of a western view and the problems of western sun. The view was too wonderful not to be an essential part of the house. In the end I settled on a huge two-storey glass wall facing the view and double-glazed fixed panels with narrow Venetian blinds between the big glass panes. Adjustable glass louvres were fitted at the top of the glazing to maximise ventilation.

The approach by foot to the house was a meandering, stepped path leading by the cliff face that separated the old house site [4 Dumaresq Road] from the new house at water level. From then on everything was simple, the entry a flush panel front door under a tiny hooded entry space. For the entrance lobby, I chose traditional black and white marble tiles to converse with some of the antique furniture coming from the old house.

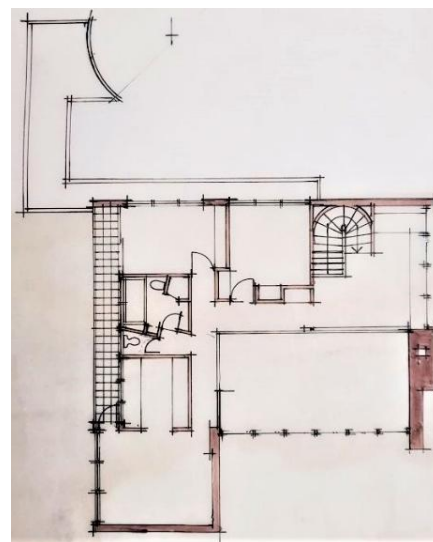
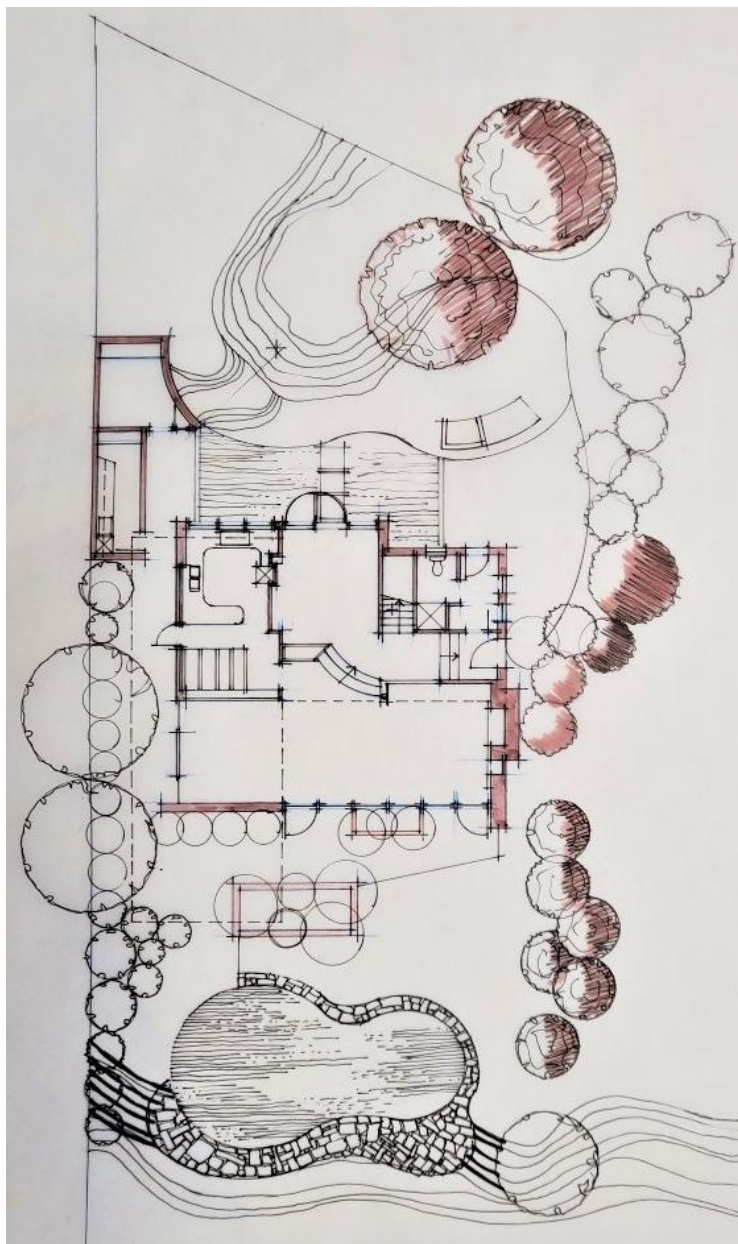
Everything else was white; glossy white walls and ceilings, white terrazzo floors, a white built-in settee, a black dining table with black tubular steel chairs and white cord chairs and white venetian blinds.³⁰

Extant structural drawings prepared in the office of M S Stanley and H A Llewelyn describe the reinforced concrete footings for the ground floor brick walls and bases for tubular steel columns and the flat reinforced concrete first floor and roof slabs. The drawings are dated 22 June 1951 and 5 July 1951 respectively.³¹

30 Goad, pp.243-245.

31 Woollahra Council Building Application 202/51.

Gruzman was interviewed by pioneering oral historian Hazel de Berg in July 1974. 2C Dumaresq Road was one of the topics that was discussed. Gruzman noted that his aunt was still living in the house at this time. It and the Bursill House next door "... still stand ... and to enter them, it is still amazing even to me, that they could be as advanced as they were in those days, which were not that long after the war and austerity, and built in an environment in Australia, which was even further behind the rest of the world than is possible today ...". Gruzman explained that he became interested in the architecture of the Modern Movement (which he termed "International style") because of his student days with George Molnar and the work of premier architectural exponents Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe and Le Corbusier - "... these two houses used concrete and brick and large areas of glass, in the International manner ... what is surprising is that spatially in particular No 4A [2C Dumaresq Road], the form and space are still impressive and still express an advanced spatial concept which is rare today in Australia."³²



12 Ground floor plan (left) and first floor plan (right) of 2C Dumaresq Road. These drawings are understood to show the house as originally designed.

Source: SLNSW PXD 1011 Series 2 Folder 1.

32 Neville Gruzman typescript of De Berg tapes (National Library of Australia) oral history interview, 2 July 1974 at SLNSW MLMSS9168 Series 3: Neville Gruzman records 1974, 1983-84, Folder 02.



- 13 The Lapin and Bursill Houses viewed from the west. The site to the north of the Lapin House was not developed at the time the house was completed. The photograph is dated July 1954.
Source: State Library of NSW ON 558/Box 3/nos. 416-422, Max Dupain photograph.

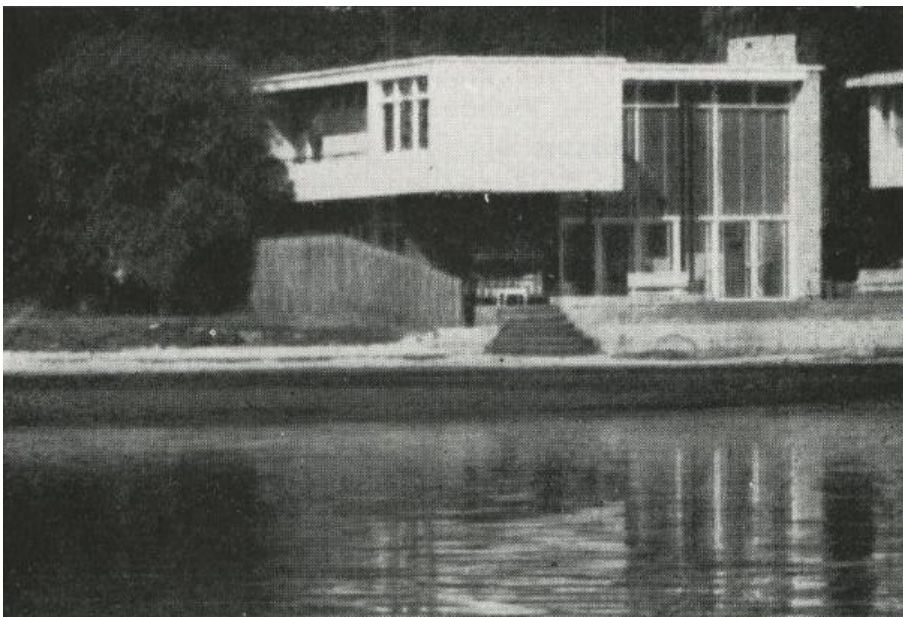


- 14 2C Dumaresq Road at left and the house designed for William Bursill at right. Although designed by Neville Gruzman, he did not superintend its construction.
Source: State Library of NSW ON 558/Box 3/nos. 416-422, Max Dupain photograph.



- 15 The western side of the Lapin House, showing the original configuration of the dwelling and the close visual relationship it shared with the Bursill house at right. The curved steps gave access to the narrow harbourside beach (left); interior of the living room shortly after the house was completed (right).
Source: SLNSW ON 558/Box 3/nos. 416-422, Max Dupain photographs.

A photograph of the completed house appeared in the September 1954 edition of *Cross-section*, a newsletter published by the Department of Architecture at the University of Melbourne from November 1952 until February-March 1971. The photograph was accompanied by laconic text: "This house, reflected in Rose Bay, Syd, is the design of a young Syd arch't [sic], Mr Neville Gruzman." Though concise, this brought Gruzman to the attention of a national audience.³³

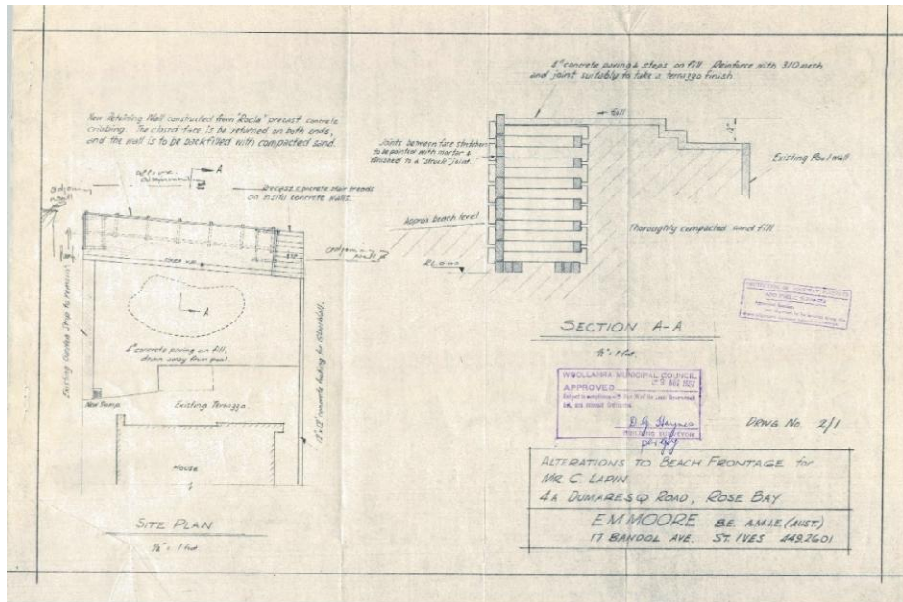


- 16 Photograph of the Lapin House published in *Cross-section*. It appears to have been a detail of a photograph taken by Max Dupain. Source: *Cross-section*, September 1954, no pagination.

³³ *Cross-section* Issue no. 23, September 1954, no pagination.

2.6 Documented alterations to the house

Building application records held by Woollahra Council describe modifications that were proposed at the Lapin House. The earliest were lodged during the 1960s and relate to the swimming pool and sea wall. Documentation lodged in 1967 describes a proprietary precast concrete sea wall and steps along with concrete paving above compacted sand fill around the existing swimming pool. The drawing also notes terrazzo paving in front of the house.³⁴

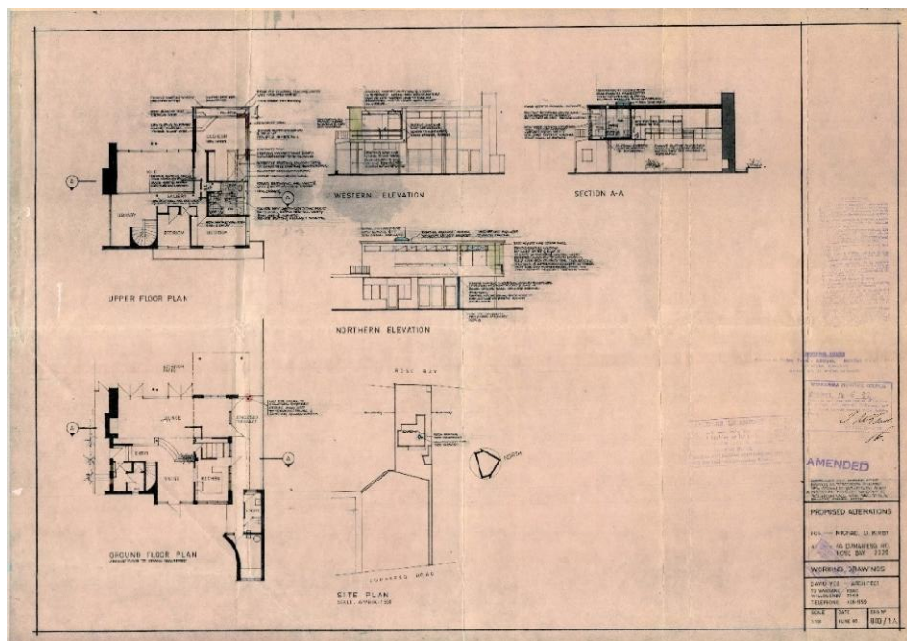


- 17 Drawing describing works associated with a sea wall and concrete paving surround the swimming pool at 2C Dumaresq Road, 1967.
Source: Woollahra Council Building Application 656/67.

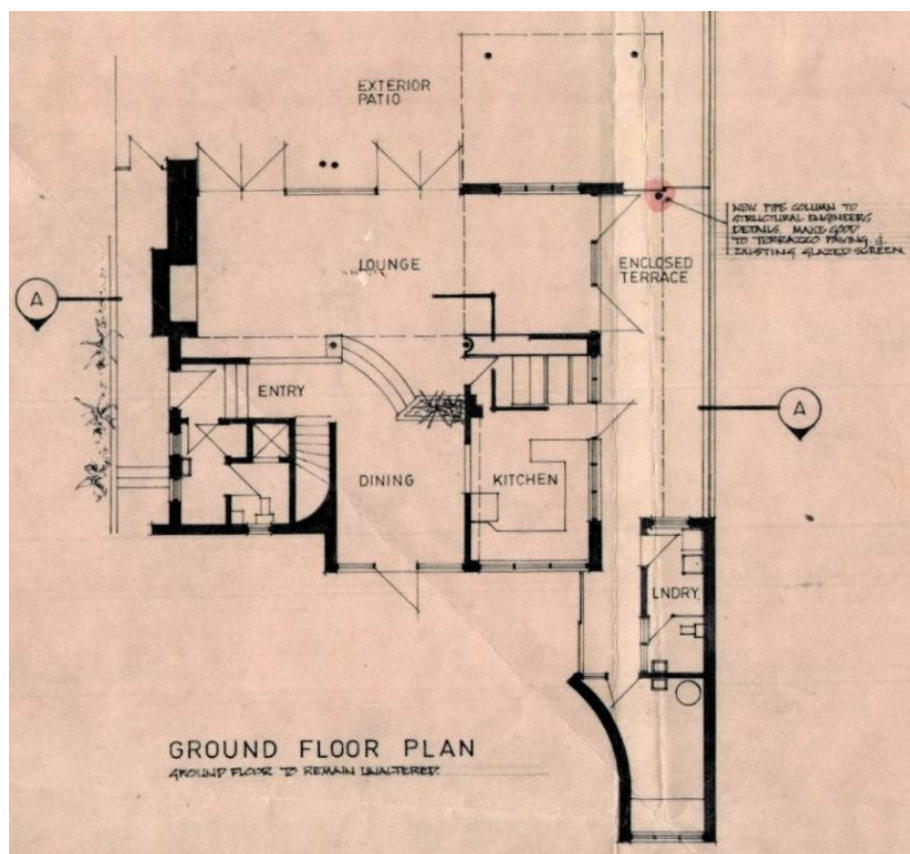
The most significant documented alterations to the house were made during the time the house was occupied by Justice Michael Kirby and his partner. Drawings were prepared in 1980 by architect David Yeo for works associated with the master bedroom on the first floor, which were approved by Council in 1982. The proposal included modifications to the main bedroom, enclosure of the shallow first floor balcony on the northern side of the house to accommodate upgraded bathroom and wardrobe facilities, a shallow balcony on the western side of the bedroom and modifications to balustrading around the void above the living room. The ground floor was to remain unaltered apart from the installation of a new pipe column to support the additional weight of structure caused by enclosure of the northern balcony.

The house appeared unchanged apart from minor modifications to the laundry and the installation of a window on the western side of the master bedroom, perhaps a response to the construction of the house at 6A Dumaresq Road, a building application for which had been lodged during 1957. It effectively blocked the northern views to the beach and the “splendid cliff face” described by Neville Gruzman.

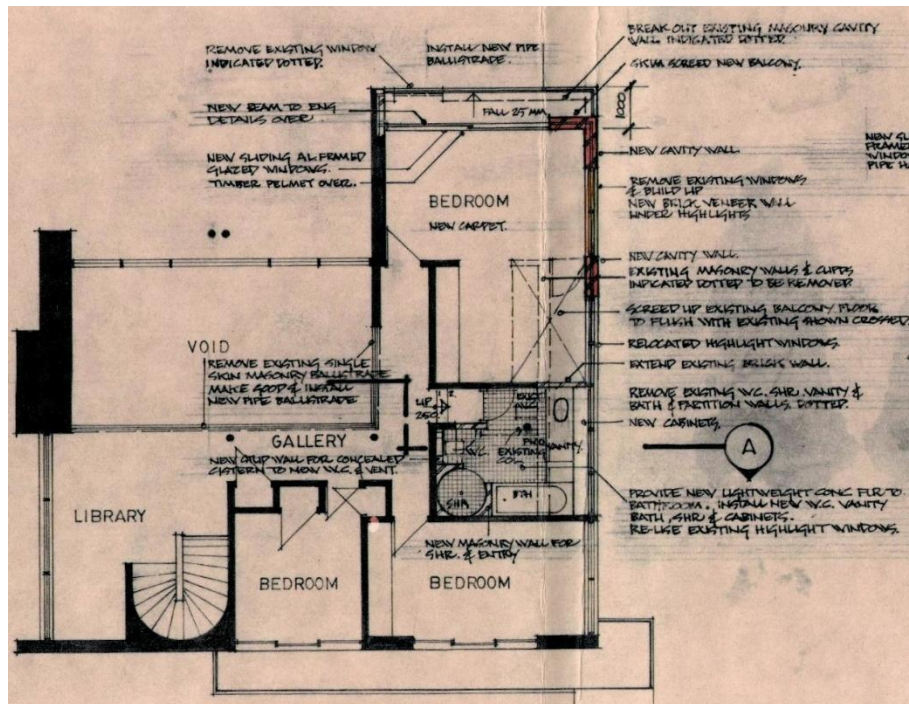
³⁴ Woollahra Council Building Application 656/67. The application was approved by Council on 9 August 1967.



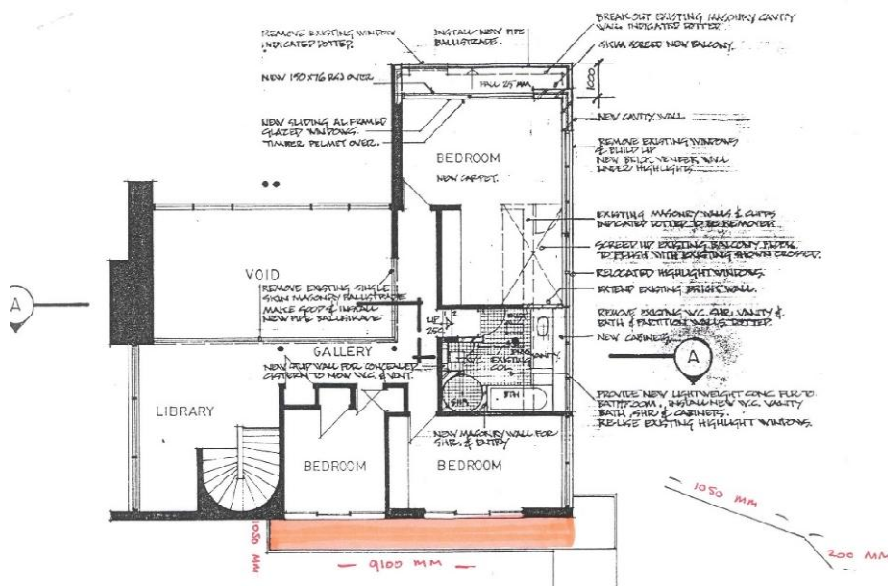
18 Drawing prepared in the office of architect David Yeo in June 1980 describing alterations and additions on the first floor of the Lapin House.
Source: Woollahra Council Building Application 369/82.



19 Portion of Figure 18 showing the ground floor plan. It includes the notation "ground floor to remain unaltered". The plan also shows that the laundry was modified and the court on the northern side of the house was enclosed prior to 1980 and that the paving outside the house consisted of terrazzo, to be made good after installation of the new pipe column.



- 20 Detail of Figure 18 describing proposed modifications to the first floor of the Lapin House. Most of the works did not proceed. The drawing suggests that the two bedrooms on the eastern side of the house included sliding doors giving access to a shallow balcony that had been installed prior to 1980 (if not original building fabric). Source: Woollahra Council Building Application 369/82.



- 21 Marked up drawing showing the extent of the lightweight polycarbonate canopy at the rear of the house (coloured pink at the base of the plan). Source: Woollahra Council Building Application 1565/88.

Around this time an application was lodged for additional paving and new stairs adjacent to the swimming pool, which was approved by Council in April 1980.³⁵ There was also an application for a sandstone wall along the beachfront. Michael Kirby and his partner lodged an application for a lightweight polycarbonate canopy measuring one metre wide and nine metres long supported off metal posts, to be located at first floor level at the rear of the house, towards the end of 1988.³⁶ It was approved in January 1989 and subsequently constructed.

Photographs associated with the sale of the house in 2020 reveal later modifications, presumed to have been undertaken after the 1980s and possibly after Michael Kirby sold the house in 2014.

³⁵ Woollahra Council Building Application 205/80.

³⁶ Woollahra Council Building Application 1565/88.



- 22 Photograph associated with the sale of the house in 2020 indicate several modifications to the Lapin House, including substantial piers beneath the cantilevered master bedroom and aluminium framed doors connecting the living room and the terrace.

Source: <https://www.realestate.com.au/property/2c-dumaresq-rd-rose-bay-nsw-2029/> - Laing & Simmons Double Bay.



- 23 Photograph associated with the sale of the house in 2020 showing aluminium framed doors connecting the living room and the terrace.

Source: <https://www.realestate.com.au/property/2c-dumaresq-rd-rose-bay-nsw-2029/> - Laing & Simmons Double Bay.



24 A view of the Living Room.
Source: <https://www.realestate.com.au/property/2c-dumaresq-rd-rose-bay-nsw-2029/> - Laing & Simmons Double Bay.



25 Principal bedroom.
Source: <https://www.realestate.com.au/property/2c-dumaresq-rd-rose-bay-nsw-2029/> - Laing & Simmons Double Bay.

3 Analysis of physical evidence

3.1 Introduction

The overall form and massing of 2C Dumaresq Road remains very much as constructed. The exterior and interior of the building, although having undergone some modification, remain relatively intact. The original design and planning of the house are very evident. An inspection of the site, including the interior of the house, was undertaken on 12 July 2023.

3.2 Exterior

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.³⁷ 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.³⁸ 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.

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.

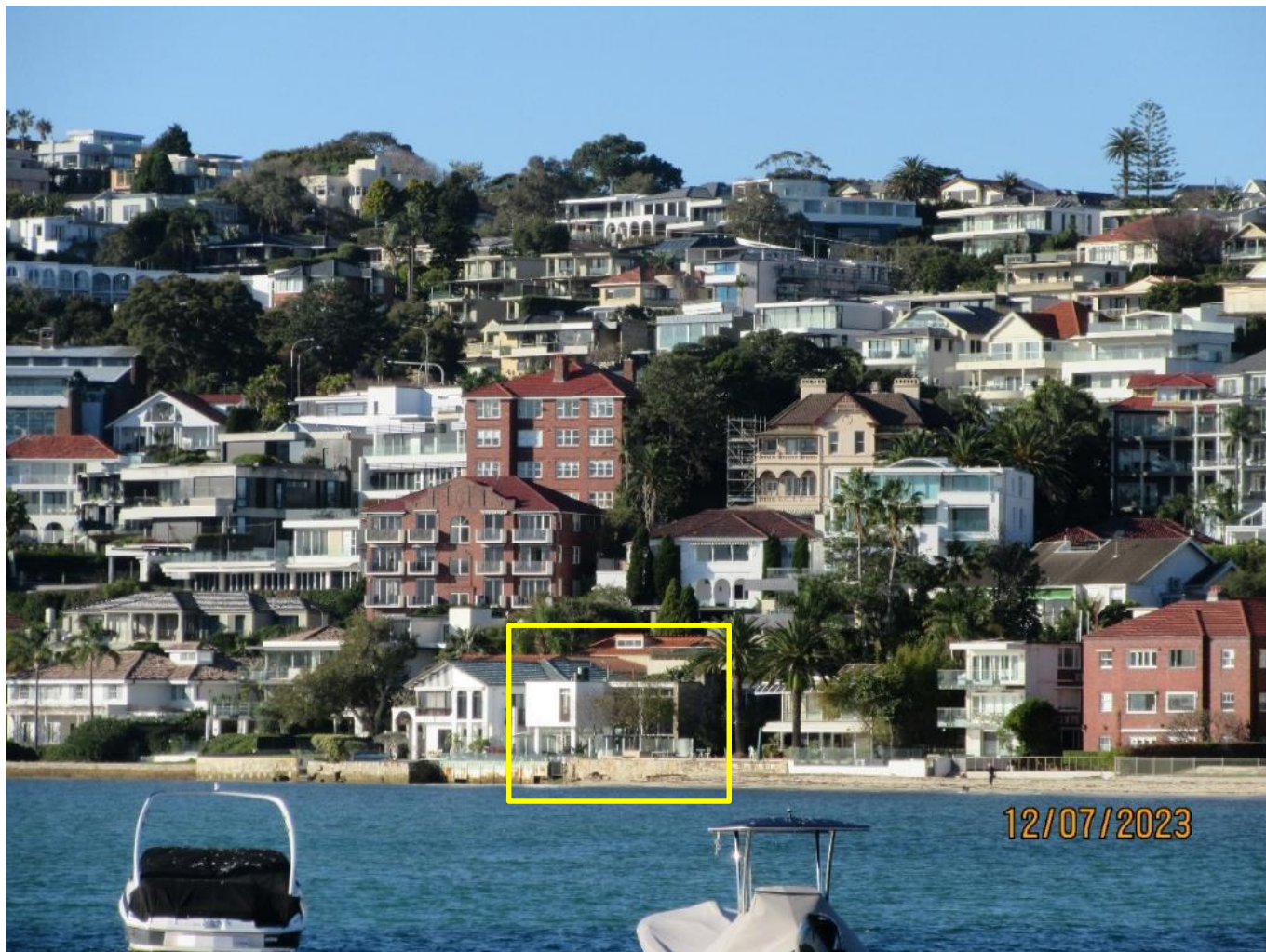
Changes to the exterior of the house include the following:

- 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.

The exterior of the house and grounds is described in the following photographs.

37 Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*, pp.214-217.

38 Apperly et al, p.217.



26 Context of the Lapin House (highlighted), viewed from the west at Lyne Park.



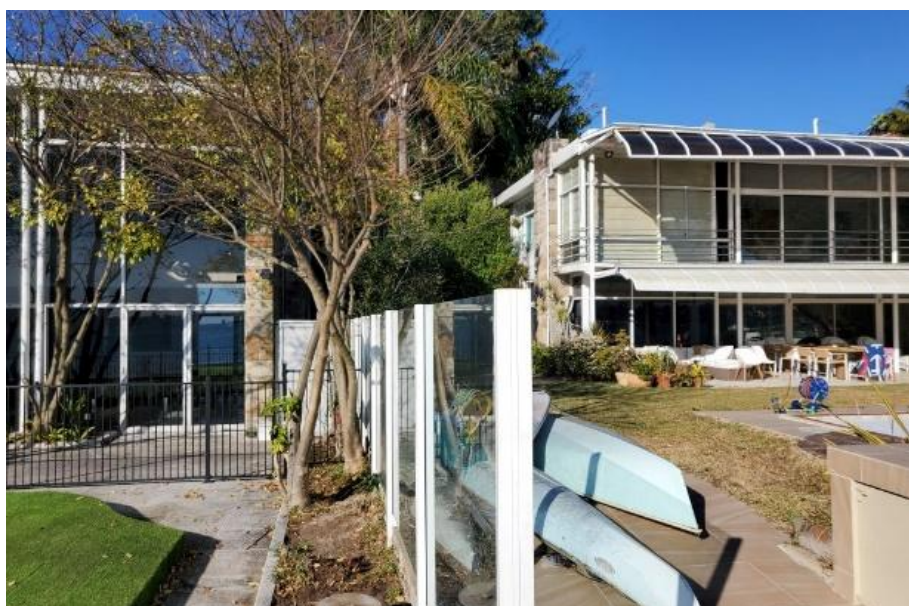
27 Immediate context of the Lapin House. It and the Bursill House to the south are highlighted.



28 Western elevation of the Lapin House. The square piers supporting the cantilevered section of the first floor may encase the original steel pipe columns, which have been retained in front of the Living Room glazing. Original doors and louvres have been replaced



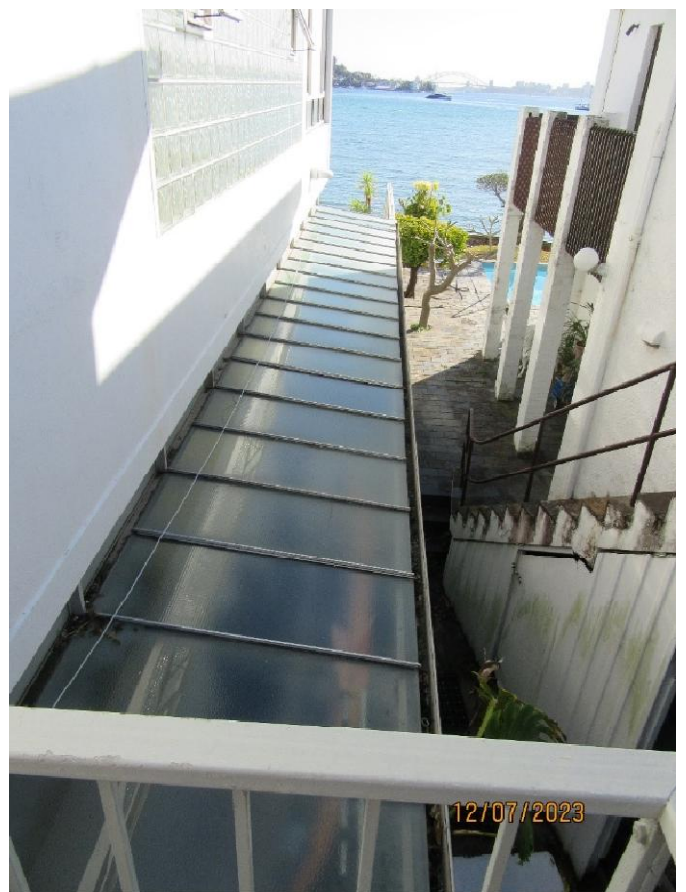
29 Looking north to 6 Dumareshq Road.



30 Looking east long the southern site boundary. The Bursill House can be seen to the right, to the south of the Lapin House (right).



31 Looking south-west across the swimming pool terraces.



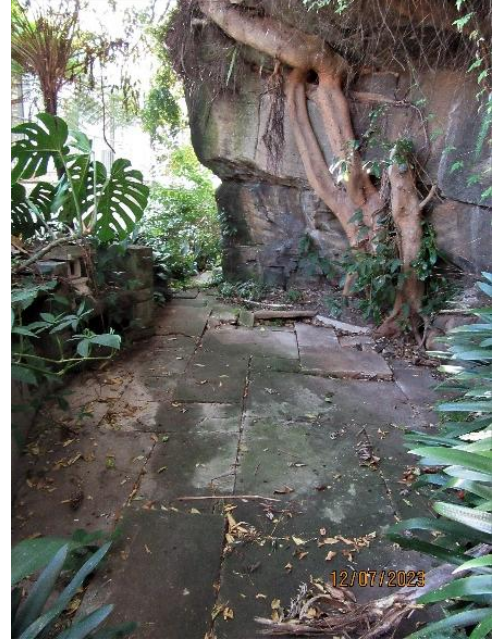
32 Looking east along the northern site boundary (left); glazed roof enclosing the court on the northern side of the Lapin House, which is a later addition to the building.



33 Looking north along the western elevation. The low stone planter can be seen in early photographs of the house (left); narrow court on the eastern side of the house (right).



34 Rear of the house viewed from the south-east.



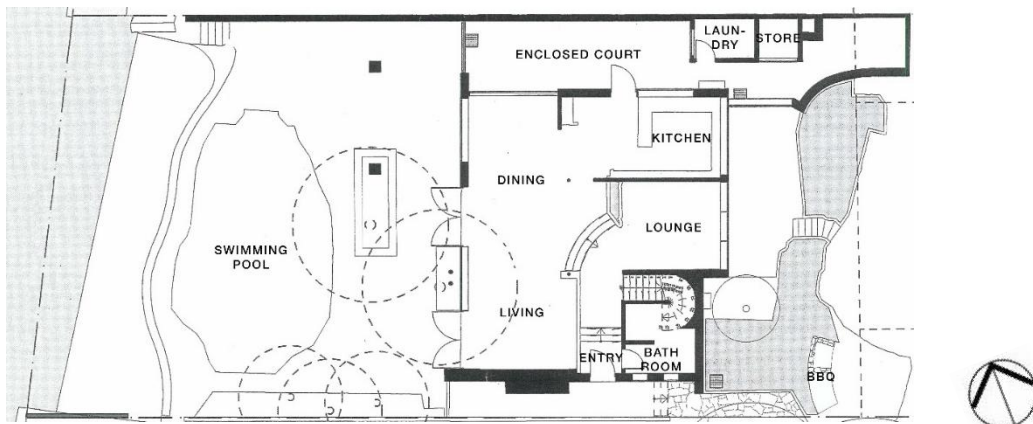
- 35 The rear yard of the Lapin House has retained the barbecue shown on early plans of the building. The yard is bounded by a small cliff.

3.3 Interior

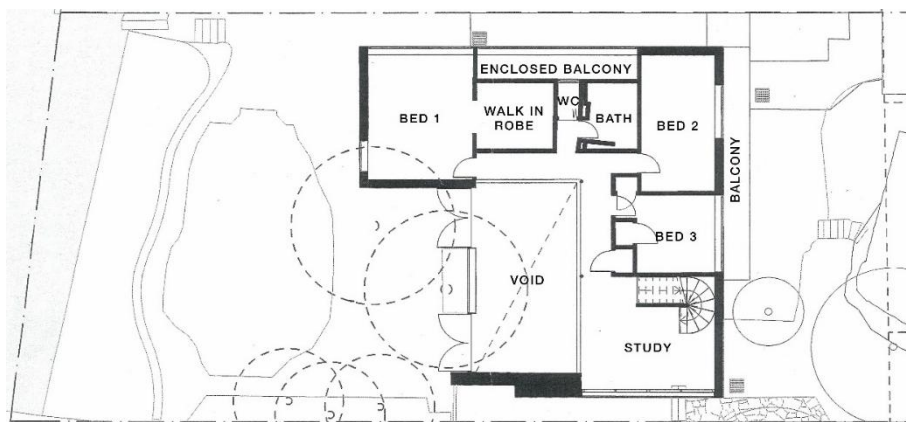
The internal layout of the house on both levels is essentially the same as originally documented. The interior of the house, as described by Neville Gruzman, is oriented towards the view west across Rose Bay and Sydney Harbour. The ground and first floors are lined with terrazzo (carpet in bedrooms) as described by Gruzman. Stair risers and treads are also lined with terrazzo.

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.

The interior of the Lapin House is described in the following photographs.



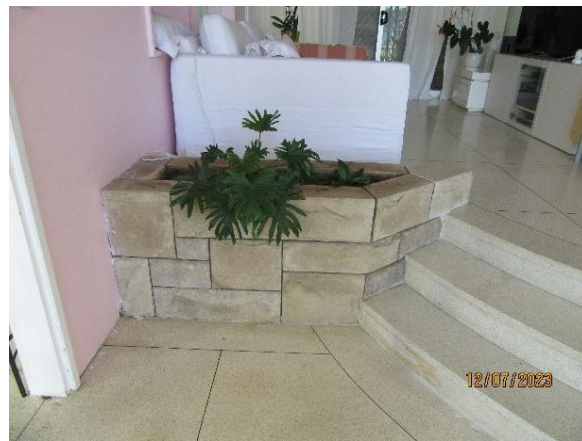
36 Ground floor plan.
Source: MHNDU Architects with TKD overlay.



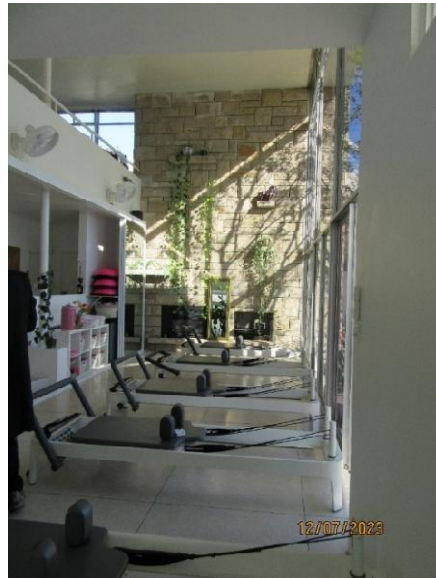
37 First floor plan.
Source: MHNDU Architects with TKD overlay.



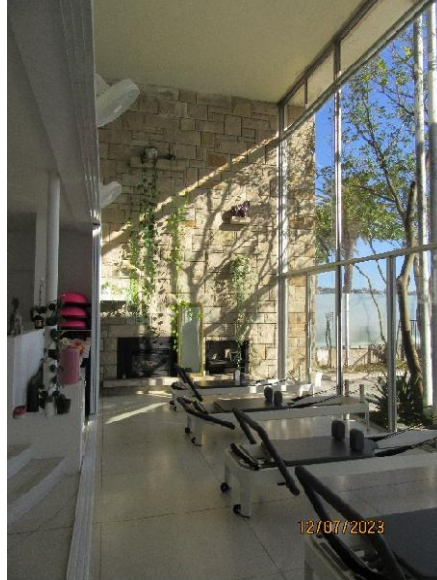
38 Looking south along the passage to the principal house entry (left) and from the entry to the lounge and kitchen beyond (right). Terrazzo flooring accords with Neville Gruzman's description of the original finishes within the house.



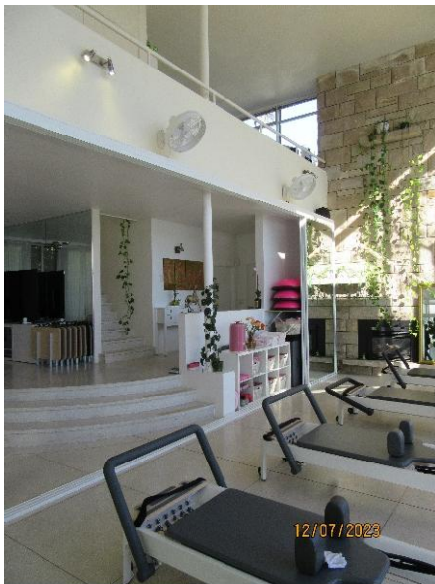
39 Looking towards the Lounge from the Living Room. The sliding mirror-lined door and tracks are recent fabric. The planter on one side of the steps is original.



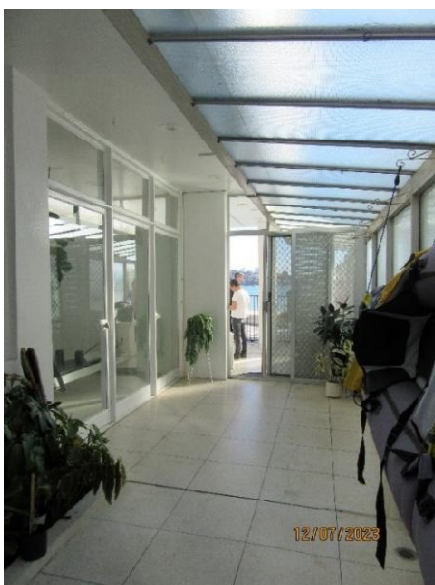
40 Looking south across the Living Room: photograph taken in 1954 (left) and 2023 (right). Notwithstanding the installation of tracks and sliding doors (which can be removed), the space has retained much of its original character. Source: SLNSW ON 558/Box 3/nos. 416-422, Max Dupain photographs; TKD Architects.



41 Internal views of the western fenestration to the Living Room. Two bays of louvres in the central bay have been replaced with a single sheet of glass.



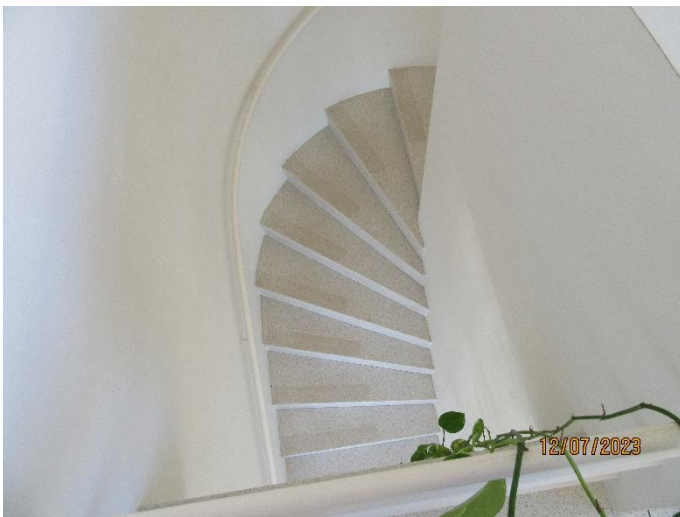
42 Looking across the Living Room towards the main entrance to the house (left); the Kitchen (right). Joinery is not original.



43 The enclosed Courtyard on the northern side of the house looking to the west (left) and to the east, towards the laundry and storage rooms beyond (right). The Courtyard floor is covered with terrazzo.



44 Laundry interior(left); looking towards the storage area beyond the Laundry (right). The glazed doors at right give access to the small rear yard.



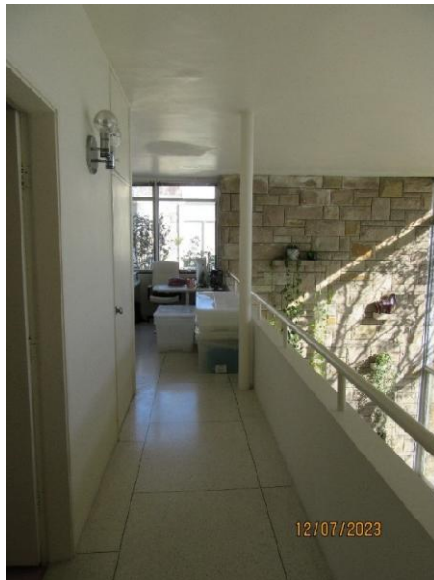
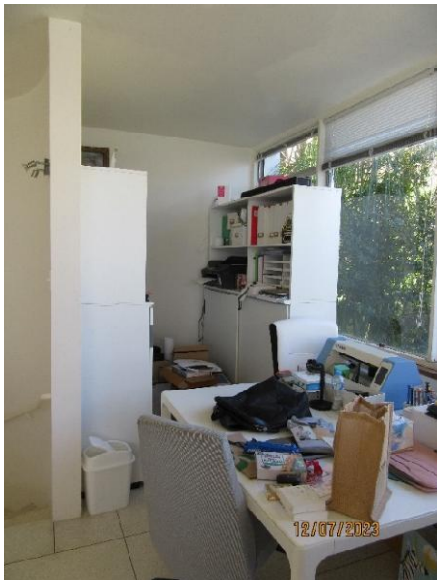
45 Stairwell viewed from the first floor. Stair treads are finished with slabs of terrazzo (left); balustrading above the stair at the first floor (right). The continuous wall-mounted handrail consists of a simple steel tube conforming to the curve of the stairwell.



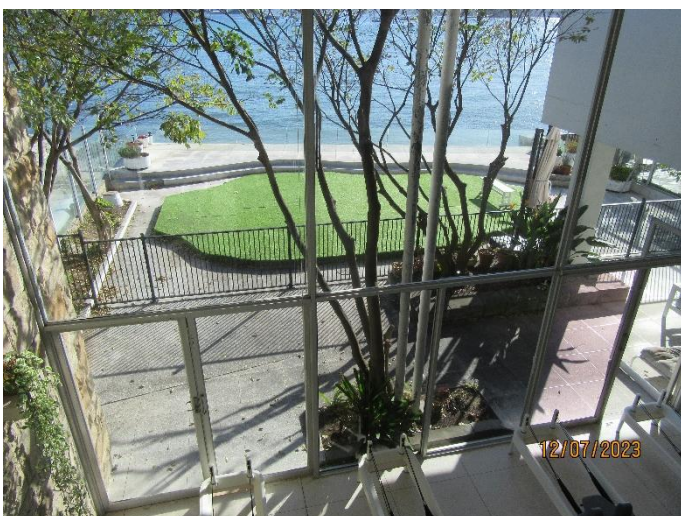
46 Looking towards the first floor from the stair (left); the stair can be seen at left in this photograph of the Study (right).



- 47 Although window sashes have been replaced, original timber sills and mullions have been retained in the windows to the Study.



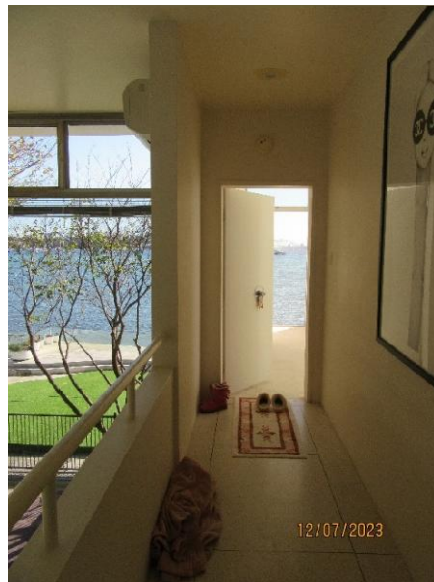
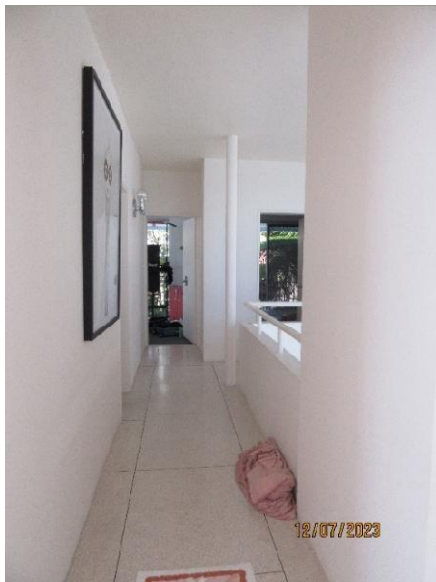
- 48 The Study (left); looking along the eastern passage towards the Study (right).



- 49 Looking across the void above the Living Room from the first floor Study.



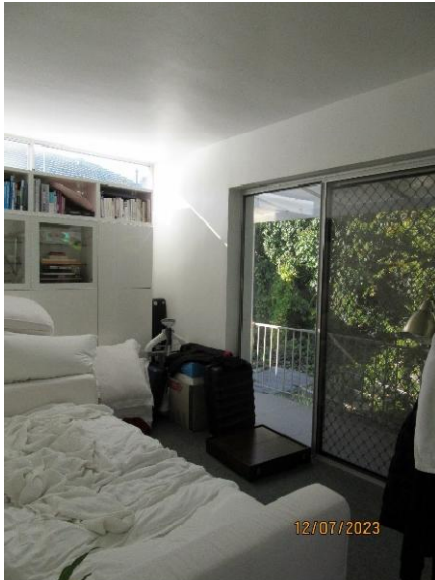
50 View to the west from the first floor. These views were an important determinant in the design of the house, according to Neville Gruzman.



51 Passage on the northern side of the first floor looking towards Bedroom 2 (left) and Bedroom 1 (right). The floor is lined with terrazzo.



52 Bedroom 3. Original windows have been replaced with aluminium framed units. It is possible that the wide opening was originally occupied by windows at a similar height to those in Bedroom 1. It is not known when the aluminium framed units were installed.



- 53 Bedroom 2. Original windows have been replaced with aluminium framed units. It is possible that, as with Bedroom 3, the wide opening was originally occupied by windows at a similar height to those in Bedroom 1. As with other parts of the house, original door hardware with distinctive wide escutcheon plates has been retained.



- 54 Although the fitouts of the WC and Bathroom have been changed, the layout of the spaces is the same as originally documented. Terrazzo flooring in the bathroom is likely to be original. The floor level of the lavatory and shower recess have possibly been raised to accommodate plumbing requirements.



- 55 Fenestration in Bedroom 1. The window opening in the western wall (left) was formed prior to 1980. It is possible that it was initiated by the Lapins. Original sashes in the northern side of the room (right) have been replaced with aluminium framed units.



- 56 Eastern side of Bedroom 1.
Mirrors are unlikely to be original. Shelving and joinery items in the walk-in wardrobe are relatively recent fabric. The door to the passage has retained original hardware.



- 57 Left: The Enclosed Balcony - original opening has been filled in with glass bricks, probably during the 1980s.
Right: looking south along the balcony on the eastern side the house (right). The canopy, posts and lightweight metal balustrade were probably installed at the end of the 1980s.



- 58 The Enclosed Balcony: detail of the original timber mullions and timber framed sashes lighting the walk-in-wardrobe to Bedroom 1.

4 Comparative Analysis

4.1 Introduction

According to academic Professor Philip Goad,

The significance of the architecture of Neville Gruzman is the special place that it occupies in the development of postwar architecture in Australia.

Following World War II, strengthened trans-Pacific ties increased the influence of the United States on Australian architecture ... [Sydney-based] architects like Peter Muller, Bruce Rickard and Neville Gruzman drew on their United States experience in the 1960s and 1970s in architectural work that referenced Los Angeles' Case Study House program and the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, while also responding to Sydney's climate and topography.³⁹

Goad also wrote that "Gruzman represents a true original. His is a modernism that is personally developed but informed by a myriad of international sources."⁴⁰ Gruzman became "a central figure in the distinctive architectural identity to emerge in Sydney in the late 1950s and 1960s".⁴¹

4.2 The residential work of Neville Gruzman

Neville Gruzman's practice was responsible for a wide range of projects, initially focussed on individual residences by as time went on diversifying to include several other building typologies. He was in time acknowledged as one of Sydney's leading architects by his peers.⁴²

Three aspects of his later work were already to be seen in Mollie Lapin's house – the site becoming a major determinant in the development of his design; moulding and shaping space through planar surfaces (roof, walls, overlapping and interpenetrating space; and rapport with clients, reflected by their long tenure in the houses he designed for them.⁴³ According to academic Philip Goad,

...It was an exercise in sculpting form, and directly explored the early 1930s ideas of Le Corbusier and other orthodox Modernists such as FRS Yorke and Marcel Breuer. But even in this first building, Gruzman included elements that would become signature elements of his later practice. The first was the use of gloss white paint for walls and ceilings, gloss black for columns, and an entire wall that took on the appearance of gloss black lacquerwork. ... But Gruzman had more precise reasons, he employed these materials for their 'reflections'. The other interesting aspect of the Lapin House, sitting right on the water, was Gruzman's careful study of the section of the sloping site. The pathway down from the thinnest of concrete canopies to the double height of the living room and its huge glass wall facing the Sydney Harbour Bridge was an orchestration

39 Rebecca Hawcroft, "Emigres & exchange" in Hannah Lewi and Philip Goad (editors), *Australia Modern: Architecture, landscape & design*, pp.96-97.

40 Goad, p.17.

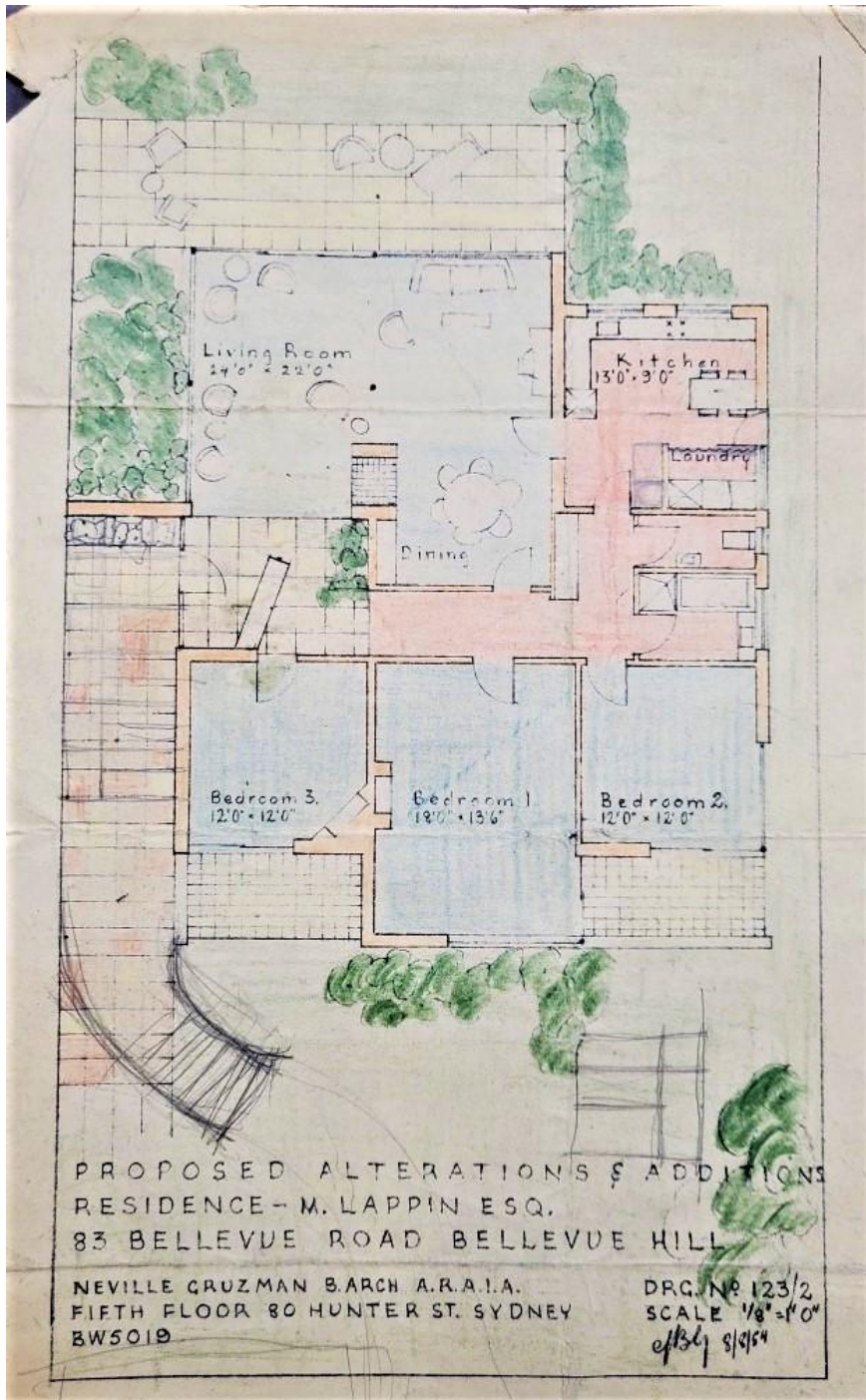
41 Harry Margalit, "Gruzman, Neville" in Goad and Willis, p.303.

42 For instance, architectural historian Professor Jennifer Taylor in *Australian Architecture Since 1960* (2nd edition), p.143.

43 Haskell, p.234.

of planes with a meandering route to negotiate changes in level. It was almost as if in this first house that Gruzman was designing architecture as a negotiation of slope, and one that characterised living in Sydney as existing on a series of flat shelves of landscape overlooking a panorama. It was a theme soon to be developed in earnest.⁴⁴

2C Dumaesq Road was not the only residential commission Gruzman undertook for the Lapins. Alterations to a house at 83 Bellevue Road, Bellevue Hill, presumably an investment property, were documented during 1954.⁴⁵ It has not been determined if these works were undertaken. However, the house at this address has been extensively modified.



59 Plan describing alterations to the house at 83 Bellevue Road, Bellevue Hill. The plan is dated 8 August 1954.

Source: Woollahra Council Building Application 256/54.

44 Goad, p.19.

45 Building Application 256/54.

Until he visited Japan in 1955, Gruzman's early work was firmly founded on Modernist principles. The Lapin House (and Bursill House), along with the prototype building containing eight maisonette apartments known as "Montrose" at 445 Alfred Street, Neutral Bay (1955), were considered to "indicate a thorough grounding in the tenets of modern architecture, without revealing the particular direction his future work took."⁴⁶ Gruzman's design for the small block of flats was innovative. Taking the form of maisonettes, living areas were oriented to take advantage of views and sunlight.

Externally it was clad with a glazed curtain wall utilising glass louvres. The building's structure was minimal, with floor beams cantilevering off party walls.⁴⁷ Another apartment project, a penthouse added to a block of flats constructed during the second half of the 1930s at 38 Wunulla Road, Point Piper, was designed about two years later (though its construction was not supervised by Gruzman) and also demonstrates a minimal Modernist aesthetic.



60 "Montrose" at Alfred Street, Neutral Bay (left); penthouse at Wunulla Road, Point Piper (right).

Sources: <https://www.athomeinnorthsydney.com.au/montrose-apartments.html>, Max Dupain and Associates/Eric Sierens - Max Dupain photograph, 1955; Cross-section, January 1959 – David Moore photograph.

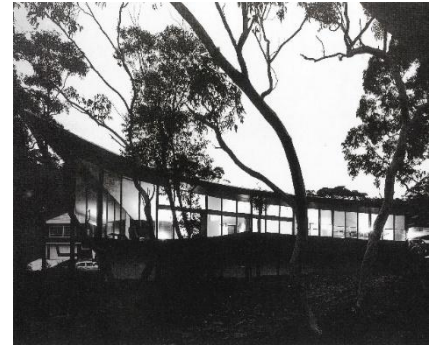
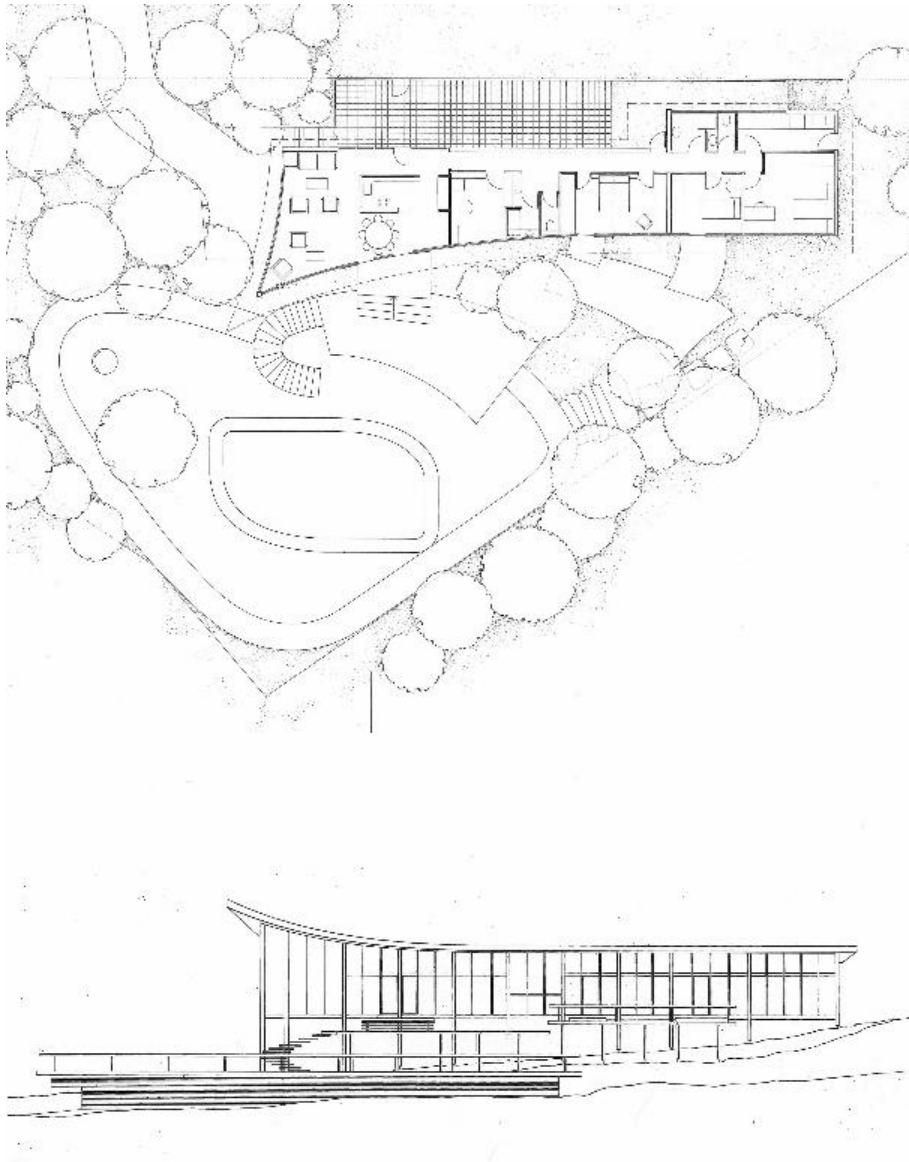
Gruzman's approach to architectural design underwent a fundamental change after his travels overseas, particularly to Japan - "on his return he experimented with fusing Japanese motifs and colour schemes with contemporary Sydney influences, in an effort to create an architecture of greater evocative effect, or poetics, than that of the abstract-leaning Seidler or the Georgian-influenced work of Anchor."⁴⁸

46 Haskell, p.232.

47 <https://www.athomeinnorthsydney.com.au/montrose-apartments.html>, accessed 19 July 2023; Goad, pp.235-237.

48 Harry Margalit, *Australia: modern architectures in history*, p.137.

This is demonstrated in the house he designed for Ellen and Ben Goodman at 17 North Arm Road, Middle Cove (1956). Here the building's linear plan culminated in an extraordinary living room, dramatically expressed in the building's sweeping form - a break from "the customary spatial order of Gruzman's earlier houses, but a new hybrid of experimental structure, materials and finishes brought to life through the exigencies of the site and client needs."⁴⁹ According to Gruzman, the Japanese influence is most clearly evident in the building's post and beam structure, a roof partly inspired by Kyoto's temples, and the way Japanese designers manipulate occupants' eyes towards the garden around the house.⁵⁰ The use of glazed louvres formed continuity with the Lapin House and "Montrose".



61 Plan and north-western elevation of the Goodman House (left); view of the house from the north-west. The distinctive character of the house, with its curved roof and extensive areas of glazing overlooking the view available to the site, is evident. Source: Goad, pp.81, 86.

49 London, Goad and Hamann, p.206.

50 Goad, p.80.

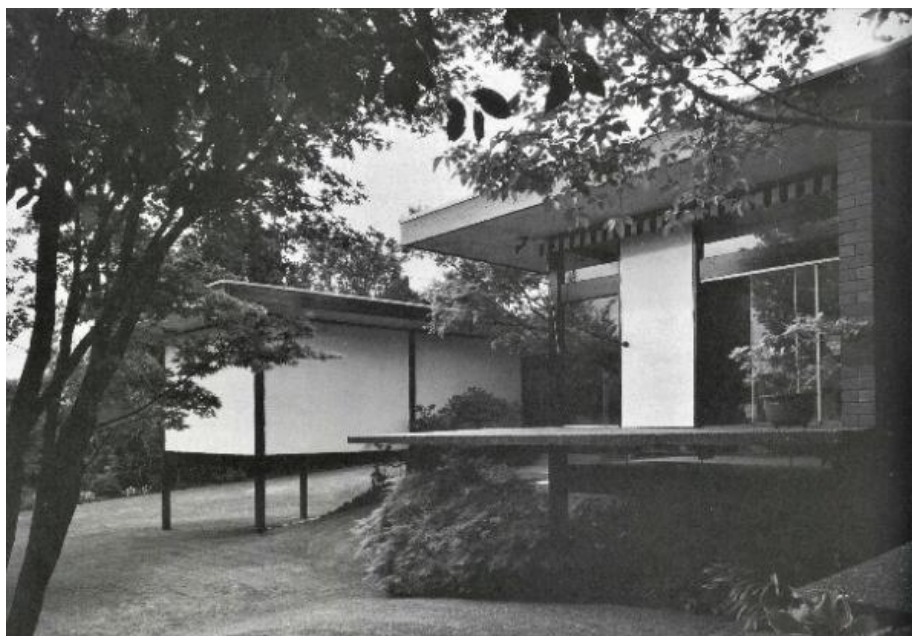
The Probert House at 15 Collins Road, St Ives (1957) also reflected Japanese influence. It was designed around a pair of courts and divided into separate living and bedroom zones. It featured a post and beam structure, extensive areas of glazing, stained timber and face brick walls, a family room (uncommon at this period) and a floating concrete terrace. According to one commentator, the Japanese influence was seen as much in the use of materials, craftsmanship and intellectual discipline of the work as much as the architecture itself.⁵¹



62 Two views of the Probert House. Its Japanese-influenced character is expressed through the use of materials and structure.

Sources:

<https://www.realestate.com.au/property/15-collins-rd-st-ives-nsw-2075/>; Art and Australia, Summer 1985.



Gruzman was also strongly influenced by American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Architect Bruce Rickard's slides of Frank Lloyd Wright's work are considered to have had some influence.⁵² However, Gruzman visited the United States of America in the second half of the 1950s and made another trip there in 1963, which was devoted to

⁵¹ Haskell, p.232.

⁵² *Australia: modern architectures in history*, p.146.

visiting Wright's buildings. However, he claimed that "what is notable is that Japanese architecture and that of Wright and of Mies van der Rohe have elements in common. I have been strongly influenced by all three."⁵³ Other commentators have suggested that while many architects "designed through partial emulation, assimilation and invention. Neville Gruzman ...used [his] houses as a medium for uniquely personal compositional development."⁵⁴

Wright's influence, layered over that of Japan and Mies Van Der Rohe, first appeared in Gruzman's own house at 4-8 Oswald Street, Darling Point (1958), which featured an accomplished open plan and dominant horizontal aesthetic. Alterations were made to the house in 1965 and again in 1995. Other examples influence include the Holland House at Middle Cove (1960-62), notable for its transparency, dominant horizontal aesthetic and structural adventurousness that were already anticipated in the Lapin House.



63 Exterior and interior of the Gruzman House at Darling Point.

Source:

<https://thedesignfiles.net/2018/09/modernist-architecture-midcentury-sydney-home-gruzman>, images from Sydney Sotherby's International Realty.



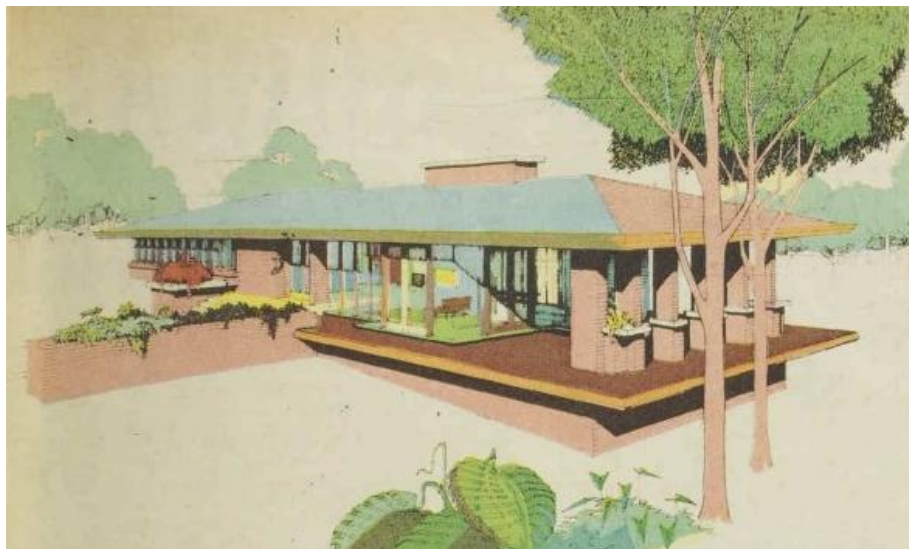
⁵³ Goad, p.282.

⁵⁴ Geoffrey London, Philip Goad and Conrad Hamann, *An Unfinished Experiment in Living: Australian houses 1950-1965*, pp. 36-37.

This was carried to even greater lengths with the audacious Rosenberg/Hills House at North Turramurra (1966, subsequently extended). It was essentially a floating glass pavilion with extensive roof overhangs and upturned concrete slabs. Terraces hover above the ground and horizontal roofs float above walls of glass. The interior extends into its surrounds in a manner reminiscent of traditional Japanese architecture.



64 The Rosenberg/Hills House at North Turramurra.
Source: Roy Lumby photographs.



- 65 Frank Lloyd Wright influenced designs by Gruzman for three project homes built at Carlingford for the Lend Lease Kingsdene Estate, 1962. Unusually for Gruzman, pitched roofs appeared.

Source: Australian Women's Weekly, 24 January 1962, p.11.

The quality of Gruzman's architecture was acknowledged by inclusion in the 1971 guidebook *444 Sydney Buildings*, which was published by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. They comprised the following:

- South Head and District Synagogue, 666 Old South Head Road, Vaucluse.
- 10 Small Street, Rose Bay.
- 6 Ruby Street, Mosman.
- 30 Mary Street, Longueville (Benjamin House).
- 36 Banks Avenue, North Turramurra (Rosenburg/Hills House).
- Surgeries, 8 Wharf Road, Gladesville (since demolished).⁵⁵

In 2000, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects listed Gruzman's Holland house at Middle Cove one of the 20 best Australian buildings of the 20th century.⁵⁶

Several of Gruzman's houses have been included in local environmental plans:

- 30-32A Darlinghurst Road, Kings Cross (1962) – City of Sydney LEP
- Gaden House, 2A Cooper Street, Double Bay (1962) - Woollahra LEP
- Montrose Flats, 439 Alfred Street, North Sydney (1955) – North Sydney LEP
- Chadwick House, 83 Arthur Street, Forestville (1961-1974) - Northern Beaches LEP
- Probert House, 15 Collins Road, St Ives (1957) – Ku-ring-gai LEP
- Rosenburg/Hills House, 36 Banks Avenue, North Turramurra (1966) – Ku ring-gai LEP
- Goodman House, 17 North Arm Road, Middle Cove (1956-57) - Willoughby LEP
- Gowing House, 8 The Bulwark, Castlecrag (1970) – Willoughby LEP

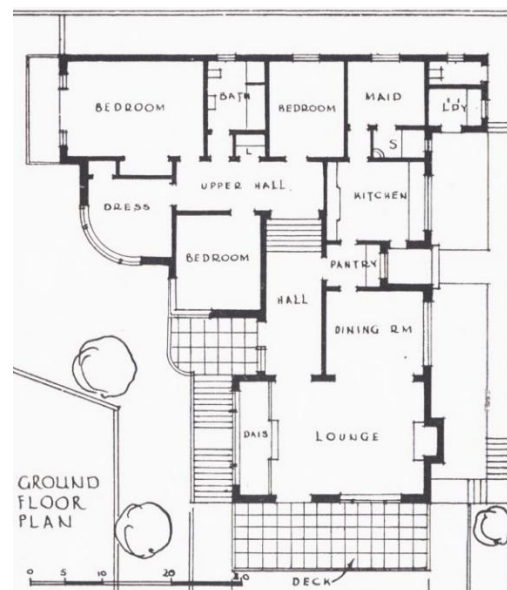
4.3 Contemporary Modernist residential work by other architects

A small number of architects in NSW designed houses demonstrating an understanding of the Modern Movement during the 1930s. For example, the eclectic English-born

⁵⁵ Richard Apperly and Peter Lind, *444 Sydney Buildings*.

⁵⁶ Jackson.

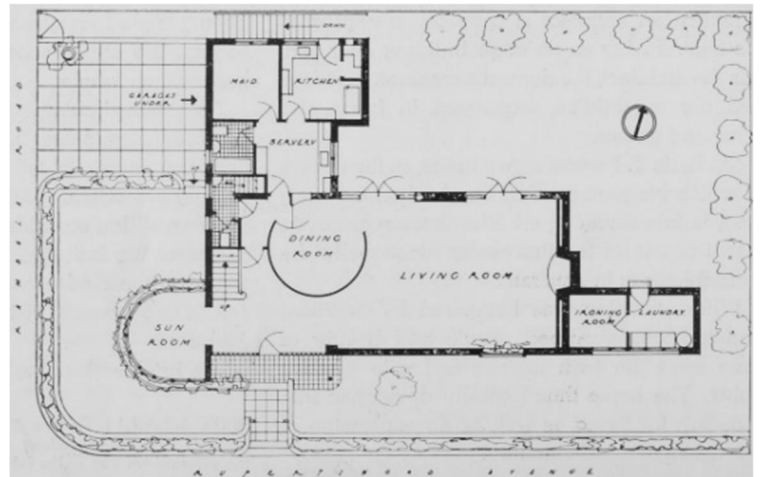
Frederick Glynn Gilling (1877-1955) was responsible for two early examples, "Cotway" at Bellevue Hill (circa 1935; demolished) and the house in 6 Graylind Place, Vaucluse (1935-36), which still stands and is listed as a heritage item by Woollahra Council. While stylistically advanced for Sydney, their planning and spatial configuration were relatively conventional.



66 Frederick Glynn Gilling's Modernist 6 Graylind Place, Vaucluse.
Source: George Beiers, *Houses of Australia: a survey of domestic architecture* (1948).

Many younger architects ventured overseas during the 1930s. Amongst the most influential were Sydney Ancher (1904-1979) and Arthur Baldwinson (1908-1969), whose experience and quality of their subsequent projects place them apart from many of the others.

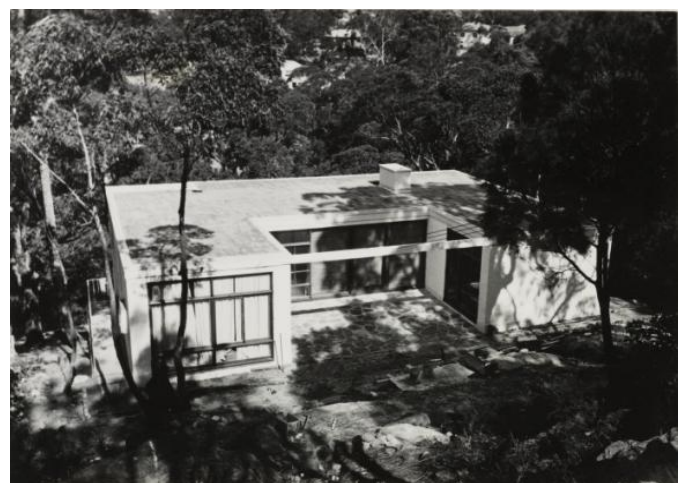
Both travelled to England in the early 1930s, working there with significant Modern Movement architects and exploring the architectural scene in various European countries. Whilst in Germany Ancher saw the work of Mies van der Rohe and others at the Weissenhof-Siedlung housing exhibition at Stuttgart and the 1931 building exhibition in Berlin, while Baldwinson became ex-Bauhaus head Walter Gropius's assistant in 1935, designing halls of residence at Cambridge and Oxford universities. Both young architects brought home first-hand experience that was interpreted in their residential commissions. Ancher made a major contribution to local architecture with an advanced flat-roofed house for the Prevost family at Bellevue Hill (1937), which was a rare example of Modern Movement inspired architecture in NSW at this time. The planning and appearance of the house reflected an understanding of European Modernism but there was no vertical interpenetration of spaces like those to be found at 2C Dumaresq Road.



67 The Prevoist House in Kambala Bellevue Hill
Source: *Decoration and Glass*, December 1937.

In the immediate post World War II era Anchor produced fine ground-hugging houses that integrated indoor and outdoor areas by means of verandahs, terraces and expansive openings. Open-planned living areas were separated from bedrooms and spilled out onto terraces. Anchor admitted to the influence of Mies Van Der Rohe and Le Corbusier, and his houses offered their owners superior living conditions achieved by intelligent architecture responding sensitively to site conditions. A house in Maytone Avenue, Killara, despite Kuring-gai Council's opposition prior to its construction, won the 1945 Sulman Medal.

About two years later Anchor's cutting-edge flat-roofed weekend house in North Curl Curl known as Windy Drop Down ran into council opposition but won a celebrated landmark court case that defended an architect's right to design contemporary buildings, which was judged to be in the best public interest. Arthur Baldwinson designed a number of fine houses after setting up his own practice in 1937. Generally they reflected a careful response to their sites through planning and opening living areas to terraces and the surrounding grounds. However, they lack the spatial adventure and complexity of 2C Dumaresq Road.



68 Sydney Anchor's "Poyntzfield" at 3 Maytone Avenue, Killara, recipient of the 1945 Sulman Medal (left); Arthur Baldwinson's house at Castlecrag for Mr and Mrs B Abbot, 1951.
Source: SLNSW PXA 6900 and PXA 372/vol. 6. Max Dupain photographs.

Prominent émigré architect Harry Seidler was preceded by the arrival of several accomplished European émigré architects in Australia during the 1930s and 1940s, although none mastered publicity in the way that he did. Apart from Molnar, one was Viennese-born Hans Peter Oser (1913-1967), who arrived in Australia in 1938 and commenced in private practice during 1946. His commercial and domestic work has been described as “marked by a sophistication of form and composition within an informed Modernist style.”⁵⁷ A number of the houses that he designed in the late 1940s and early 1950s were of timber. Their planning could be irregular in layout with open living areas directly related to outdoor areas. Another was Hungarian-born Henry Epstein (1909-1968), who studied architecture in Vienna. He arrived in Melbourne in March 1939 and in 1946 set up his own practice in Sydney. Epstein designed a relatively large number of houses in the late 1940s and 1950s. His early dwellings have been described as “transplanted European modern houses with white painted walls, sun-deck flat roofs behind parapets ... and strip (ribbon) steel windows” while his later houses “incorporated timber and stone in a freer modernism as Australian materials were incorporated into his work.”⁵⁸



69 Hans Peter Oser and Jean Fombertaux' Stroud House at Clareville, circa 1955 (left); Dr Henry Epstein's Hillman House at Roseville, completed in 1948 (right).

Sources:

<http://www.afr.com/lifestyle/sydney-forgotten-midcentury-modernists-20170719-gxehcb>, Max Dupain photograph, Max Dupain Archive at SLNSW; author's photograph.

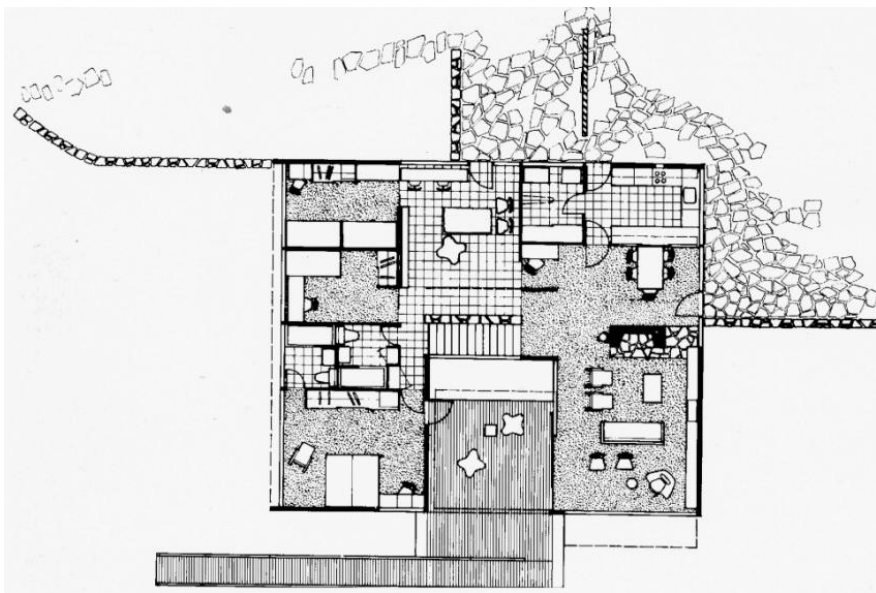


57 Harry Margalit, “Oser, H P” in Philip Goad and Julie Willis (editors), *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, p.520.

58 Scott Robertson, “Epstein, Henry” in Goad and Willis, p.236.

Harry Seidler arrived in Sydney during 1948. His understanding and experience, having studied in America under ex Bauhaus head Walter Gropius and studied and worked with prominent architect Marcel Breuer, placed his work on a different level to other architects influenced by the Modern Movement practicing in Sydney. His early houses have much in common with those of Marcel Breuer and their planning reflects two Breuer plan typologies - the rectangular linear plan, with a range of single spaces organised in a linear manner, and the bi-nuclear plan, where living areas and bedrooms were organised into two discrete zones. Seidler also developed the so-called "ring" plan, where spaces were organised around a central kitchen – it was intended to minimise circulation through the house.⁵⁹

Seidler's groundbreaking house that he designed for his parents at Wahroonga (the so-called Rose Seidler House) brought Marcel Breuer's adaptation of European modernism to North American conditions directly to Sydney. Its spatial flow was sophisticated, open in plan but encouraging movement through its spaces by not revealing the whole of the interior from any one vantage point. It also exploited available views with floor to ceiling glazing. The Rose Seidler House generated a great deal of publicity, appearing in local newspapers and journals as well as overseas publications. To cap it off, it was awarded the RAIA's Sulman Medal for 1952.



70 Plan of the Rose Seidler House (left); photograph looking from the dining area in the Rose Seidler House to the living area and view beyond.
Source: Harry Seidler, *Houses and Interiors 1*, copyright Penelope Seidler; SLNSW PXA 6900, Marcell Seidler photograph.

59 Kenneth Frampton and Philip Drew, *Harry Seidler: four decades of architecture*, pp.21-22.



- 71 Seidler's Rose House, near the Rose Seidler House at Wahroonga (designed 1950) was structurally audacious. It was supported by four steel columns off which diagonal hangers supported a raised floor cantilevering five metres at either end of the structure. Its elegant and simple linear plan consisted of a living and dining area separated by a fireplace, with the kitchen and bathroom segregating the living areas from the single bedroom. It maximised the potential for views available from the site.

Source: SLNSW Max Dupain photograph.

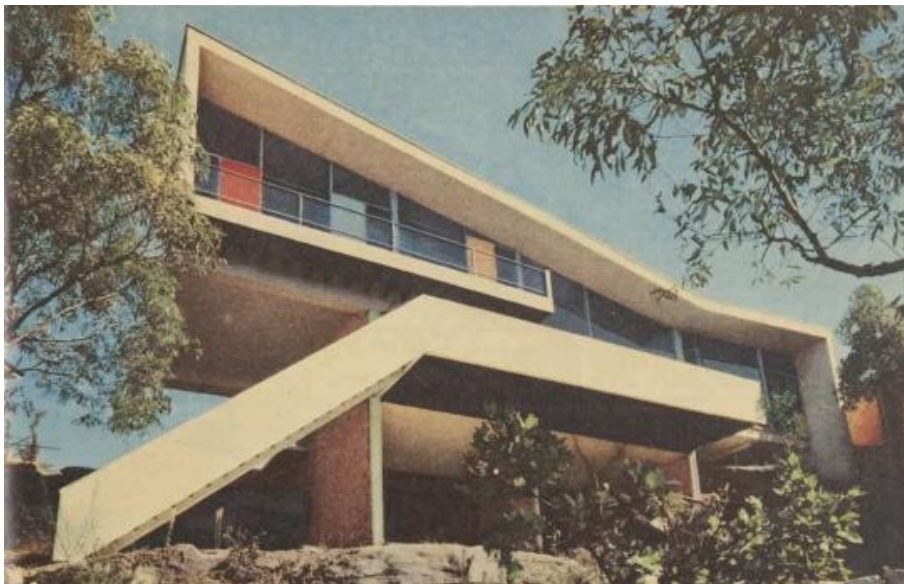
Several of Seidler's early houses demonstrated a comparable spatial character to Gruzman's house for his aunt, Mollie Lapin. Seidler's second residential commission was the Leo Waks House in Coorabin Road, Northbridge (designed in 1948). In contrast to the horizontal plan of the Rose Seidler House, the Waks House integrated horizontal and vertical spaces in a controlled rectangular plan that extended over three levels on a steeply sloping site - living areas on the uppermost floor, bedrooms on the intermediate level and a playroom on the ground floor. Living spaces and bedrooms were aligned to the northern view, while the spatial resolution of the house was organised around a void extending through two levels above the living room. It has since been modified.

The Meller House in Castlecrag, completed during the first half of 1953 was also the first example of split-level residential planning by Seidler. The house extended over three levels, all accessed via ramps on the western side of the house. There was no precedent for this in NSW - "the use of ramps instead of staircases is, of course, a radical departure from the conventional type of house."⁶⁰ Planning was linear - the kitchen, dining area and entry were situated on the "intermediate" level, with formal living areas on the level below it and bedrooms on the level above. The upper floor cantilevered almost four metres over an outcrop of rock and contained two bedrooms, one of which overlooked the formal living areas.

60 "Unconventional house causes stir", *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 2 September 1953, p.49.



- 73 Views of the Waks House at Northbridge showing the double-height living room.
Source: SLNSW - Volume 1: Harry Seidler scrapbook of press cuttings, 1949-1956 - *Australian Home Beautiful*, April 1951, p.16; *Houses and Interiors 1* - Marcell Seidler photograph



- 72 Exterior of the Meller House, showing the cantilevered upper floor.
Source: *Australian Women's Weekly*, 2 September 1953,

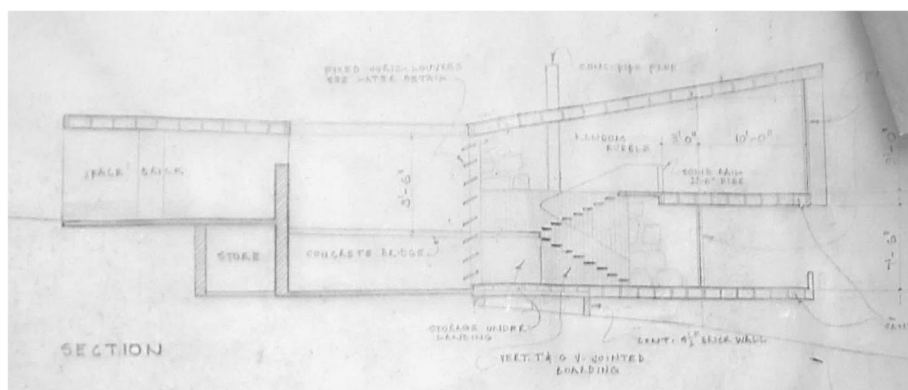


- 74 Part of the interior of the Meller House, showing the living room looking from the bedroom (right).
Source: Marcell Seidler photographs.

Seidler's Thurlow House at Blakehurst demonstrated a comparable spatial complexity to the Lapin House. This house, on which design commenced during 1951, has retained a high level of integrity and is listed in the NSW State Heritage Register. It was described in Seidler's first promotional book, *Houses, Interiors and Projects*:

The water frontage site overlooking the George's River to the South, resulted in all rooms of the house looking out in that direction. The two levels are staggered to result in space relationships between them inside, with the upper bedroom level forming the roof over the continuous view side terrace of the living floor. The slope of the site placed the double carport on a higher level on the street side and led the suspended approach bridge to an intermediate entrance level. Short flights of steps lead from it down to the living areas and up to the bedrooms. ...

The house is built on a continuous rock shelf. The south end of the structure reaches out over the edge of the rock and is therefore cantilevered to avoid foundations on the steeply sloping ground below the rock.⁶¹



- 75 Portion of a working drawing describing the section through the Thurlow House.
Source: SLNSW PXD 613 Tube 6, Project No. 51-11.



- 76 Thurlow House, photographed in 1954: view from the bedroom level towards the main entrance and living room, which is shaded by fixed timber louvers.
Source: courtesy Polly Seidler - Max Dupain photographs.
Copyright Penelope Seidler.

61 *Houses, Interiors and Projects*, pp.46 and 50.



77 Thurlow House, looking across the dining room to the stair, upper-level bedrooms and the external deck overlooking the George's River.

Source: courtesy Polly Seidler - Max Dupain photographs.
Copyright Penelope Seidler.

78 Thurlow House, photographed in 1954: view from the bedroom level towards the main entrance and living room, which is shaded by fixed timber louvres (left); looking across the dining room to the stair, upper-level bedrooms and the external deck overlooking the George's River (right).

Source: courtesy Polly Seidler - Max Dupain photographs. Copyright Penelope Seidler.

Seidler discussed precepts for residential design in his essay "Our Heritage of Modern Building", which was included in his 1954 book *Houses, Interiors and Projects*. Some had already been realised or partially realised by Gruzman at 2C Dumaresq Road:

- Use of "skeleton materials", in this case steel beams, to allow "internal visual freedom" achieved through open planning that realised the integration and interplay of spaces and spaces that flowed both horizontally and vertically.
- Separation of living and sleeping areas, arranged in an open manner.
- Focus of living areas around a fireplace that formed the "centre of the present-day home." An open fire provided "psychological warmth" rather than efficient heating.
- The bedroom area is smaller than the living area.
- "The site as the determining factor in basic disposition of parts will often suggest an arrangement of three different zones on various levels following the contours of the land and connected by ramps or half-flights of stairs with a resulting interplay of interior spaces";
- "Small economical houses will be more compact with a minimum of exterior wall space. The in-line arrangement is one particularly suitable in the case of a predominant view preferably coinciding with a good orientation ... All rooms will be arranged to have at least one wall of glass facing this desirable exposure."

Seidler's house for Mr and Mrs Joseph Weinrich at 11 Olola Avenue, Vacluse (1961), is listed by Woollahra Council. Its split-level configuration is more characteristic of Seidler's later houses. Like the Lapin House, the view and orientation were important considerations:

Built on a site sloping up from the street, this house is oriented to the northeast front, where the living room and parents' bedroom's continuous balcony overlook a park and a distant view of the harbour.

The rear garden and terrace are accessible from the central children's play space. The slope of the ground resulted in two levels, with a double garage and spare room excavated below.

The central dining space is contained by a semicircular parapet wall separating the levels, and is lit by a round skylight over the dining table.⁶²



- 79 The Weinrich House at 11 Olola Avenue, Vaucluse (1961). The curved parapet-like wall enclosing the dining area in the photograph at right modulates the living space below and controls movement at the main entrance to the house, visible to the left of the curved bay.

Source: <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/events/weinreich-house-tour> - Max Dupain photograph, October 1962; copyright Penelope Seidler.

Seidler's Bauhaus-derived Modernism was not generally adopted by his contemporaries. Gruzman was not the only young architect to respond positively to the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright. One was Peter Muller. His house for Robert Audette at Castlecrag shows its affinity to Wright's work through horizontal bands of windows and splayed brick walls and timber board-lined fascias. The north-oriented planning of the house is reflected in its picturesque massing, while Muller selected natural materials for its construction. Another was Bruce Rickard, who encountered Wright's work while in America during 1957. His houses displayed a Wright-influenced horizontality, skilfully integrated indoor and outdoor areas and made use of natural materials such as stone.

62 Harry Seidler, *Houses & Interiors 1*, p.120.



80 Peter Muller's Audette House at Castlecrag, 1953.
Source: Twentieth Century Heritage Society of NSW and ACT, Matt Stone photograph.

Philip Goad summarised differences between Gruzman and other architects with the Baudish House project of 1962 – like the Holland House, it was to comprise repetitive platforms and roof planes in layers across the site:

It was an organic model of composition, additive and not at all like the hermetic box forms of Seidler's houses isolated from their landscapes. It was also different from the systematised brick platforms of Ken Woolley's house at Mosman (1962) where the skillion roofs of that house enforced views down the slope or across the contour. Nor was it like John James's own house at Mosman (1965) with its collection of trapezoidal pods cascading down the slope. In Gruzman's houses, it was as if one was outside, living on a series of natural steps with a series of natural parasols above. The view was not to be compromised by building. Architecture was magically recessive, in terms of both materiality and structural expression.⁶³

Ironically the Baudishes built a house designed by Ken Woolley.

4.4 Exhibitions

The Lapin and Bursill Houses selected for the exhibition staged at Sydney Town Hall designed by Harry Seidler as part of the Australian Architectural Convention held in May 1954, indicating the esteem with which his work was held by his peers. The young Neville Gruzman was one of fifteen architects chosen. According to the editors of *Architecture*, the official journal of the RAIA,

A feature of the Convention which aroused wide-spread public interest were the exhibitions arranged at key points in the City.

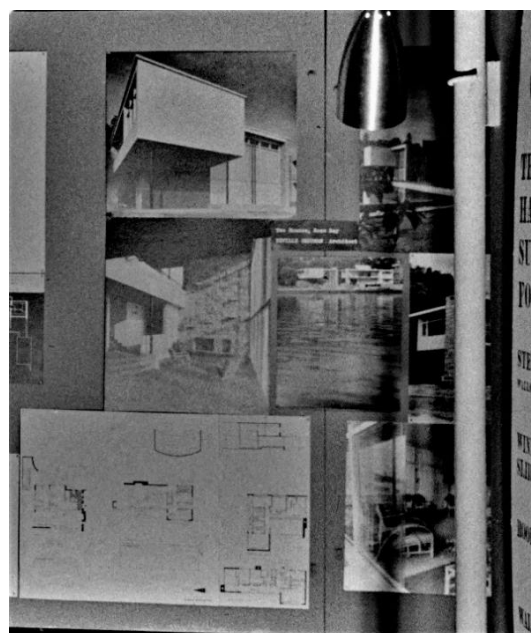
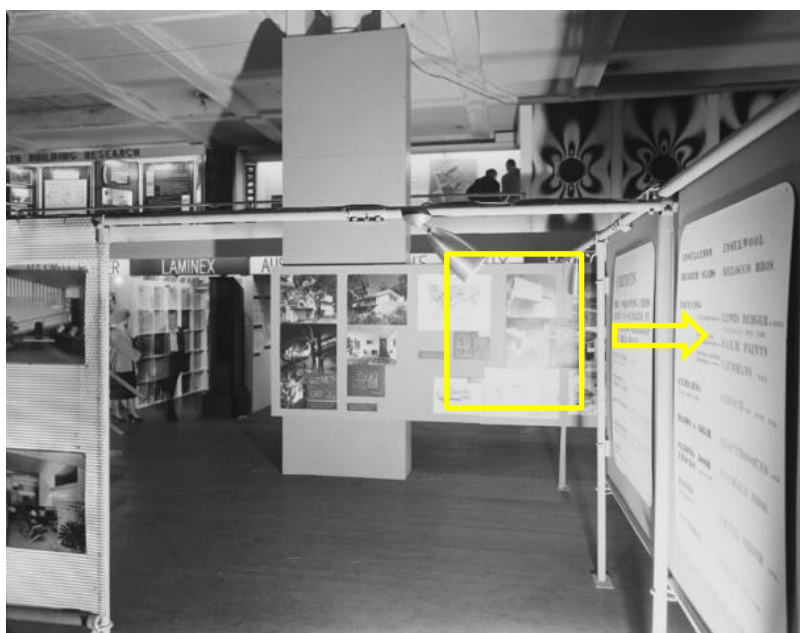
At least 40,000 people visited the Architectural and Building Exhibition in the Town Hall. Here were displayed photographs and models of the work of architects throughout New South Wales; a full-sized house designed by Mr Harry Seidler attempting to forecast design and structural techniques for the future; drawings and models of the winning designs in the national competition for an ideal Australian home recently sponsored by the Australian Women's Weekly. Members of the public were simultaneously amused and instructed by Mr George Molnar's series of drawings depicting architects at work.⁶⁴

⁶³ Goad, p.27.

⁶⁴ "Fourth Australian Architectural Convention. Exhibitions", *Architecture*, July-September 1954, p.130.



81 Neville Gruzman (second from left) with members of Harry Seidler's family at the Australian Architectural Convention. Harry Seidler is at far right.
Source: *Farmer and Settler*, 14 May 1954, p.25



82 Photographs and plans of Gruzman's Lapin and Bursill Houses at the 1954 Australian Architectural Convention exhibition.
Source: SLNSW ON 558/Box 3/nos. 630-631, Max Dupain photograph.

Gruzman's Benjamin House at Longueville (1959) formed part of the *15 Houses by Sydney Architects* exhibition held at the Blaxland Gallery in Farmer & Co's prestigious Sydney department store between August 23 and September 5, 1961.⁶⁵ The exhibition was staged by the RAIA NSW Chapter in association with the Museum of Modern Art of Australia (MoMAA) in Melbourne and featured photographs by Max Dupain. It was subsequently shown at MoMMA as *Modern Sydney Domestic Architecture*.

⁶⁵ The other architects were, like Gruzman, all prominent and included Peter Muller, Harry Seidler, Sydney Ancher, Bruce Rickard, John James, John Allen and Russell C. Jack, Max Collard and Guy Clarke; Neville Gruzman, L. Peter Kollar, (James Kell of Fowell, Mansfield and Maclurcan), W.E. Lucas and Ruth Lucas, Ian McKay, Bruce S. Robertson, Ross Thorne and Andrew Young (Duffield Young Associates).

Over twenty years later Gruzman was the subject of the RAIA's *Twenty-five small buildings* exhibition. First shown in Sydney during December 1983, this retrospective exhibition subsequently toured other state capitals. Gruzman suggested he was the only living architect to have been honoured this way by the RAIA (NSW). The Lapin House was amongst the houses selected for inclusion in the exhibition. Although his first work, Gruzman expressed pride in the house and the following notes are believed to have accompanied photographs displayed in the exhibition.

Only a relative would entrust a new building to a young man who had just completed his third year of architecture but this was Gruzman's early good fortune. The building is successful because in the early 40s and 50s design was the central theme of University architecture courses. Today with the emphasis on a wide variety of related disciplines, educators have lost sight of the essential contribution the architect needs to make to the community; that is the putting together of materials and equipment into house man in the most splendid way possible.

In this early house, Gruzman broke new ground structurally by an early use of raft slab, an early use of flat slab and an early use of adjustable glass louvres and an early attempt to relate two houses together (though the second one was not supervised by the architect).

The Lapin House is an experiment in space, strongly influenced by the International school [sic], an architectural approach which Gruzman rapidly discarded. The living space is on three levels, part of it going through two floors to form at the upper level a study and the access gallery to the bedrooms. This large space enabled the architect to face the splendid view with an immense glass wall through which the view can be experienced from a variety of elevations. The Lapin house also began the first of many essays on the relation of inside and outside space which remain an essential aspect of the architect's work.⁶⁶

The Retrospective 2 exhibition was held at the Rex Irwin Gallery in Woollahra in February 1992. A catalogue and selected writings accompanied the exhibition. One was an essay by Professor Joan Kerr. It included an analysis of the Lapin House and its near contemporaries:

Gruzman has always picked up and used current international styles with an Australian accent. His earliest buildings [including] the Lapin House ... assert his admiration for those 'Modern Masters' who were influencing the whole Western World in [the] 1950s ... The Lapin pair of houses clearly derive from Le Corbusier's 1920s seminal models in Weisenhof and Poissy. ...

Nevertheless, none of these buildings were unmodified International Style imports, as, for instance, Seidler's Turramurra House was. Gruzman's inevitable awareness of client and site gave them an intimate local character too. They may have been white cubes or glass boxes, but both types had a peculiarly local character. The Lapin houses modestly nestle in their site ...⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Scripts, typed and hand-written, on selected Neville Gruzman houses, authorship unclear at SLNSW MLMSS9168 Series 3: Neville Gruzman records 1974, 1983-84, Folder 06.

⁶⁷ Joan Kerr, "Neville Gruzman - Retrospective 1983" in Neville Gruzman, *Neville Gruzman retrospective 2 : catalogue & selected writings*, no pagination.

4.5 Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from the discussion above.

- Neville Gruzman absorbed architectural influences but translated them to suit the building site conditions and the needs of his clients. This, his first house, demonstrates his absorption of European Modernist architecture of the interwar period and anticipated his later absorption of other influences such as traditional Japanese architecture and the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright.
- The Lapin House provides evidence of his adventurous approach to structure and exploiting the intrinsic character of the site, including its orientation towards views. This continued across his body of residential work. Contemporary architects had similar approaches to siting, orientation and views.
- When compared to contemporary houses by established architects, the Lapin House is notable for its interpretation of Modernist architecture and for its spatial character and qualities.
- The house was a significant one for Gruzman as part of his overall body of residential buildings. This is apparent by its appearance in a succession of exhibitions from 1954 to 1992 and as one of the selected buildings in Gruzman: an architect and his city.

5 Assessment of Heritage Significance

5.1 Introduction

The concept of “cultural significance” embraces the values of places or items to the community, which cannot be expressed in financial terms alone. Assessment of cultural significance endeavours to establish why a place or item is considered important and valued by the community. Significance, therefore, is embodied in the fabric of the place, including the setting, the records associated with the place and the response that the place evokes in the community.

The Lapin House has been assessed in accordance with the guidelines contained in *Assessing heritage significance: Guidelines for assessing places and objects against the Heritage Council of NSW criteria* (State of NSW and Department of Planning and Environment, 2023).

Reference to relevant Threshold indicators

5.2 Previous assessments

The following statement of heritage significance has been extracted from the Demolition Report and Heritage Assessment 2C Dumaresq Road, Rose Bay (Urbis, June 2023):

The subject site known as ‘Lapin House’ and located at 2C Dumaresq Road, Rose Bay possibly meets the criteria for aesthetic significance, although the dwelling was not a well resolved dwelling by a then untrained architect and has been altered over time.

The subject site was designed by architect Neville Gruzman and was constructed in 1952. The dwelling is a relatively intact example of Gruzman’s domestic work in the very early part of his career. The building’s form and volumetric composition provides evidence of Gruzman’s early interest in the Modernist International architectural style that was embraced by architects in the post-war period. The building’s aesthetic significance has been degraded by later additions and the deterioration of some original fabric, including the support of the cantilevered bedroom, however its overall original architectural program remains legible and key contributory internal fabric remains.

5.3 Assessment of significance

The following assessment of heritage significance uses the framework for the assessment of significance advocated by the NSW Heritage Office in the guidelines included in the NSW Heritage Manual. In this framework places are assessed in accordance with the defined criteria set out below.

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).

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.

2C Dumaresq Road does not meet the State or Local significance threshold for Criterion A.

Criterion B

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

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.

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 *Gruzman: an architect and his city* 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.

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.

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.

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.

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).

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, Vacluse 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.

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.

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.

Criterion D

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

2C Dumaresq Road is unlikely to fulfil this criterion. However, further investigation is required to confirm this.

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).

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.

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).

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.

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.

2C Dumaresq Road meets the **Local** significance threshold for Criterion F. It demonstrates a distinctive attribute that is rare within the local area.

Criterion G

An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's (or the local areas) cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments.

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.

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.

5.4 Statement of cultural significance

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 *Gruzman: an architect and his city*. 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.

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.

6 Recommendations

Available documentary evidence, comparative analysis and physical fabric indicate that 2C Dumaresq Road has sufficient associational, aesthetic and technical significance, along with sufficient integrity (notwithstanding modifications undertaken to it in the past) to warrant inclusion in Schedule 5 of Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 2014.

Notwithstanding modifications to wet areas and replacement of original fabric, the plan, a large amount of original fabric and the innovative spatial character of the house are intact.

The building is not located within a conservation area, and current planning instruments do not provide sufficient protection for the building. Listing it as a heritage item will enable its heritage significance to be protected.

The following actions are recommended:

- The property should be added to Schedule 5 of Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 2014 as 'The Lapin House, 2C Dumaresq Road, Rose Bay and interiors,' with the curtilage defined as the land contained within Lot A Deposited Plan 33652.
- 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.

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Appendix A Buildings and projects designed by Neville Gruzman in Woollahra

This list is based on the Project List included in *Gruzman: an architect and his city*, which was compiled from documents held in the Neville Gruzman Pty Ltd archive. The extent of completed projects in the list has not been ascertained.

Date	Residential	Other building type
1949-52	Lapin House, Dumaresq Road, Rose Bay	
1952	Bursill House, Dumaresq Road Rose Bay	
1954	Sobol Flats, Wolseley Road, Point Piper	
	Reidl House, Drumalbyn Road, Bellevue Hill	
1955	Studio, Eric Smith House, Small Street, Woollahra	Shop and surgery alts and adds Rose Bay
1957		South Head and District Synagogue, 666 Old South Head Road, Rose Bay (mutilated)
1958	Gruzman House, 4-8 Oswald Street, Darling Point (1965, 1995)	
	Eric Smith House alterations and additions, Small Street, Woollahra	
	Penthouse addition, 38 Wunulla Road, Point Piper	
1963-64		Rudy Komon Art Gallery, Paddington
1964	Williams House, Rose Bay	
	Blacket Square townhouse proposal, Double Bay	
1965	Japanese Consul General's residence, Bellevue Hill	
1966	Scott House, Woollahra	
1966-72	Ashton House, 4 Figtree Lane, Woollahra - alterations and additions.	
1967	10 Small Street, Rose Bay	
	McKewan Interiors, Double Bay alterations and additions.	
	Wentworth Bowling Green, Double Bay	
C 1967	Proposal for Owen Traynor at Point Piper - project.	
1968	Mitchelmore House, Woollahra - alterations	Gaden House, Double Bay
1969		R G Menzies Building, Double Bay.
1970	Stanbury House, Bellevue Hill alterations and additions.	Gruzman Office, 170 Queen Street, Woollahra
1971	Heath House, Bellevue Hill.	Commercial premises for Meriton at Double Bay.
1972	Eric Smith Studio, Double Bay	Double Bay Steakhouse, Double Bay
	Vernon House, Double Bay - garden	
1973		Helen Keller House, Woollahra
		Vardis Restaurant, Double Bay

Date	Residential	Other building type
1974	McHollick House, Paddington	
1976	Semmil-Van Dalen House, Woollahra	
	Townhouses, Vacluse - project	
1977	Taylor House, Woollahra – alterations and additions	Sloak Properties, Double Bay – alterations and additions.
1980	House in Queen Street, Woollahra – alterations and additions.	
1987	Connelley House, Darling Point - alterations	Overpass and retail development, Double Bay – project.
1988	Conley House, Woollahra - alterations	
1989		Refurbishment of commercial premises, Double Bay.
1991	Hilton House, Bellevue Hill – alterations and additions.	
1995	Turner House, Woollahra	
	Rona, Bellevue Hill	
1996	Schaeffer House, Bellevue Hill	
	Rydge House, Point Piper -not built.	
2000	Rose Bay Waters, Rose Bay	
	Kings Apartments, Rose Bay	
2001	Babworth House, Darling Point	
Unknown		45A Bay Street, Double Bay
		11 Bay Street, Double Bay