

## HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

---

**NAME:** Graham and Barbara Dickson House

**PLACE:** 26597

---

**ADDRESS:** Karna Country

4 Marola Avenue, Rostrevor

---

This heritage assessment considers that the place meets criteria (e) and (g). Refer to Summary of State Heritage Place for final approved wording, including criteria statements.



**Graham and Barbara Dickson House**

Source: DEW Files 24 July 2024

## ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

### Statement of Heritage Significance:

The Graham and Barbara Dickson House is an outstanding representative of the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional architectural style and has a special association with South Australian architect Robert Dickson. Robert Dickson was one of a small group of architects who established the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style creating a more relaxed and friendly form of modernism suited to South Australian conditions. Designed in 1958, it is one of Dickson's earlier commissions and acted as an experimental ground from which many of the key attributes of the style emerged.

## Relevant South Australian Historical Themes

The Graham and Barbara Dickson House is associated with the following historic themes and subthemes for South Australia:

### 4. Building Settlements, Towns and Cities

4.3 Shaping the suburbs (including pre and post World War 2).

4.7 Marking significant phases in developing SA's settlements, towns and cities (including key town planning initiatives and architectural styles).

## Comparative Analysis:

Graham and Barbara Dickson House is associated with the architect Robert Dickson and the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional architectural style that he and partner Newell Platten (Dickson and Platten) were instrumental in developing between the 1950s and 1980s.

## Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional

Regional variations of Modern architecture appeared across Australia in the decades following the Second World War and while drawing on modern architectural ideas these variations also responded to local climate and topography. In Adelaide, the partnership of Robert (Bob) Dickson and Newell Platten, operating as the architectural firm Dickson and Platten (1958-1973), is recognised as 'pioneering and developing'<sup>1</sup> a 'friendly and more relaxed form of modernism'<sup>2</sup> that came to be known as Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style. While Modern architecture generally favoured flat roofs, pitched roofs, once associated with domestic buildings, were reintroduced in the Adelaide Regional idiom resulting in the creation of 'interesting' interior spaces through the use of sloped and exposed ceilings. Landscape settings were 'understated and informal' and tended to frequently use Australian native plants. Other architects to design in Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style include John Chappel and JD Craven.<sup>3</sup>

Apperly et al note the following attributes that define the style:

- Mainly domestic; some institutional buildings,
- Textured walls of painted or face brick or blockwork,
- Timber windows and door joinery, stained or oiled,
- Simple shapes freely composed,
- Low-pitched gable roofs with wide eaves clad in terracotta or concrete tiles,
- Clerestory windows,
- Well-shaded verandahs with timber posts and screens, and
- Off-form concrete columns and balustrades.

## Robert (Bob) Dickson

Bob Dickson was born in Adelaide in 1926. He studied architecture at the South Australian School of Mines and Industries between 1946-1952 and was articled to and then worked for Claridge, Hassell and McConnell between 1948-1955, receiving his

Associate Diploma in Architecture in 1953. While still a student, in 1949 Dickson began designing a home for himself and wife Lilian, taking 1951 off from his studies to build it. Located at Wandilla Drive Rostrevor (SHP 26194), close to Morialta Conservation Park, it is an expression of the ideals he and Lilian held about creating a home closely connected with nature.<sup>4</sup>

The house is an 'influential representation of modern organic design and construction' noted for its relationship with the site.<sup>5</sup> Designed within the constraints of a tight budget and also government buildings restrictions it grew, as planned, with the growth of the Dickson's family. Planned growth was a typical feature of many of the architect designed homes at this time and allowed for additions to meet family needs once building restrictions were lifted and family members and budget grew.<sup>6</sup> Bob Dickson's own home was the only example of residential architecture in South Australia selected for the Royal Institute of British Architects 1956 London Exhibition on Australian Architecture.<sup>7</sup> Inspired by the modern architecture being created in Italy after the war, Dickson arranged to work with Italian architects Mangiarotti and Marassutti in Milan between 1955-1956, Bob stating the experience 'reaffirmed my approach to architecture'.<sup>8</sup>

Academic, Rachel Hurt has researched and analysed the work of the Dickson and Platten practice finding that the early house commissions of the 1950s and 1960s allowed them to challenge the 'stylistic conventions of Adelaide taste'. These house commissions became 'experimental grounds' that allowed them to consolidate their design philosophy that 'underwrote later larger works'.<sup>9</sup>

### **Key stylistic indicators of Dickson & Platten:**

Hurst has identified further stylistic indicators of the work of Dickson and Platten that are integral to Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style to those published earlier by Apperly et al in 1989, including:

- Structural expression and materials palette reminiscent of the work of Alvar Aalto and the Sydney School,
- Design response to site and function; aesthetics arise from the built solutions to the problem,
- Rejection of historic allusion and irrelevant beautification,
- Plan resolution is fundamental, is zoned and defines site relationships,
- Use of filtered light in circulation corridors to blur edges (clerestory windows),
- Direct journey through the space,
- Thickened walls,
- Overlapping framed views,
- Built-in furniture,
- Shaded living spaces, slatted and shaded verandas,
- Courtyards,
- Roof is emblematic and expresses function of the internal spaces while shaping interesting volumes, module based on width of 'Solomit' compressed

straw panelling that was used as a ceiling lining and was often varnished, roof clad in terracotta or concrete tiles,

- Interesting use of brick both as face-brick and load-bearing walls, early works characterised by the use of red brick, cream brick used in later works. Brick is used as a textural element often as brick-on-edge lintels and grilles (best example of this according to Platten is Union House, University of Adelaide (Union Building Group SHP 17619, listed 25 July 2002 under criteria (e) and (g)),
- Extensive use of exposed timber for trusses and robust internal carpentry,
- Use of off-form concrete for structural elements, and
- Landscape elements/setting.<sup>10</sup>

### **Oeuvre of Dickson & Platten and representation on the SA Heritage Register**

The series list of items in the Dickson Collection held by the Architecture Museum, UniSA, includes the plans for hundreds of commissions undertaken by Dickson & Platten and later Robert Dickson & Associates. As a practice, nearly a hundred houses were designed new or had additions planned, with the 'predominantly domestic...[e]arly commissions...regarded [by Dickson and Platten] as the most pure form of architecture'.<sup>11</sup> Their oeuvre also contains many different building types including schools, libraries, sporting clubs and facilities, civic buildings, water treatment plants, landscaping, office buildings and hotels.

While many of their houses and practice office building best express their work, notable larger commissions include the highly intact, State Heritage listed Kathleen Lumley College, North Adelaide, 1968 (SHP26350) (Platten) and Union House, 1967-1975 University of Adelaide (Dickson), which is part of the listing for the Union Building Group (SHP17619). Unlisted notable examples of their work include the now demolished Associated Limited Securities building located adjacent to Hindmarsh Square (Dickson) and the substantially altered Arkaba Hotel, Fullarton (Dickson). Two further State Heritage Places associated with Bob Dickson are his own home and the Dickson family beach house:

Of the four State Heritage Places designed by Bob Dickson, two are dwellings, notably:

1. Dwelling designed by Robert Dickson, (own home) 1 Wandilla Drive, Rostrevor, 1952 (listed 15 June 2009 under criteria (e) and (g)), (SHP26194).

The Statement of Heritage Significance states: Dickson House at Rostrevor has unique and significant associations with the life and work of Robert Dickson, and demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic and technical accomplishment as well as being an influential representative of modern organic design and construction. In particular, the way in which the place relates to its site, its outstanding quality and integrity, and the fact that it has been internationally recognised as one of Australia's most architecturally notable mid-20th-century houses provide it with outstanding significance in the context of South Australia's architectural development.

2. Dickson Beach House, Little Gorge Beach, main South Rd, Normanville, late 1950s (listed 15 June 2012 under criterion (e) and (g)), (SHP26195).

The Statement of Heritage Significance states: The Dickson Beach House is a significant surviving representative of the work of notable South Australian architect Robert Dickson. Alongside his own house at Rostrevor, the building's relatively unaltered state provides special insights into the life and design philosophy of Dickson. It is also a notable early example of a perma-pine pole-framed beach hut and demonstrates significant modern design characteristics with its functional minimalist plan, innovative use of multi-function shutters, and the way in which the windows and internal design create a specific relationship with external views.

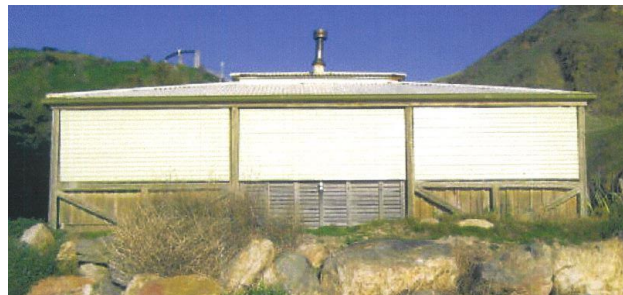
The other State Heritage Places designed by or in association with Dickson are:

- Union House, 1967-1975 University of Adelaide (Dickson), part of the listing for the Union Building Group (listed 25 July 2002 under criteria (e) and (g)), (SHP 17619).
- Kathleen Lumley College including Amenities Wing, Residential Wing, Master's Residence, Central and Front Gardens, Transformer Building, Southern Boundary Walls and Gate, 113-123 Mackinnon Parade, North Adelaide. While acknowledged as a part of the work of Dickson and Platten, Kathleen Lumley College was designed by Dickson's partner Newell Platten, (listed 25 October 2013 under criterion (e) and (g)), (SHP 26350).



**Dickson House, 1952 (SHP 26194)**

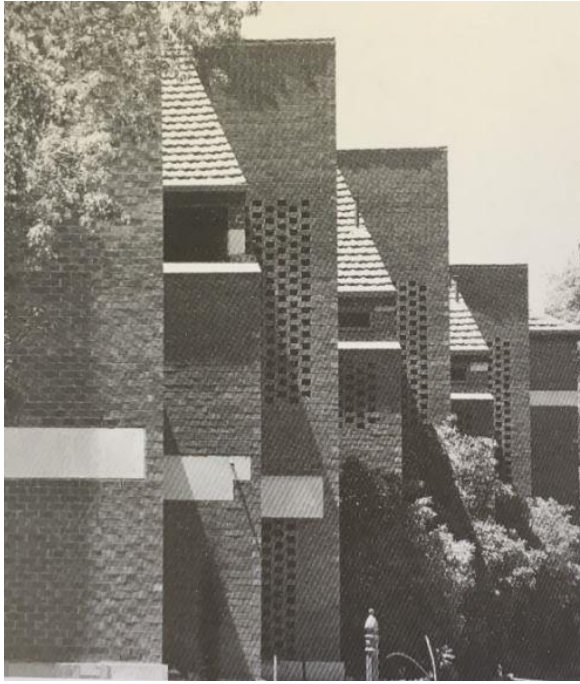
Source: Dickson, p.29.



**Dickson Beach House (SHP26195)**

Source: Dickson, p.90.





**University of Adelaide Union Building (SHP 17619), showing an example of the brick grille and internal timber framing to roof and 'Solomit' compressed straw panelling to ceiling.**

Source: Dickson, p.136.



**Interior images of the Arkaba Hotel (left) and Dickson & Platten Office (right), note the use of timber, off-form concrete and brick structural elements.**

Source: Dickson, pp.110,163.

Other houses designed by Bob Dickson that are recognised as influential examples that follow Dickson's design ethos include:

- Bowe/Turner House Lot 3 Marola Ave, Rostrevor; construction commenced by Bill Bowe in 1953 but not completed until the early 1960s by the second owners. Acquired by Beryl and George Turner c.1966 who added a parent's wing in the late-1960s-early-1970s.
- Draper House, Wandilla Drive, Rostrevor; designed and built c.1966.

- Warburton House Lot 4 Werona Place, Rostrevor; designed and built c.1966. Dickson identified this house as the one he would most liked to have lived in assumingly aside from his own house.
- Graham and Barbara Dickson House, 4 Marola Avenue, Rostrevor; built 1958-1968 (subject of this assessment).
- Palmer / Blewett house, 20 Baroota Avenue, Rostrevor; construction commenced 1968 by the Palmers, the house was later completed by Jill and Neil Blewett.
- Belcher House Lot 3 Werona Place, Rostrevor; designed 1969 and constructed soon after, with later additions including a parent's retreat connected to the original house with a gallery and carport.
- May's Flat, 165 Mackinnon Parade, North Adelaide; a flat created for Bob Dickson's mother and located at the rear of the Dickson and Platten Office.<sup>12</sup>



**Warburton House, Lot 4 Werona Place, Rostrevor (designed 1966).**

Source: SLSA BRG 346/28/DicksonandPlatten/34/1-3 1967



**May's Flat 165 McKinnon Parade, North Adelaide**

Source: SLSA BRG 346/28/DicksonandPlatten/24/1 1973

**Assessment against Criteria under Section 16 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*.  
All Criteria have been assessed using the 2020 Guidelines.**

**(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.**

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

*The place should be closely associated with events, developments or cultural phases which have played a significant part in South Australian history. Ideally it should demonstrate those associations in its fabric.*

*Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if they are of a class of things that are commonplace, or frequently replicated across the State, places associated with events of interest only to a small number of people, places associated with developments of little significance, or places only reputed to have been the scene of an event which has left no trace or which lacks substantial evidence.*

The Graham and Barbara Dickson House (the house) is associated with the historic theme building settlements, towns and cities and its subthemes shaping the suburbs (including pre and post-World War 2) and marking significant phases in developing South Australia's settlements, towns and cities (including key town planning initiatives and architectural styles). Specifically, the house is associated with the post-World War Two suburban expansion of Adelaide and the emergence of Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style of architecture.

The house is associated with the suburban expansion of Adelaide in the decades following World War Two and is one of 9 houses built in a small scale re-subdivision of a part of the Rostrevor estate during the 1950s-1970s. Undertaken by like-minded professionals, led by Adelaide architect Robert Dickson, the group acted to create and protect an ideal living environment for themselves and their families that was in keeping with the environmental concerns of the day. While an interesting part of the history of Rostrevor and the work of Robert Dickson, it has not made a strong, noticeable or influential contribution to the evolution or pattern of South Australian history. Such a contribution instead came from the large-scale planning initiatives of several government agencies (South Australian Housing Trust and South Australian Land Commission) and private developers (Reality Development Corporation and Delfin), both of which also sought to create better living environments. It is their work that shaped South Australia's post-war suburbs both in Adelaide and regional centres across the State.

Similarly, while the house is an outstanding example of the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional architectural style (considered under criterion (e)), of itself, the house has not made a strong, noticeable or influential contribution to the evolution or a pattern of the settlement and development of South Australia. Rather the house was one of several early experiments that enabled Robert Dickson to explore his growing confidence as an architect and the evolution of an Adelaide response to modern architecture that resulted in this architectural style. These attributes are better



explored under criterion (g) and the association the house has with Robert Dickson and his overall contribution to the design and built history of South Australia.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (a).

**(b) it has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.**

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

*The place should demonstrate a way of life, social custom, industrial process or land use which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost, or is of exceptional interest. This encompasses both places which were always rare, and places which have become scarce through subsequent loss or destruction.*

*Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if their rarity is merely local, or if they appear rare only because research has not been done elsewhere, or if their distinguishing characteristics have been degraded or compromised, or if they are at present common and simply believed to be in danger of becoming rare in the future.*

The house is one of several homes designed early in the career of Bob Dickson that acted as a testing ground for design ideas that would later be identified as the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional architectural style. While the development of a regional variation of Modern architecture is culturally significant to South Australia, dwellings and other buildings designed in the style are not rare, uncommon or endangered. There are many built commissions, houses and other buildings designed in the style by Dickson, as well as dozens of commissions designed by several other architects, including Newell Platten and John Chappel. As houses in the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional architectural style are not uncommon, rare or endangered, criterion (b) is not considered to be met.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (b).

**(c) it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history.**

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

*The place should provide, or demonstrate a likelihood of providing, information that will contribute significantly to our knowledge of the past. The information should be inherent in the fabric of the place. The place may be a standing structure, an archaeological deposit or a geological site.*

*Places will not normally be considered under this criterion simply because they are believed to contain archaeological or palaeontological deposits. There must be good reasons to suppose the site is of value for research, and that useful information will emerge. A place that will yield the same information as many other places, or information that could be obtained as readily from documentary sources, may not be eligible.*

Prior to the construction of the Graham and Barbara Dickson House, the land had been cleared and planted as an orchard. It was then cleared again for the

construction of the house, carport, pergola, inground swimming pool and bush-style garden. There is no evidence to suggest that the house and its allotment will yield information that is not already well documented in other sources, including but not limited to published histories, newspaper articles, photographs, documents and architectural drawings. Consequently, criterion (c) is not considered to be met.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (c).

**(d) it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.**

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

*The place should be capable of providing understanding of the category of places which it represents. It should be typical of a wider range of such places, and in a good state of integrity, that is, still faithfully presenting its historical message.*

*Places will not be considered simply because they are members of a class, they must be both notable examples and well-preserved. Places will be excluded if their characteristics do not clearly typify the class, or if they were very like many other places, or if their representative qualities had been degraded or lost. However, places will not be excluded from the Register merely because other similar places are included.*

The Graham and Barbara Dickson House is a family home designed and built in the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional architectural style. While the style is considered to be culturally significant to South Australia as it is an important regional variation of and response to Modern architecture, these qualities are better considered under criterion (e), which specifically addresses design qualities.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (d).

**(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.**

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

*The place should show qualities of innovation or departure, beauty or formal design, or represent a new achievement of its times. Breakthroughs in technology or new developments in design would qualify, if the place clearly shows them. A high standard of design skill and originality is expected.*

*Places would not normally be considered under this criterion if their degree of achievement could not be demonstrated, or where their integrity was diminished so that the achievement, while documented, was no longer apparent in the place, or simply because they were the work of a designer who demonstrated innovation elsewhere.*

The Graham and Barbara Dickson House (the house) is an outstanding representative of the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional architectural style. Designed by Adelaide architect Robert Dickson, who with Newel Platten 'pioneer[ed] and

develop[ed]' a 'friendly and more relaxed form of modernism' that came to be known as Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional, the house is both an exceptional and influential example of the style. Designed in 1958, early in Dickson's career, the house is one of several early commissions (see Comparative Analysis) that directly defined the key attributes of the style. The house also remains highly intact exhibiting a high degree of integrity that allows the style to be readily understood to a high degree.

Key attributes of the style demonstrated by the house include:

- Design response to the sloping site by creating a split-level home comprising simple shapes, with a shallow pitched roof that is parallel to the slope of the hill and clad in corrugated steel (replacing original asbestos cladding). Siting of house and main living areas to enable large expanses of glazing to northern and southern elevations to take advantage of the views (existing) and bush-like setting (created over time).
- Division into functional areas with each level having a specific function within the domestic sphere, notably living and master suite on level 1; kitchen, dining and laundry on level 2; and bedrooms and family bathroom on level 3.
- Extensive use of exposed timber for trusses and robust internal carpentry/joinery including built-in furniture and partitions to further divide or denote functional areas between each level and to create direct movement from one space to the next.
- Interior and exterior timber carpentry/joinery (carport and covered walkway) showing design solution that would later be used in many buildings designed in the style by Dickson and Platten including Union House (Union Building Group SHP 17619), Arkaba Hotel, Salisbury Civic Centre (demolished).
- Roof featuring wide shallow eaves, with exposed timber and strawboard ceiling extending from interior to exterior, providing solar control to large expanse of glazing.
- Textured walls with use of blockwork both internally and externally, contrasting with painted plaster.
- Timber windows and door joinery.

While the master bedroom and ensuite was added in 1968, it was designed by Robert Dickson and built with the same level of detailing as the earlier parts of the house and fits into the overall design seamlessly.

It is recommended that the nominated place **fulfils** criterion (e).

**(f) it has strong cultural or spiritual association for the community or a group within it.**

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

*The place should be one which the community or a significant cultural group have held in high regard for an extended period. This must be much stronger than people's normal attachment to their surroundings. The association may in some instances be in folklore rather than in reality.*

*Places will not be considered if their associations are commonplace by nature, or of recent origin, or recognised by a small number of people, or not held very strongly, or held by a group not widely recognised, or cannot be demonstrated satisfactorily to others.*

The Graham and Barbara Dickson House may be important to groups who appreciate modern architecture such as the Art Deco and Modernism Society, followers of Modernist Adelaide and others who form a disparate collective who celebrate such places. However, these groups tend to hold many similar places in high regard and there is no evidence to suggest that these groups hold this particular house in higher regard than most others. As a result, criterion (f) if not considered to be met.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (f).

**(g) it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.**

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

*The place must have a close association with a person or group which played a significant part in past events, and that association should be demonstrated in the fabric of the place. The product of a creative person, or the workplace of a person whose contribution was in industry, would be more closely associated with the person's work than would his or her home. Most people are associated with many places in their lifetime, and it must be demonstrated why one place is more significant than others.*

*Places will not generally be considered under this criterion if they have only brief, incidental or distant association, or if they are associated with persons or groups of little significance, or if they are associated with an event which has left no trace, or if a similar association could be claimed for many places, or if the association cannot be demonstrated. Generally the home or the grave of a notable person will not be entered in the Register unless it has some distinctive attribute, or there is no other physical evidence of the person's life or career in existence.*

The Graham and Barbara Dickson House (the house) has a special association with prominent South Australian architect Robert (Bob) Dickson who, with partner Newell Platten, pioneered and developed a 'friendly and more relaxed form of modernism'<sup>13</sup> that came to be known as the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style. The house was designed in 1958, shortly after Bob Dickson returned from working in the Milan office of Italian architects Mangiarotti and Marassutti, an experience that



reaffirmed Dickson's approach to architecture. That same year Dickson went into partnership with Newell Platten and while the two architects are often acknowledged as working separately, the partnership was a symbiotic relationship. In particular, early house commissions acted as an 'experimental ground' that consolidated their joint design philosophy and would go on to 'underwr[i]te later larger works', for example the Union Building (part of Union Building Groups SHP 17619) and Arkaba Hotel, (see Comparative Analysis).

In this early part of his career, the house builds on Bob Dickson's earlier experiments with his own home (Dwelling – Dickson House SHP 26194) located nearby and shows his maturing understanding of the relationship between site and building. The house is also associated with the development of Bob Dickson's growing environmental ethos, one seemingly shared with his brother Graham for whom the house was designed, and which Bob Dickson continued to explore at the Rostrevor location adjacent to Morialta Conservation Park in the following decades. While there are several houses at Rostrevor (known as the Morialta Nine) that could also be said to have similar associations, in comparison the Graham and Barbara Dickson House has a higher level of integrity and remains highly intact.

It is recommended that the nominated place **fulfils** criterion (g).

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Primarily constructed in 1958, the Graham and Barbara Dickson house is a split-level home constructed over three levels that step down a gentle slope. It includes a carport and covered entrance that links the former to the front of the house. The house is a timber framed, concrete-brick building with a shallow pitched roof that is parallel to the slope of the hill and clad in corrugated steel, which has replaced the original asbestos cladding. The main living areas feature large expanses of timber-framed windows to take advantage of the views to the north and south. A master bedroom and ensuite addition was designed by Bob Dickson and added in 1968. The bedroom follows the detailing of the earlier construction. A swimming pool, timber pergola (designed in keeping with the house) and garden sheds were also added c.1968. The house is set in a bush-style garden created by Graham and Barbara Dickson to compliment the house.

Other features of the house include:

- Exposed timber roof beams that extend to support external eaves that provide solar control.
- Bound straw ceilings, likely Solomit®, that extend from interior ceilings across the external eaves.
- Internal timber framing, partitions and bespoke designed built-in timber furniture to create divisions between living spaces, notably between living and dining areas.
- All internal timber in natural (varnished) finish unless otherwise stated.
- Suspended lights with opaque-white cylindrical shade.

Level 1 (living room, master bedroom and ensuite)

- Timber framed doors and windows, featuring:
  - Timber door to front entrance and door to garden from master bedroom (exterior painted cream).
  - Picture windows to northern elevation (living room) and southern elevation (master bedroom), featuring awning windows at ground level with particleboard infill (unfinished interior, painted cream exterior) and removable internal timber-framed fly screens.
- Timber panelling to walls in master bedroom.
- Timber built-in cupboards in master bedroom.
- Timber wall mounted bedside lights with opaque-white, cylindrical shades in master bedroom.
- Tiled floor throughout (brown to living room and master bedroom, white to ensuite floor).
- Combustion wood heater (living room).
- Master bedroom has a painted plaster ceiling, with timber soffit to external eaves.
- Timber stairs x 3 with wide runners and balustrade between level 1 and level 2.

## Level 2 (dining room, kitchen, laundry)

- Bamboo flooring (newer addition) to dining room, laundry alcove and kitchen corridor.
- Timber doors (opposite each other) providing direct access to front and back gardens.
- Timber panelled partition to kitchen and to screen-front entrance with built-in shelving to kitchen partition, both open at top.
- Timber framed picture windows, full height to south (front), divided to north (back) with casement to middle section and fixed glass top and bottom.
- Kitchen features timber cabinetry with white laminate benchtops, white tile splashback to sink and stovetop (appliances, sink and tapware not original fabric).
- White painted plaster to concrete block internal walls in kitchen, concrete blocks exposed in corridor and laundry alcove.
- Timber cabinetry to laundry alcove, with tile splashback and white laminate benchtops.
- Timber stairs x 2 with wide runners between level 2 and level 3.

## Level 3 (original master bedroom (now bedroom/living room), 2 children's bedrooms, family bathroom and toilet)

- Raised roof to create clerestory windows and additional natural lighting to bathroom and toilet.
- Bamboo flooring (newer addition) to all bedrooms and corridors.
- Terrazzo floor to bathroom and toilet (tiled shower floor).
- Concrete block walls to toilet and cupboards.
- Concrete block walls painted white in bedroom/living room, painted white and/or finished with white plaster in children's bedrooms.
- All bedrooms feature bespoke designed timber built-in cupboards and shelving, timber framed windows,
- Bedroom/living features timber framed glass door to north (back).

### **Elements of Significance:**

Elements of heritage significance include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Split level house created over three levels, including master bedroom and ensuite addition.
- Carport.
- Covered walkway linking carport and front entrance.
- Interior timber detailing including exposed roof beams, framing, partitioning and built-in furniture.
- Straw-board ceilings, likely Solomit®.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Swimming pool.
- Garden sheds.
- Pergola.

## HISTORY

### Rostrevor

The Kaurna people are the traditional owners of the country that forms the Adelaide Plains, foothills and parts of the Mount Lofty ranges. Prior to colonisation, the Kaurna people lived in extended family groups in seasonal camps residing near the coast during the warmer months and inland when it grew colder. Morialta is derived from the Kaurna word 'moriatta', meaning ever-flowing, and was an important seasonal location for the Kaurna people, with the area providing food, shelter and firewood. Traditional firestick farming practices were carried out at Morialta and in the surrounding area.<sup>14</sup>

Colonisation had an immediate and detrimental impact on the Kaurna people. Kaurna country was surveyed and sold to the newly arrived colonists within 10 years of settlement. Traditional practises like relocating between seasonal camps and firestick farming were hindered or banned, while European methods of farming and animals decimated traditional food sources. Many Kaurna people were also taken off country and sent to missions at Ruakkan/Point McLeay and Point Pearce.<sup>15</sup>

Section 857, Hundred of Adelaide, was sold on 24 September 1839 to Thomas Hodgson, a surgeon who lived in Halifax, UK. Hodgson was an absentee landowner who treated the land as an investment. When Hodgson died in 1854, his wife Mary inherited the section, who subsequently arranged through Lavington Glyde to lease it to Alfred Walters for twenty years. Alfred was already a resident of the area, with his father Samule (sic) owning land nearby. His younger brother leased the adjacent section 96 and their land was worked as a market garden by the Walters family.<sup>16</sup>

Price Maurice purchased section 857 in 1891 and as a part of a larger assemblage of land known as the Fourth Creek Estate, was operated as an Angora goat stud. When Maurice died in 1895, the Estate was acquired by James Smith Reid, the owner of Rostrevor Hall.<sup>17</sup>

In 1912-1913, Reid sold his Rostrevor holdings after deciding to live at Mount Macedon in Victoria. It was at this time that he convinced the government to purchase part of Morialta by donating the steeper portions to create the nucleus of what would become a National Pleasure Resort, later the Morialta Conservation Park. Sections 857 and 96 were purchased by a consortium that formed the company Rostrevor Estate Ltd. The steeper terrain of section 857 meant it was subdivided into house and orchard or vineyards blocks and offered for sale in 1919 at £35 an acre. The newly opened Millsbrook Reservoir provided water, while an electric tram to the Morialta Park afforded some level of public transport.<sup>18</sup>



The area was initially purchased and used for food production including poultry, honey, dairy and market gardens or was purchased by horse trainers and hardy commuters. Suburban development did not commence until after the Second World War.<sup>19</sup> Thereafter, the area attracting younger professionals seeking a semi-rural area to live.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Morialta Houses**

The Morialta Houses are a series of nine homes designed by Bob Dickson for like-minded clients and built between 1949 and c.1968. The first was his own house designed and built by himself in 1949-1951 (see Comparative Analysis), accomplished during a break from his architectural studies and located at 1 Wandilla Drive. Dickson was approached by Bill Bowe to build the second of the nine in 1952.

The nine houses are:

1. Bob Dickson's own house, Wandilla Drive (1949-1950)
2. Graham Dickson, Marola Ave (1958-1968)
3. McDonald, Wandilla Drive (c. 1958)
4. Bowe/Turner, Marola Ave (1952-1963)
5. Warburton, Werona Place (1966)
6. Draper/Reintels, Wandilla Drive (1966)
7. Belcher, Werona Place (c.1967)
8. Lelacheur, Wandilla Drive (1969)
9. Palmer/Blewett, cnr Baroota and Marola (c.1968)<sup>21</sup>

Bob Dickson also prepared specifications for the Racz family, Wandilla Drive (1964) and sketches to extend an existing cottage for the Worrall's at Werona Place (1967), although it remains unclear if either commission proceeded.<sup>22</sup>

Dickson employed a consistent design approach across the 9 houses. However, each takes into account the requirements of its owner as well as individual site constraints and advantages, such as topography and shape of the allotment. The plan form of each house was designed to ensure that the interior spaces are related to garden spaces, ensure privacy from the road and other development, and as much as possible take 'advantage of north facing orientation'.<sup>23</sup> Solar control was integral to the designs. Designed by Philip Fargher, footings employing deep concrete beams integrated with the concrete slab enabled affordable building on the reactive clay soils. Roof forms and cladding to roofs and walls varied.

Dickson noted that he didn't impose his preferences for wall materials as might typically occur to unify a small housing estate and expressed his surprise at the diversity of choices that emerged, although some changes were required to keep within clients' budgets and other constraints. For example, both Dickson and Bowe chose timber cladding to enable the build to go ahead due to materials restrictions after the War, while for another house stone was initially selected to compliment the adjacent stone at Morialta, but was replaced with brick in a similar colour due to cost.

Bob Dickson and later Graham Dickson, after he moved to 4 Marola Avenue, also worked with the local residents as a part of the Morialta Residents' Association to influence the subdivision of a small part of Rostrevor adjacent to Morialta. The most notable was the collective purchase of 13 allotments that were re-subdivided creating Werona Place and 10 larger, irregularly shaped blocks.<sup>24</sup> Graham Dickson's home adjoined two of the original blocks and he was concerned about the uncertainty of what would be built there. Bob and Graham Dickson later purchased 5 allotments that were re-subdivided into 4. Other residents also did the same on occasion. The rationale behind the purchase and re-subdivision into fewer and larger blocks was to preserve the natural environment and semi-rural character of the area while also creating a buffer between houses. Typically, an encumbrance was added to the title of the allotments sold as a part of this process to prevent building of what the residents considered to be inappropriate structures, such as tin sheds.<sup>25</sup>

The desire to preserve the natural environment and prevent ugliness was a paramount concern for the residents, and after considerable lobbying and partly at their own expense, the electricity lines were placed underground at Werona Place in the early 1970s. Bob Dickson had previously purchased Lot 88 in 1965 with financial assistance from the residents and after considerable negotiations convinced the government to buy it as an addition to the Morialta Conservation Park, an action that cost him £1,000. The residents also advocated for other parcels to be purchased by the government to link Black Hill and Morialta Conservation Parks when the land was offered for sale.<sup>26</sup>

Not all of the lobbying by the Morialta Residents' Association can be viewed with the same altruism. The group acted to prevent the construction of 6 two-storey residential units for a nursing home and other associated buildings in the mid-1970s that was proposed to be located across from the Morialta Conservation Park. The group sighted an inappropriate density of people for the area amongst other concerns.<sup>27</sup>

#### **4 Marola Ave**

4 Marola Avenue was the third of the 9 Morialta houses designed by Bob Dickson (subject of this assessment). The house was designed for his brother Graham and sister-in-law Barbara. Graham Dickson purchased lots 13 and 14 in 1954 and he and Barbara lived in a cottage nearby on Wandilla Drive while the house was being built.<sup>28</sup> The land was previously planted as an orchard.<sup>29</sup>



**Southern (front) elevation of the Graham and Barbara Dickson House, showing living room (left), front door with timber covered walkway and carport just visible to the right. Note the expansive use of glass with awning windows. The asbestos tiles are also evident on the covered walkway to front door and have since been replaced.**

Source: SLISA BRG 346/28/DicksonandPlatten/25/3 December 1967



**View of northern (rear) elevation showing the roof line matched to the slope of the site and the three stepped levels comprising bedrooms and bathroom (left) kitchen, dining and laundry (middle) and living (right). Note the expansive use of glass to provide an outlook over the garden. The new master bedroom and ensuite was added shortly after the image was taken.**

Source: SLISA BRG 346/28/DicksonandPlatten/25/1 December 1967



**View of the living room from the dining room, showing the exposed beams, straw ceiling and original floor tiles.**

Source: SLISA BRG 346/28/DicksonandPlatten/25/4 December 1967

A new master bedroom and ensuite addition, swimming pool and pergola were designed and built in the late 1960s. The Dicksons remained at the property until the 2020s and it was sold to new owners in mid-2024. The house is currently being offered as short-term accommodation on Airbnb.

## Chronology

Year	Event
Pre-1836	Morialta is an important seasonal location for the Kurna people, the area providing food, water, shelter and firewood.
1839	Section 857 Hundred of Adelaide is sold to absentee landowner Thomas Hodgson.
1856	Section 857 is leased to Alfred Walters who with his brother operates a market garden from this and adjacent sections.
1891	Price Maurice purchases section 857 and it becomes a part of the Fourth Creek Estate. An Angora goat stud is run from the Estate.
1895	Maurice dies and the land is purchased by James Smith Reid, the owner of the nearby Rostrevor Hall.
1912-1913	Reid relocates to Victoria and donates and sells part of his Rostrevor holdings to the South Australian Government to create the nucleus of the Morialta National Pleasure Resort, later Morialta Conservation Park.
	Sections 96 and 857 are sold to Rostrevor Estate Ltd.



- 1919 Rostrevor Estate Ltd. subdivides the land into house and orchard or vineyard blocks and offers them for sale.
- 1946- Robert Dickson studies architecture at the South Australian School of Mines  
1952 and Industries, receiving his graduate diploma in 1953.
- 1949 Robert Dickson designs a home for a block of land on Wandilla Dr, Rostrevor  
taking 1951 off from his studies to build the house himself.
- 1950s- Younger professionals move to the area and purchase land to build homes  
1960s in a semi-rural environment.
- 1954 Graham Dickson buys two blocks of land on Marola Avenue, Rostrevor.
- 1955- Robert Dickson works with Italian architects Mangiarotti and Marassutti in  
1956 Milan. The experience reaffirming his approach to architecture.
- 1956 Robert Dickson's home is selected to represent residential architecture in  
South Australia at the Royal Institute of British Architects London Exhibition  
on Australian Architecture.
- 1958 Robert Dickson and Newell Platten create Dickson and Platten architects.  
Robert Dickson designs a house for his brother Graham and sister-in-law  
Barbara at Marola Avenue.
- 1968 Robert Dickson designs an addition to the Graham and Barbara Dickson  
House (new master bedroom and ensuite).
- 1973 Newell Platten leaves Dickson and Platten. Robert Dickson forms Robert  
Dickson and Associates.
- 2024 Graham and Barbara Dickson House is sold for the first time.
- 2025- Graham and Barbara Dickson House is offered for short-term  
accommodation on Airbnb.

## References

### Books & Book Chapters

- Apperly, Richard, Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter (2011), *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, (Angas and Robertson: North Ryde).
- Dickson, Robert (2010), *Addicted to Architecture*, (Wakefield Press: Kent Town).
- Lockwood, Christine (2017), 'Early Encounters on the Adelaide Plains and Encounter Bay' in Peggy Brock and Tom Gara eds. *Colonialism and its Aftermath A History of Aboriginal South Australia*, (Wakefield Press: Kent Town).
- Warburton, Elizabeth (1982), *The Making of Morialta From Farm to Suburb*, (Morialta residents Association: Adelaide).
- Warburton, Elizabeth (1986), *From the River to the Hills Campbelltown 150 Years*, (Corporation of the City of Campbelltown: Campbelltown), p.226. Warburton (1982).
- Pilkington, Michael and Collins, Julie eds. (2017), *Dickson & Platten Architects 1950-222*, (Phillips Pilkington Architects: Adelaide).

### Websites

- McDougall, Alison (2008), 'Platten, Newell', *Architecture Museum, University of South Australia, Architects of South Australia*: [[http://www.architectsdatabase.unisa.edu.au/arch\\_full.asp?Arch\\_ID=81](http://www.architectsdatabase.unisa.edu.au/arch_full.asp?Arch_ID=81)]
- Conference Proceedings
- Hurst, Rachel (2002), 'An Unselfconscious Architecture the work of Robert Dickson', in *Additions the proceedings of the XIX conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand* (Brisbane).
- Hurst, Rachel (2004), 'Modest Revolutionaries: The Architecture of Dickson & Platten' in *Limits the proceedings of the XX1st conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand* (Melbourne).
- Hurst, Rachel (2009), 'Stories of Gardens and Dolls: Dickson & Platen's Kathleen Lumley College' in *Cultural Crossroads: Proceedings of the 26th International Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand Conference* (Auckland).

### Reports

- Department for Environment and Heritage (2001), *Morialta and Black Hill Conservation Parks Management Plan*, (Department for Environment and Heritage: Adelaide).
- Dickson, Robert Harold Collection, *Architecture Museum University of South Australia Series 272*.

## SITE RECORD

---

<b>NAME:</b>	Graham and Barbara Dickson House	<b>PLACE NO.:</b>	26597
--------------	----------------------------------	-------------------	-------

---

**DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:** Split-level house designed in the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style with timber framing, concrete-brickwork picture windows and shallow pitched roof.

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:** 1958, 1968 addition.

**REGISTER STATUS:** Nominated: 6 June 2024  
Provisional Entry s17(2)(b): 12 June 2024

**CURRENT USE:** Airbnb, 2025-present

**PREVIOUS USE(S):** Family Home, 1958-2024

**ARCHITECT:** Robert Dickson, Dickson Platten Architects  
1958, 1968

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** City of Campbelltown

**LOCATION:**

<b>Street No.:</b>	4
<b>Street Name:</b>	Marola Avenue
<b>Town/Suburb:</b>	Rostrevor
<b>Post Code:</b>	5073

**LAND DESCRIPTION:**

<b>Title</b>	CT5672/29 F132994 A4
<b>Reference:</b>	
<b>Hundred:</b>	Adelaide

## PHOTOS

**NAME:** Graham and Barbara Dickson House

**PLACE NO.:** 26597

All Image are from DEW Files 24 July 2024 unless otherwise stated.



Various views of the front (southern) elevation showing roof form, carport, covered walkway and bush-like garden setting.



Detail showing the timber framing to windows and sill; and inside the carport with designed spaces to accommodate firewood, etc.





**Views of front showing covered walkway, details to carport, note alcoves and timberwork.**





**View of rear (northern) elevation showing in detail the original master bedroom (above) and 1968 master bedroom addition (below).**



**Views of the backyard showing the pergola and swimming pool.**





**Views of the living area showing the strawboard ceilings, large timber framed windows with views of the garden, tiles to floor, stove, bespoke designed built-in timber furniture, timber panelling and exposed blocks to walls.**





**Views of the master bedroom addition showing timber framed windows and door, tiles to floor, light fittings and awning window for ventilation.**





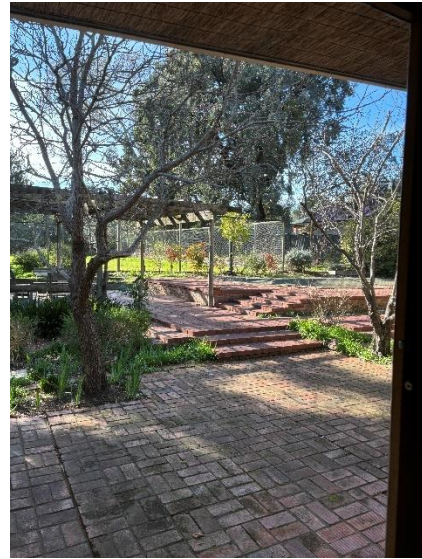
**View of ensuite bathroom addition.**





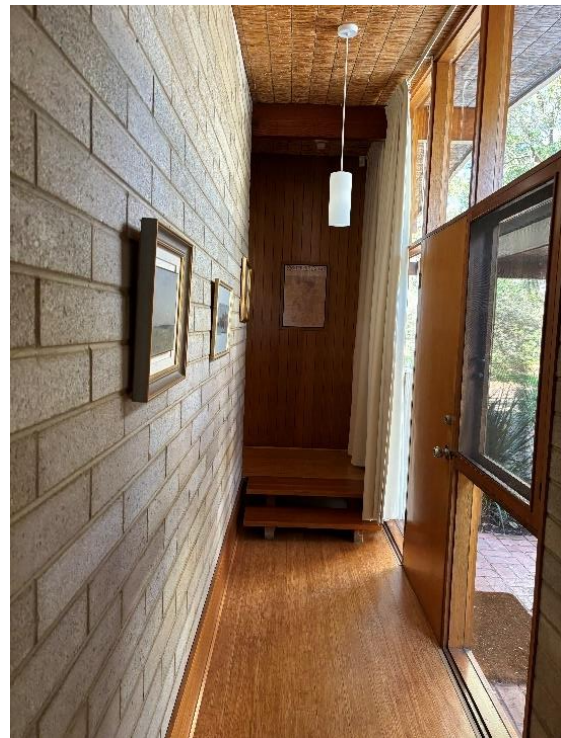
**View of dining area showing timber framed windows, built-in furniture designed to divide the space from the living room and stairs between levels.**





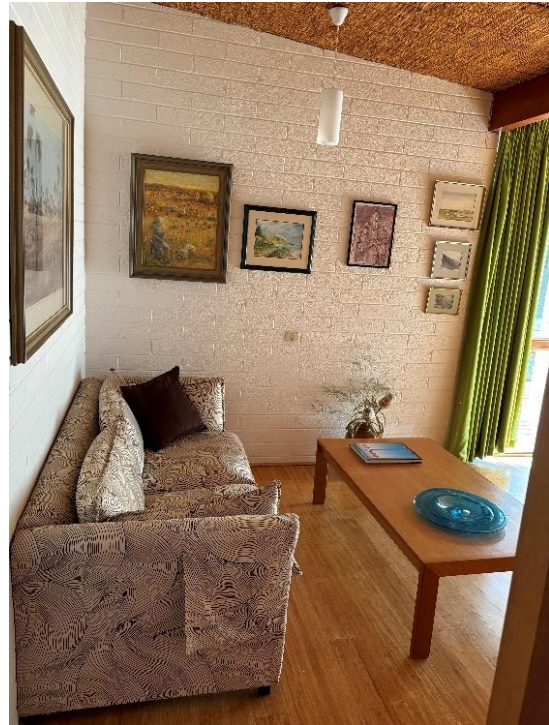
**View of kitchen showing timber framed windows, view from kitchen over back garden, timber partition wall with gap to top and timber kitchen cabinetry.**





**View of kitchen showing kitchen cabinetry, detail of roof beam and the transition of materials from inside to outside, the window layout to northern elevation, use of block wall to create corridor and step between levels.**





**View of laundry and original master bedroom converted into a living room; note the timber built-in cupboards and shelving and painted and unpainted blockwork walls.**





Views of children's bedroom, corridor between bedrooms and bathroom, and bathroom, noting the clerestory windows in bathroom.



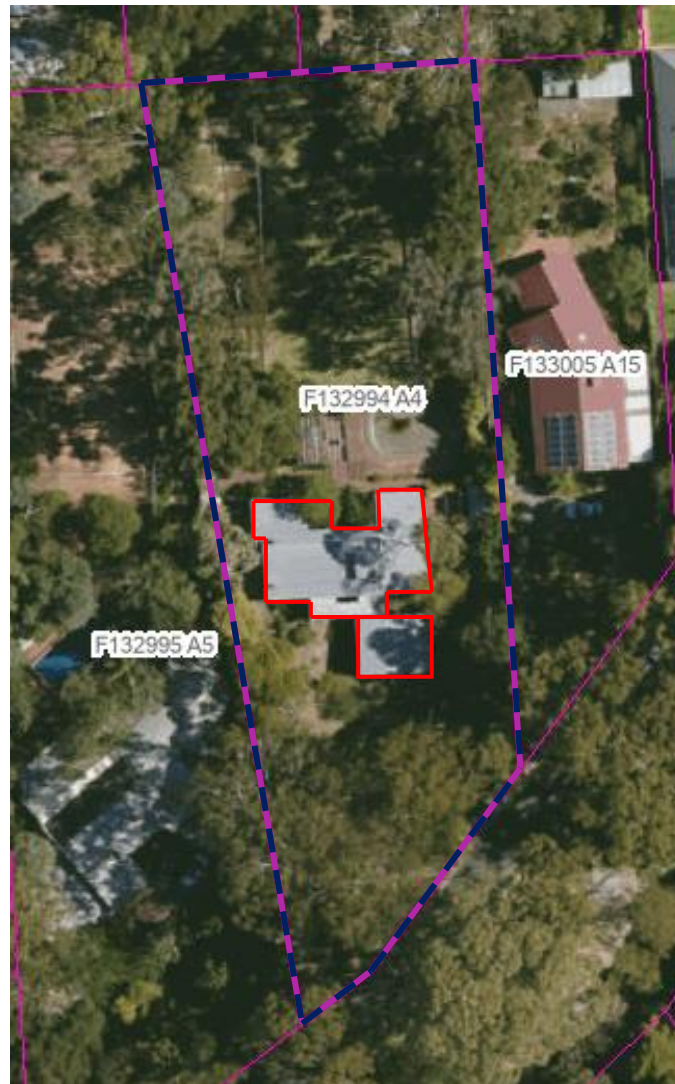


**View of bathroom and toilet, note the terrazzo floor and use of reflected light from clerestory windows in toilet to provide natural illumination.**

## SITE PLAN

**NAME:** Graham and Barbara Dickson House


**PLACE NO.:** 26597



Graham and Barbara Dickson House, 4 Marola Ave, Rostrevor  
CT5672/29 F132994 A4 Hundred of Adelaide

N ↑

### LEGEND

 Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)

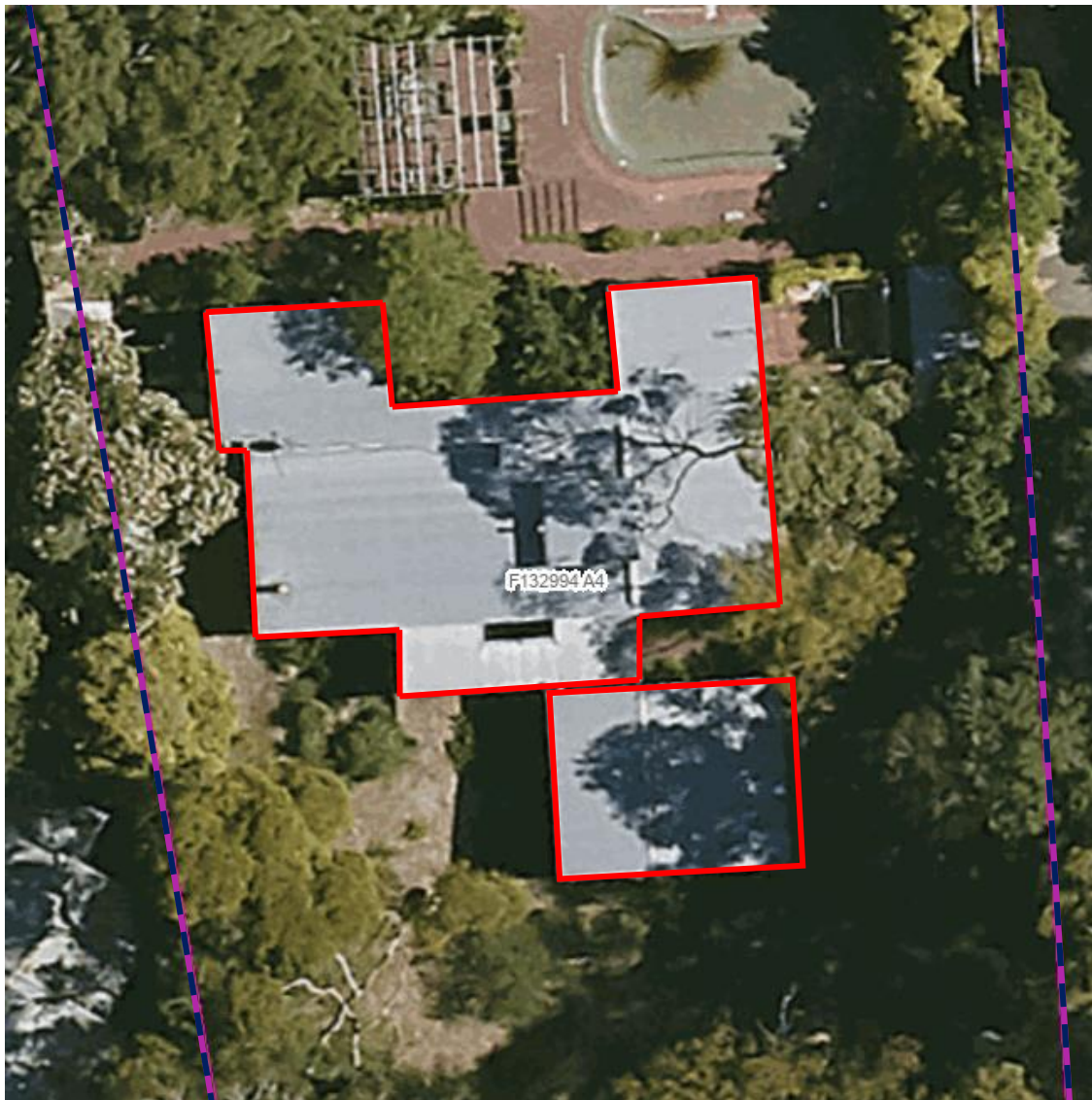
 Outline of Elements of Significance for State Heritage Place

\*Red outline is indicative of elements of significance, noting imperfect alignment of aerial imagery with parcel cadastre.

## SITE PLAN (DETAIL)


**NAME:** Graham and Barbara Dickson House

**PLACE NO.:** 26597



**Graham and Barbara Dickson House, 4 Marola Ave, Rostrevor**  
**CT5672/29 F132994 A4 Hundred of Adelaide**

### LEGEND

 Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)

 Outline of Elements of Significance for State Heritage Place

\*Red outline is indicative of elements of significance, noting imperfect alignment of aerial imagery with parcel cadastre.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Alison McDougall (2008), 'Platten, Newell', Architecture Museum, University of South Australia, Architects of South Australia:  
[[http://www.architectsdatabase.unisa.edu.au/arch\\_full.asp?Arch\\_ID=81](http://www.architectsdatabase.unisa.edu.au/arch_full.asp?Arch_ID=81)]
- <sup>2</sup> Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds (2011), *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, (Angas and Robertson: North Ryde), pp.248.
- <sup>3</sup> Apperley, p.248.
- <sup>4</sup> McDougall. Robert Dickson (2010), *Addicted to Architecture*, (Wakefield Press: Kent Town), p.14.
- <sup>5</sup> SA Heritage Register.
- <sup>6</sup> Rachel Hurst (2004), 'Modest Revolutionaries: The Architecture of Dickson & Platten' in Limits the proceedings of the XX1st conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand (Melbourne) p.235.
- <sup>7</sup> Dickson, p.29.
- <sup>8</sup> Dickson, p.72.
- <sup>9</sup> Hurst 2004 p.235.
- <sup>10</sup> Rachel Hurst (2002), 'An Unselfconscious Architecture the work of Robert Dickson', in Additions the proceedings of the XIX conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand (Brisbane). Rachel Hurst (2004). Rachel Hurst (2009), 'Stories of Gardens and Dolls: Dickson & Platten's Kathleen Lumley College' in Cultural Crossroads: Proceedings of the 26th International Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand Conference (Auckland).
- <sup>11</sup> Platten quoted in McDougall.
- <sup>12</sup> Michael Pilkington and Julie Collins eds. (2017), *Dickson & Platten Architects 1950-222*, (Phillips Pilkington Architects: Adelaide), pp.44-50, Hurst (2004). Dickson, pp.73-89.
- <sup>13</sup> Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds (2011), *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, (Angas and Robertson: North Ryde), pp.248.
- <sup>14</sup> Department for Environment and Heritage (2001), *Morialta and Black Hill Conservation Parks Management Plan*, (Department for Environment and Heritage: Adelaide), pp.19-20.
- <sup>15</sup> Christine Lockwood (2017), 'Early Encounters on the Adelaide Plains and Encounter Bay' in Peggy Brock and Tom Gara eds. *Colonialism and its Aftermath A History of Aboriginal South Australia*, (Wakefield Press: Kent Town), pp.66-67
- <sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Warburton (1982), *The Making of Morialta From Farm to Suburb*, (Morialta residents Association: Adelaide).
- <sup>17</sup> Warburton (1982).
- <sup>18</sup> Warburton (1982).
- <sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Warburton (1986), *From the River to the Hills Campbelltown 150 Years*, (Corporation of the City of Campbelltown: Campbelltown), p.226. Warburton (1982).
- <sup>20</sup> Warburton (1982), p.34.
- <sup>21</sup> Dickson, pp.73-86. Dickson, Robert Harold Collection, Architecture Museum University of South Australia Series 272.
- <sup>22</sup> Pers Com. Dr Julie Collins.
- <sup>23</sup> Dickson, p.76.
- <sup>24</sup> Dickson, pp.73,76.
- <sup>25</sup> Warburton (1982), pp.36, 46, 48-49.
- <sup>26</sup> Warburton (1982), p.62.
- <sup>27</sup> Warburton (1982).
- <sup>28</sup> Dickson, pp73-86.
- <sup>29</sup> 1949 aerial images EnvMaps