

Penrith Heritage Inventory

State Heritage Inventory

SHI Number

2260685

Study Number

P49

Item Name: **Seidler House**

Location: **31-33 Nepean Avenue, Penrith**

Address: 31-33 Nepean Avenue
Suburb / Nearest Town: Penrith
Local Govt Area: Penrith
State:
DUAP Region: Sydney West
Historic region: Sydney
Parish:
County:

Other/Former Names: Wood House

Area/Group/Complex: Group ID:

Aboriginal Area:

Curtilage/Boundary:

Item Type: Built Group: Residential buildings (Category: House

Owner: Private - Individual

Admin Codes: 1000 Code 2: Code 3:

Current Use: House

Former Uses:

Assessed Significance: State Endorsed Significance:

Statement of Significance: Wood House is of state historical and aesthetic significance having been designed by Harry Seidler who was considered to be one of the leading exponents of Modernism and the first architect to fully express the principles of the Bauhaus. Harry Seidler played a vital role in international architecture both in Australia and abroad.

Wood House is rare as it the only house to be designed by Harry Seidler in Penrith LGA. The dwelling is of aesthetic significance having been specifically designed and orientated to take advantage of the Nepean River embankment setting. The use of blonde brickwork, long rectilinear wall planes, perforated screen walls, streetscape presentation, large paved courtyards, flat roof and large expanses of glazing distinguishes this dwelling within the streetscape/riverscape setting and are characteristic design elements of Harry Seidlers style of residential architecture in the post war period.

Historical Notes or Provenance: Harry Seidler (1923-2006) was an Australian architect who is considered to be one of the leading exponents of Modernism and the first architect to fully express the principles of the Bauhaus in Australia. During his career he worked or studied with some of the world's best-known Modernist architects including Walter Gropius, Josef Albers, Marcel Breuer and Oscar Niemeyer.

Born in Vienna of Romanian ancestry, Seidler fled to England when Nazi Germany occupied Austria in 1938. He was interned by the British authorities as an enemy alien before being shipped to Canada, where he studied architecture. He went to Sydney, Australia in 1948 to reunite with his parents. A decade later he gained Australian citizenship, married Penelope Evatt, 15 years his junior, and together they have two children.

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Seidler's best-known early work is the famous Rose Seidler House (1948-1950), a striking Bauhaus-styled home in Sydney's northern suburbs, built for his mother. The first domestic structure of its kind in Australia, it was built in the face of considerable opposition from the local council, but is now classified as an historic home and is the site of a popular annual 1950s fair.

In the 1960s Seidler again broke new ground with his radical design for the Australia Square project (1961-67), which was the first circular high-rise tower block built in Australia, and one of the first buildings of its kind in the world.

He was a founding member of the Australian Architecture Association. In 1984 he became the first Australian to be elected a member of the Academie d'Architecture, Paris and in 1987 was made a Companion of the Order of Australia, an honour which he accepted in his trademark suit and bowtie. Over the years Mr Seidler was also awarded five Sulman Medals by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, as well as the RAIA Gold Medal in 1976, and the Royal Gold Medal by the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1996.

"For 50 years Harry Seidler played a vital role in international architecture. His work is widely recognised as an original and intensely creative contribution to the architecture of the second half of the 20th Century."

Seidler's work has been widely praised, he has won many awards, and he has been one of the most prolific Australian architects. However his designs are far from being universally popular and he has often been criticised for his single-minded pursuit of Modernist design principles. He has further aggravated critics with his aggressive and intimidatory defences of his work and reputation, and by his evident disdain for Australia's architectural heritage.

Themes:	National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
	4. Settlement	Accommodation (Housing)	Towns
	4. Settlement	Towns, suburbs and village	Subdivision and consolidation
	8. Culture	Domestic life (new theme)	(none)

Designer: Harry Seidler

Maker / Builder:

Year Started: Year Completed: 1961 Circa: Yes

Physical Description: The Wood House is located on the top of the Nepean River embankment, enjoying views extending to the Blue Mountains in the distance to the northwest.

The house is within a tree lined street of houses dating from the late 1930s, and is a stark

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contrast to the majority of double fronted one and two storey residences within the streetscape. The house is distinguished by the long linear stone wall fronting the street, set well back from the neighbouring residences with an expansive lawn forecourt. There is double car garage in front of house constructed of blonde brick and is orientated with the entry away from the street frontage. The living quarters can not be seen due to their location behind the wall. The front door is set behind a space in the long linear wall. The low-lying form of the house is particularly evident from the river frontage with the house sitting comfortably with the strongly defined crest of the river bank. The grounds fronting the nepean river have been landscaped.

The in-line plan positions almost all rooms to face the view. Courtyards are created on both sides of the house using perforated screen walls. These are coloured blue and orange, contrasting with the blonde brickwork.

The central living area opens onto a covered terrace on the view side and an open courtyard towards the street, so that outdoor living is possible in the sun or shade at different times of the day. The exterior spaces become part of the interior via the wall and flat metal roof extensions with parapet edging. The downturn of the roof on the northwest provides shading.

Physical Condition: Good

Modification Dates:

Recommended
Management:

Management:

Further Comments:

Criteria a) Wood House is of state historical having been designed by Harry Seidler in the post war period in Penrith.

Criteria b) Wood House is of state historical significance having been designed by Harry Seidler who is considered to be one of the leading exponents of Modernism and the first architect to fully express the principles of the Bauhaus. Harry Seidler played a vital role in international architecture both in Australia and abroad.

Criteria c) The dwelling is of aesthetic significance having been specifically designed and orientated to take advantage of the Nepean River embankment setting. The use of blonde brickwork, long rectilinear wall planes, perforated screen walls, streetscape presentation, large paved courtyards, flat roof and large expanses of glazing distinguishes this dwelling within the streetscape/riverscape setting and are characteristic design elements of Harry Seidler's style of residential architecture in the post war period.

Criteria d)

Criteria e)

Criteria f) Wood House is rare as it the only house to be designed by Harry Seidler in Penrith LGA.

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Criteria g)

Integrity / Intactness: High

References:	Author	Title	Year
	Chris Abel, Harry Seidler	Harry Seidler Houses and Interiors 1	

Studies:	Author	Title	Number	Year
	Paul Davies Pty. Ltd.	Penrith Heritage Study Review	P49	2005

Parcels:	Parcel Code	LotNumber	Section	Plan Code	Plan Number
		1		DP	14827

Latitude:

Longitude:

Location validity:

Spatial Accuracy:

Map Name:

Map Scale:

AMG Zone:

Easting:

Northing:

Listings:

Built Form:

Allotment and Setback:

Height:

Fences:

Driveways and Garages:

Building Materials:

Data Entry: Date First Entered: 02/03/2005

Date Updated: 28/11/2007

Status: Basic

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Image/s:

Caption: View towards Wood House from Nepean River

Copyright:

Image by: Terry Agar

Image Date:

Image Number:

Image Path: 2260685t3.jpg

Image File: 2260685b3.jpg

Thumb Nail Path:

Thumb Nail File: 2260685t3.jpg

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Image/s:



Caption: Seidler House river frontage

Copyright: Paul Davies Pty Ltd

Image by: Paul Davies Pty Ltd

Image Date: 7/11/2004

Image Number:

Image Path:

Image File: 2260685b1.jpg

Thumb Nail Path:

Thumb Nail File:

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Item Name: **Seidler House**

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Image/s:



Caption: Rear view of Wood house from landscaped gardens

Copyright:

Image by: Terry Agar

Image Date:

Image Number:

Image Path:

Image File: 2260685b5.jpg

Thumb Nail Path:

Thumb Nail File: 2260685t5.jpg

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Item Name: **Seidler House**

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Image/s:



Caption: Rear view of Wood house showing use of blond brick, flat metal roof with parapet edging and large expanses of glazing

Copyright:

Image by: Terry Agar

Image Date:

Image Number:

Image Path:

Image File: 2260685b8.jpg

Thumb Nail Path:

Thumb Nail File: 2260685t8.jpg

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Item Name: **Seidler House**

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Image/s:



Caption: View of long rectilinear blonde brick wall to front of house with garage orientated away from the street frontage.

Copyright:

Image by: Terry Agar

Image Date:

Image Number:

Image Path:

Image File: 2260685b4.jpg

Thumb Nail Path:

Thumb Nail File: 2260685t4.jpg

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Item Name: **Seidler House**

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Image/s:



Caption: Wood House distinguished by garage and long rectilinear blonde brick wall fronting Nepean avenue

Copyright: Paul Davies Pty Ltd

Image by: Paul Davies Pty Ltd

Image Date: 7/11/2004

Image Number:

Image Path:

Image File: 2260685b2.jpg

Thumb Nail Path:

Thumb Nail File:

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Image/s:



Caption: Front entrance to house concealed behind a space in the long rectilinear blonde brick wall

Copyright:

Image by: Terry Agar

Image Date:

Image Number:

Image Path:

Image File: 2260685b7.jpg

Thumb Nail Path:

Thumb Nail File: 2260685t7.jpg

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Image/s:



Caption: Seidler House

Copyright: Paul Davies Pty Ltd

Image by: Paul Davies Pty Ltd

Image Date: 8/05/2006

Image Number:

Image Path:

Image File: 2260685b9.jpg

Thumb Nail Path:

Thumb Nail File: 2260685t9.jpg