

# **NORTH SHORE HOUSES, State Library of New South Wales**

**Generously supported by the Upper North Architects Network (SPUN),  
Australian Institute of Architects.**

**Compiled by John Johnson**

**Arranged alphabetically by architect.**

**Augustus Aley  
Allen & Jack Architects (Russell Jack)  
Allen, Jack & Cottier (Russell Jack)  
Sydney Ancher  
Adrian Ashton  
Arthur Baldwinson  
Arthur Baldwinson (Baldwinson & Booth)  
John Brogan  
Hugh Buhrich  
Neville Gruzman  
Albert Hanson  
Edward Jeaffreson Jackson  
Richard Leplastrier  
Gerard McDonnell  
D.T. Morrow and Gordon  
Glen Murcutt  
Nixon & Adam (John Shedden Adam)  
Pettit, Sevitt & Partners Exhibition Houses  
Ross Brothers (Herbert Ernest Ross and Colin John Ross)  
Ernest A Scott (Green & Scott)  
Harry Seidler  
Harry and Penelope Seidler  
Douglas Snelling  
John Sulman  
War Service Homes Commission  
Leslie Wilkinson  
Wilson & Neave (William Hardy Wilson)**

**Architect: Augustus Aley**  
**'Villa Maria' (House for Augustus Aley), 1920**  
**8 Yosefa Avenue, Warrawee**

Architect Augustus Aley (1883-1968) built 4 houses in Yosefa Avenue, Warrawee (Nos. 7, 8, 9, 11) two of which were constructed for himself. He and wife Beatrice (1885?-1978) moved into Villa Maria in 1920 and developed a fine garden. In 1929 they moved to a new house, Santos, at 11 Yosefa Ave.

“Mr Aley, the architect, and incidentally the owner, has planned both house and garden with the utmost care, so that each should combine to make a delightful whole. The irregular shape and sloping nature of the ground presented many difficulties, but at the same time abounded with possibilities, of which he has taken full advantage. The most important thing, in a house of this sort, and indeed in any house, is aspect, and here it is just right.

The plan of the house is unconventional, although its usefulness has not been lessened because of it. The feeling of joyousness and lightness is apparent right through the house – in its cream-washed walls on which the big gum tree in the garden etches ever-changing shadows, in its striped shutters of apricot and blue, in the flowered curtains, and delicately toned wallpapers, in the luminous old ivory of the woodwork and the chaste simplicity of the fireplaces, in the doors, which wherever possible are of glass, even in the glass door handles.

There are lots of wide and beautiful windows with clear expanses of glass, which fill the house with light, and make it somehow kin to the happy sunlit bush outside. The courtyard faces north and consequently gets plenty of sunshine. On the east it is bounded by a large cloistered porch which is flooded with morning sun, but is shaded in the afternoon. From the west it is protected by the bedroom wing, and along the central wall are the windows and entrance into the galley ... The windows facing on to the courtyard are so arranged that a draught can always be obtained, so that even on the hottest day it is always cool and airy.

On the right of the entrance hall is the salon, a large room with a wide window bay, and built-in window seat. The saloon is restful and cool, the colour scheme of the room is in muted shades of greens, brown greys and mica, trimmed with cream woodwork. There are deep sofas and easy chairs upholstered in dove coloured velvet, and the windows are softly shaded with curtains of self-coloured festooned silk, with net over-curtains bordered with handsome Viennese point lace. Brilliantly coloured cushions on the cram window seat supply the needed colour note. The little recessed china shelf by the fireplace strikes a note of old world daintiness, and incidentally houses some nice bits of old china. Mr Aley does not like pictures unless they suit the character of the room, and in his salon the only picture as yet is a copy of a Dutch old master which hangs above the piano. How bare, people might exclaim, but really the pictures are not missed. The composition of the room is too skilfully balanced...

The kitchen is a satisfying place. There is a built-in dresser with a servery into the gallery, a porcelain sink and drainer under the brightly curtained window. On the floor is a grey and black cork linoleum, patterned in large squares, and against the wall an electric cooker performs its duties with silent efficiency. The bathroom is no anaemic thing of cold white and uncompromising blue. The walls are tiled in a lovely primrose yellow, large square tiles, with a brown toned border near the top, and the floor is paved...with Dutch red tiles.”

(Cooper, Nora, “A bit of transplanted Mediterranean”, *Australian Home Beautiful*, Melbourne, September 1926.)

PXD 1043

**Architect: Allen & Jack Architects (Russell Jack)**  
**Russell Jack House, 62 Boundary Rd Wahroonga, 1957 (1957 Sulman Award)**  
**Builder: Donald W. Taylor**

Soon after forming a partnership, Allen and Jack won the Sulman Award with this house, which was built for Russell Jack. Built at the northern edge of Wahroonga, the house was close to the bush of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. The house was small, but extensions were planned (when finances permitted). The block was typical of the forested, steep and rocky sites that were being developed on the upper north shore at this time.

“Two young Sydney architects, Russell Callam Jack and his partner, John Allen designed the prizewinning house, in which Mr Jack and wife are now living. Mr Jack, who is aged 32, studied architecture at Sydney Technical College. Later he spent 18 months in England and Europe on a travelling scholarship. The house cost approximately £5,500 to build and covers approximately 12½ squares (1250 square feet).

This contemporary home features simple, clear-cut lines and harmonious integration of textures and materials. Throughout there is a strong feeling that the place is well put together. This is probably due, in part, to the way in which the same timber and brickwork is used both inside and outside the home.

...the elevation of the land on which his home stands and the character of the terrain itself were the big factors in the partners’ choice of a plan. The flat-roofed house stretches across a sloping block of land, heavily wooded and covered with rock outcrop. On the garden side are large areas of glass; on the street side the brickwork is topped with window areas for cross ventilation...

Because the aspect is north-easterly, the house gets plenty of sun, light, and air. An eave overhang of about 2 ft helps to control the sun during summer... Like most young homemakers Mr and Mrs Jack wanted a comfortable, inviting home... The furnishings and décor are bright with colour, and there are some charming pieces the couple collected overseas.”

(*The Australian Women’s Weekly*, 3 September 1958, p. 52-53)

“The house is framed in timber using twin columns on a 10' module with beams at floor and roof levels connected with split ring connectors. Brick walls are bagged and painted, stud walls sheeted with red mahogany vertical boards, and all window frames and sashes are oiled maple.”

(“Sir John Sulman Award, 1957”, *Architecture in Australia*, July/Sept 1958, p.77)

PX\*D 341

**Architect: Allen, Jack & Cottier (Russell Jack)**  
**‘Kingsdon’, Jacobs House (house for His Honour Mr Justice Jacobs),**  
**36 Cleveland St, Wahroonga, 1963**  
**Engineers: Taylor, Thomson & Whitting**  
**Builders: C.H. & C.R. Ellis**

Built in 1963 for Mr Justice Kenneth (later Sir Kenneth) Jacobs, a judge of the NSW Supreme Court, this house won the 1963 Wilkinson Award. Awarded by the NSW branch of the RAI, the Wilkinson Award is the premier prize for houses in NSW. The house was built on a battleaxe block, close to Wahroonga railway station amongst established houses and gardens.

“The attainment of a restful background for day-to-day living was the governing factor behind the concept of the house. It was agreed that the building should be undramatic and have a simple subtlety which, on continued acquaintance would still appeal. The battleaxe site, together with the need to provide privacy from the surrounding houses, were other factors controlling the basic thinking.

The site was not typical of the North Shore – it was not covered by rock outcrops or natural bushland – and had, by North Shore standards, almost urban overtones. This site quality, together with client’s requirements, suggested a house which should not only attain the warmth and repose mentioned above, but should have in addition a degree of sophistication...

Attainment of the concept was further sought by restricting the vocabulary of materials and by using materials which had inherent in them the desired human qualities, such as warm-coloured sandstock brick walls (both inside and out), red quarry tile paving, naturally finished timber, and slate roofing. When surfaces had to be painted, these were generally white, although areas of more exotic finishes in wallpapers were incorporated in keeping with the required sophisticated overtones.”

(“Wilkinson Award 1963: House”, *Architecture in Australia*, Dec 1964, p.86-87)

PXD 409 ; SPF / Sydney-Subs-Wahroonga-Residences-Jacob's residence,1963.

**Architect: Sydney Ancher**

**H. Spencer English House, 64 Killeaton St, St Ives, ca. 1950 - demolished**

The English House was one of a series of flat-roofed dwellings built on the north shore by Sydney Ancher between 1945 and 1951. The English House was extensively published, beginning with a cover photograph in the journal "Architecture" in 1951. This Max Dupain photograph of the house became one of the defining images of Ancher's architecture, also featuring in "Australia's Home" by Robin Boyd in 1952 and "The New Australian Home" by Kenneth McDonald in 1954.

"In the years immediately following the Second World War I was able, for the first time, to shake off the tendency to think automatically of architecture along traditional lines. A new resolve enabled me to design simple and straight-forward buildings, free from pre-conceived ideas on proportion and style. I came to believe that all work should possess a timeless quality. And I felt that if all buildings were designed in this way they would contribute to the kind of unified character you would find in the grouped buildings on a Greek island.

I was also taken with the idea of developing an Australian style. Many things favoured such an approach, including the actual character of the typical Australian, which for good or bad is certainly distinctive. I later realized that, as there is no positively recognizable style of any other Western country, it seemed unlikely that an Australian style would emerge."

(Ancher, Sydney, "The architect's dilemma", *R.A.I.A. News*, May 1976.)

"Site: Overlooks Pymble golf links.

Planning: All main rooms face north. The gentle slope of the land to the south-west allows for garage, laundry, and utility areas below the main level.

Construction: External walls, brick, colour-washed grey-blue. Window frames, wood, painted white. Flat roof is of timber and bituminous felt. Full-length windows to living room give on to concrete-paved terrace with pergola. Interior walls and ceilings, light grey. Woodwork, white. Floors generally, polished tallow-wood. Internal doors, mahogany."

("At St Ives, NSW", *Architecture*, RAI A, Sydney, Oct-Dec 1951)

PXD 780/1-4 ; PX\*D 275 Vol 3/11 (Max Dupain photo)

**Architect: Adrian Ashton**

**Residence for Varcoe H. Jones, King Edward Street, Pymble, 1936**

**Builder: E. Ohlsen**

"Quite a lot of domestic work began to come along and I often had four or five houses going at once, [Bob] Armstrong doing most of them, though nearly always in competitive tendering. In difficult times and with alterations and

other individual work, to be able to call upon a reliable firm at any time was a great asset, and a considerable help to me with my limited time ...

One has to remember that the average couple building a home were undertaking the largest investment of their life, the payment of which would be around their necks for some 25 to 30 years. They were probably also stretching themselves more than they should, for they always wanted more than they could afford ... They were completely ignorant of the techniques of building and ... were often appalled when they saw the building in various stages of construction. A similar disillusion could occur in seeing ... a foetus in the early stages of development. The ideal client was one who approved the plans and specifications and then went abroad for six months ... I worked extremely hard in those years, drafting every weekend, up at six o'clock and doing inspections before going to the office and often spending most of the evening on the phone, sorting out problems, receiving complaints from difficult clients, giving instructions to sub-contractors and generally wrestling with the rat-race of Architectural Practice."

(Ashton, Adrian, *The life and times of Adrian Ashton*, 1977 unpublished manuscript in MLMSS 4141/Box 2.)

PXD 493/910

**Architect: Arthur Baldwinson**  
**House for Douglas Annand, Lady Game Drive, Killara, 1949-1951**  
**Studio, 1963**

Architect Arthur Baldwinson designed houses for many Sydney artists and photographers, including Max Dupain, Elaine Haxton and Desiderius Orban., Graphic designer and artist Douglas Annand (1903-1976) and his wife Maida commissioned this house for a wild site on Lady Game Drive, while living nearby at 5 Prince Road Killara.

"In 1951 Douglas and Maida Annand moved into their new home in Lady Game Drive, Killara. It was designed for them by colleague Arthur Baldwinson... Tragically Maida suffered a stroke not long before they moved and was ill for some years before her death in 1954. Annand, however, began to make his mark on their new house. Using the graffito technique he scratched geometric designs and names of family members into the plaster fireplace surrounds. Later he added murals, one a collage of graphite, stone rubbings and wallpaper; another of illustrations of Byzantine mosaics from art books, overlaid in a mosaic-like pattern and surrounded by Japanese handmade paper. Five native *Banksia serrata* remained untouched on the block and would provide stimulus for later commissions. Rocky terraces, rose gardens and a vegetable patch were added, and then a Japanese garden. Gardening became a great love, as well as making quaint garden paths, edged with tile off-cuts and curios.

...Annand's studio (built 1963) was now in the backyard of his home, and in this environment nature was a constant companion. Friends and family provided inspiration too... He now had four grandchildren, the children of his son Tony and wife Suzanne. They gathered together for regular family dinners and celebrations. Always a convivial host, Annand would also hold large dinner parties, inviting many of his colleagues from the world of Australian art and design. A toilet door, complete with drawings by many of these guests (including Russell Drysdale, Donald Friend, Lloyd Rees, Robert Klippel and Alistair Morrison) remains as a memento of these get-togethers."

Tony Annand remembers "our house at Killara was a bit like an art museum, with beautiful old and modern pots, colourful ornaments from Asia, pieces of old wood, bones, and even squashed coils of wire from the road which formed interesting shapes. It was terrible to dust, of course, but fascinated our visitors."

(McDonald, Anne, *Douglas Annand: the art of life*, Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, 2001, p. 65)

PXD 356/1530-1556 ; PXA 372 v. 6/1-4 and v. 6/27

**Architect: Arthur Baldwinson (Baldwinson & Booth)**  
**House for Mrs K. (possibly Mrs Kurt?) Mandl, 96(?) Boundary Road, Wahroonga, 1953**

"A two unit house, embracing a conventional domestic plan with separate bachelor quarters. Full advantage is taken of the beautiful natural setting."

("House at Wahroonga, Sydney, *Architecture*, Sydney, April-June 1955, p. 43)

PXD 356/1658-1666 ; PXA 372 v. 6/6 and v. 6/28

**Architect: John Brogan**  
**The White House, house for Nancy Bird-Walton**  
**136 Mona Vale Road, St Ives, ca. 1939**

Newly-married aviatrix Nancy Bird-Walton (1915- ) moved to this house with her husband Charles Walton, having given up flying and intending to start a family. Wartime duties intervened and it was not till 1945 that the Waltons re-settled in the house, where they lived together for nearly fifty years.

"The Waltons' house in its romantic setting of unspoiled North Shore bush is just the sort of place to come home to after years of travel and hard work. It is a two-storey gabled cottage with a grey-tiled, eaveless roof. Above its red front door is a leadlight staircase window, with an old heraldic device in coloured glass. Behind a short circular driveway, it is half-hidden from the road by fine old trees which have been lovingly preserved ...

Mrs Walton loves the Old English air of it which suggests Christmas carols sung on a moonlit frosty night outside some old manor house. But the colors in the living room offer the cool refreshment needed for the heat of a North Shore summer. Grey-green walls and sea-blue carpet. Grey woodwork, too, and curtains of cream damask. The bookshelves built in flush with the wall in the fireplace recesses are a modern touch. They are filled with the sort of books one would expect to find, stories of travel and adventure and triumphant effort. The gay colors of their modern jackets give a vivid touch of life to the quiet room.

The eighteenth-century dining room has the reminiscent air which suggests stories of exploits in far places told over a candle-lit table ... Mrs Walton's favourite "room", however, is not a room at all. It is the square outdoor terrace beyond another red door beside the grandfather clock. Set in the angle of the house and hidden from the road it faces the garden and the morning sun. Flowering gums growing up through the flagstones protect it from the south. The trees were there before the house and to build this outdoor room around them was one of the happy thoughts which architects & owners sometimes get."

(Cooper, Nora, "Woman flyer's new career", *Australian Home Beautiful*, Melbourne, May 1948, p. 18, 45, 49.)

PXD 525/99

**Architect: Hugh Buhrich**

**Residence for Dr and Mrs Max Rudolf (Rudi) Lemberg**

**57 Boundary Road, Wahroonga, 1951-1953**

**Extensions to house, 1963**

**Meeting house for Society of Friends (Quakers) at rear of property, 1964**

**Extensions to meeting house, 1967**

**Builder (meeting house): W.K. Murray**

**Builder (extensions to meeting house): J. Saals**

Max Rudolf (Rudi) Lemberg (1896-1975) and his wife Hanna Adelheid Lemberg (1900?-1998) arrived in Sydney in 1935, when Rudi took up the position of director of the biochemical laboratories at Royal North Shore Hospital. Rudi Lemberg was a distinguished biochemist, with a notable international reputation.

The Lembergs commissioned a house from Hugh Buhrich, which was built on a one-acre site they had purchased on Boundary Road, Wahroonga. The Lembergs, like Eva and Hugh Buhrich, were Jewish, but in 1955 Rudi became a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers). Buhrich designed a Quaker meeting house for Lemberg in 1964, which occupied a portion of the Boundary Street property. For many years this meeting house has been one of two in Sydney and guests have included Dr H.C. Coombs, chairman of the Reserve Bank and later chairman of the Australian Council of Aboriginal Affairs, Thomas Keneally, novelist, Charles Birch, biologist and theologian, Peter Mason, physicist, women such as Faith Bandler, Aboriginal leader and



spokeswoman, and Dorothy Butler, bushwalker and environmentalist. It still (2008) operates as a Quaker meeting house.

“Built in an unspoilt natural bush sanctuary, a new Quaker meeting-house at Wahroonga expresses the Quaker faith by its simplicity and freedom from superfluous adornment. The building has two wings, one containing a hall for seating 50 people, and the other the Sunday school rooms. The hall, which cannot be overlooked from the street, has a complete glass wall to the north. It incorporates aluminium-framed sliding glass doors which lead to flag-paved area.

A wide roof overhang protects the glass from the summer sun, but admits winter sunshine. On the south side smaller openings link the hall with its bush surroundings. Handmade sandstock bricks from a demolition job form the interior walls of the hall and also the end wall of the Sunday school wing. The exterior brickwork is painted white. This is combined with cypress pine boarding up to sill height in the children’s rooms. The ceilings, which contribute much to the character of the whole building, consist of stained timber battens, spaced half an inch apart and backed with mineral wool insulation. They are continued through the glass to form soffit linings.”

(“In natural bush sanctuary”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 December 1964.)

PXD 970/Job No. 102 and PXD 970/Job No. 435 ; PXD 1012

**Architect: Neville Gruzman  
Rosenburg/Hills House,  
36 Banks Avenue North Turramurra, 1966, 1983**

Built originally for bachelor, “ardent nudist and vegetarian” Sam Rosenberg, the emphasis in this house was originally for privacy and seclusion. The house overlooks Lovers Jump Creek and perhaps fittingly, its outlook is towards Clissold Road, where the Rose Seidler House is sited. Substantially altered after Rosenberg sold the property, it was restored and extended by the Hills family in 1983.

“With Sam Rosenberg’s love of sun and nature in mind, and aware that he would be the sole occupant, I decided to create a two level glazed space. This was to be entered from the upper level because of the fall of the land towards the valley. This would contain his bedroom, bathroom and was also a galley to the main space.

Although he drove a car, by nature Sam was basically a walker, so the car space was as remote from the house as reasonable. Once in the house it was invisible. In considering the nature of the main space I was aware of his desire for privacy. The site was protected on the west by the valley but exposed to neighbours on the other three sides ... I came up with the radical idea of building a series of hills, planted out surrounding the site on three sides ...

Just occasionally miracles happen. Fortunately, Sam was able to acquire earth for the hills from local road works ... The 'walls' ... varied in height like a natural mountain range and were up to ten metres high ... With planting they became very beautiful ...

Placing two symmetrical sofas helped hold the inner space together and magnified this sense of enclosure. I used extensive roof overhangs, which horizontally took the eye out to the garden. So a space with glass walls up to five and a half metres high is not just simply that, but a much more complex combination of solid and void that gives the desired enclosure and exposure.

Due to the changed floor levels, the main space in the house divided naturally into sitting spaces, cooking and eating spaces. The ceiling floated free of this so the space was always unified. The bathroom plumbing was enclosed in a glass-faced column, painted various colours by Leonard Hessing, a Sydney painter, to become a vertical sculpture.

I always use lighting in gardens so that at night they almost become part of the interior space. In this project I did something quite different. By concealed lighting around all of the edges of the roofs, I actually provided almost all of the internal lighting by reflecting it from outside to inside through the glass walls. The effect of this was at night to allow the occupants to live in a large pool of light that comprised of inside and outside as one."

"Extending this one-bedroom bachelor house to house a family, conceptually, was quite easy. The original living space became the parent's entertaining space, and the former bedroom became Michael's study. The new wing had a huge kitchen and family space with, on the same level as the children's bedroom, Kerry and Michael's bedroom, bathroom and dressing room. This last suite was a completely private space, with wonderful views over the valley.

Kerry, Michael and I had great pleasure, conceptually putting together the space, going through the very demanding building process and then the pleasurable furnishing phase. Kerry, a great gardener, planted many more native trees and shrubs and set to eradicating the creeping exotic plants that had taken over their part of the valley."

(Gruzman, Neville "Hills House, Turramurra" in Goad, Philip, *Gruzman: an architect and his city*, Fishermans Bend, Vic, Craftsman House, 2006, p88-98.

PXD 1011/97-102 ; PXA 1131/106-124 ; FM2/2030

**Architect: Albert Hanson**  
**Albert & Marjory Hanson residence**  
**55 Illeroy Avenue, Killara, 1948 (Sulman Award)**

Albert Henry Alfred (Bill) Hanson (1914-1978) and his wife Marjory moved into this house in 1948, shortly before it won the Sulman Award. It was built almost opposite "Poyntzfield", which had won the Sulman Award for Sydney Ancher

in 1945. The house had a steep site with extensive bushland views and the Hansons lived there until the early 1960s.

“A.H.A. Hanson is on the panel of architects which designs houses for the Ryde Municipal Scheme. This, his own house, is built in a rougher type of country. The bold line he has taken with it is a direct answer to conditions imposed by a steep and rocky site.

These scenic ‘pockets’ on the North Shore have a great attraction for the modern architect. Their hilly slopes, rough with rocky outcrops, create interesting building problems, while the primitive setting of blue-grey gum and opal-tinted stone seems to have a queer affinity with the smooth sophistication of modern line.

Mr Hanson’s slope was pretty rough. Rising sharply from a road which curves slightly as it climbs a hill, it offered no natural foothold for a house. But it did have a frontage to the road of 150 ft. which gave him the basic idea for his plan. This was bold and simple. With such a width of frontage all the rooms of the house could face one way and get the advantage of the northern sun. This would reduce the necessary excavation of the slope to a minimum...

Across the front of the house is a wide terrace paved with blocks of sawn stone. These give place at the western end to newly-planted lawns, shaded by natural trees, creating a garden almost out of sight of the road below. This is the spot that was chosen for the lily pool.

The living room takes up thirty feet of the terrace frontage. Its windows are shaded by a flat white-painted canopy, intersected by pergola bars. Focal point in its planning is the wide chimney, built of Lindfield stone. Its position in the centre of the wall facing the terrace divides the living area into three sections...

Off-white colouring of the interior walls is actually a mixture of white, green and black. This results in a subtle shade of off-white which changes colour according to the hour of the day. At 3.30pm the walls in the living room were of soft grey-green. In the entrance hall beyond they were a clear ice-blue.”

(Lancaster, John, “Basking on a hillside”, *Australian Home Beautiful*, April 1949, p. 26-27, 29.)

“Against keen competition from Sydney architects, the Sir John Sulman medal for buildings in the domestic and residential class, completed during the three years ended December 31, 1948 has been awarded to Mr. Albert H.A. Hanson, B.Arch., ARIBA, ARAIA.

The house ... was designed for Mr. Hanson’s wife. It is almost immediately across the road from ‘Poyntzfield’, which gained the preceding Sulman medal for Mr. S. Ancher ... Every room except service rooms, such as bathroom and laundry, face north and receives sun all day.

The entrance hall has been used to divide two functions, for at one side there is the architect's study and at the other a combined living-dining room about 30ft. by 14ft. At the rear of the entrance hall is a large window which gives a view of a cascade, rockery and pool. The living-dining room is generously glassed for sun and view, and plate glass double doors open to a stone paved terrace, lawn and pool. The stone fireplace backs on to an external fireplace, which serves to heat the terrace on cool nights.

The kitchen has been placed in the centre of the house for easy access from living room and bedrooms, and has a dining nook, adequate cupboards, double sink and fluorescent lighting. It opens directly to the front terrace for easy service of outdoor meals, and the kitchen windows overlook the wooded valley and the garden pool...

The general colour scheme internally consists of pale grey walls which act as background for bright rugs and cushions. Floors of living room, entrance hall and study are polished tallowwood. The study is furnished with blue curtains and a bright red Indian rug. The living room has mushroom coloured Indian carpets and turquoise blue patterned curtains. Venetian blinds are also a light grey. Kitchen cupboards are grey with a cherry red linoleum to the benchtops"

("Sir John Sulman Award, 1948", *Decoration and Glass*, Nov-Dec 1949, p16-7)

PXE 846/Box 3

**Architect: Edward Jeaffreson Jackson**  
**'Hindfell', house for Henry Gullett**  
**11A Lucinda Avenue, Wahroonga, 1901-02**  
**Builder: Brown and Tapson**  
**Cost: £1,685**

Journalist Henry Gullett (1837-1914) retired as editor of the Sydney Morning Herald in 1899 and travelled to England. On his return, he commissioned this house from architect E. Jeaffreson Jackson. Though built as a retirement home, Gullett was coaxed out of retirement to edit the Daily Telegraph from 1901 to 1903. Henry Gullett's personal manuscript papers are held by Mitchell Library at MLMSS 1473.

The design of the house, with its shingling, arches and prominent bracketed oriel window under a large jettied gable was very influential. An almost identical design was used some years later by builder William Richards for "Mounteray", in Burwood Road, Burwood, as part of George Hoskins' Appian Way subdivision.

"It is, in the first place, an essentially comfortable Australian home; it is picturesque without any obvious straining after effect; it has absolutely no unnecessary ornamental detail; and it groups well. No money has been wasted in attempting to achieve mere prettiness, and yet the house cannot fail to be interesting to any one

who cares in the slightest degree for domestic architecture.”

(‘Sydney Domestic Architecture: The Northern Suburbs’, *Art and Architecture*, William Brooks, Sydney, Vol 2, No 2, March-April, 1905, p. 83-85)

PXD 1043 ; Also illustrated in *Building*, 18 February, 1908

**Architect: Richard Leplastrier**  
**Sussman House, 138 Cammeray Road, Cammeray, 1981**  
**Builder: John Simpson**

Built for the Sussman family, this house overlooks Long Bay, at the southern end of Middle Harbour. Leplastrier was a dedicated yachtsman and like many of Leplastrier’s clients, the family included keen sailors. The house was crafted by John Simpson, who collaborated on a number of Leplastrier’s other projects, including the Tom Uren House, Balmain.

“Leplastrier’s buildings have something of both the classic and romantic spirit; they achieve a balance between being ‘on’ and ‘of’ the site. Clearly man-made, they contain formalised echoes of the surrounding natural landscape. At Cammeray, the concrete and brick terraces, U-shaped lower walls and flat roofs are earthbound, very much ‘of’ the site – creating internal spaces that feel protected and secure, analogous to the rocks and caves of the local rocky terrain. In contrast, the remainder of the structure’s lightweight frames of Australian hardwood covered with thin corrugated copper roofs which follow the slope of the hillside, are almost freestanding pavilions, ‘on’ the site, rising delicately out of the terraced masonry enclosures.

The Cammeray house and its site are considered as an integrated whole. The building is divided into two blocks with a small private garden between. The lower block contains the living/dining/kitchen, study and parents’ bedrooms with workshop and laundry underneath. The third child’s bedroom is a little timber pavilion on the roof of the study. The house almost fills the width of the site, leaving only narrow lanes down either side, one leading to the front door and the other to back entries to the house and garden, and to the waterfront and boathouse below.

On arrival, one sees the main roofs and lower planted roofs falling away down to the bay. From the carport, the route is down the stepped entry lane between party wall and house, past a tree growing out of the path and under a pergola, catching a glimpse of the water beyond. So one enters the house at the lower end and moves back up through the communal area and enclosed garden, to the children’s domain at the top of the site.

The swimming pool, at the lowest level of the house, is integrated with the building, as in Islamic architecture – a reflective surface of water between the living room verandah and the bay. The pool’s inner edge is hidden by the floor of the verandah while the outer edge – simply a thin copper upstand –

disappears, so that the pool merges with the sea water beyond and the living room becomes part of the atmosphere of the bay ...

Although the house is so closely bound up with its particular locality, there are recollections of buildings from elsewhere, reinterpreted in a new context. The timber structure owes something to Japan; inspiration for the monopitch roofs with their clerestory windows and bull-nosed, corrugated sheet roofs can be seen in the sawtooth rooflights of industrial buildings in Sydney's inner suburbs; the concrete vault over the kitchen/dining room and study recalls Le Corbusier's Maison Jaoul; while the terraced form with its narrow access lanes is reminiscent of a Greek village of Swiss hillside housing. But, above all, the Cammeray house is a beautifully wrought, but unpretentious expression of the easy-going, outdoor lifestyle that is so characteristic of Sydney, with its romantic setting and its mild winters."

(Spence, Rory "House, Cammeray, Sydney", *Architectural Review*, London, No. 1066, December 1985, p. 36-40.)

PXD 785/1

**Architect: Gerard McDonnell**  
**House for Mrs G.H.B. McDonell**  
**67 Elgin Street, Gordon, 1940 (Sulman Award),**  
**Builder: Hanley Brothers**  
**Cost: £1515**

Gerard Henry Bussell McDonell (1908-1979) designed this house for his own family. One of 34 houses nominated for the 1940 Sulman Award, it won despite being nearly the cheapest house nominated. It was the first Sulman Award winner on the north shore and in its simplicity and restraint set the pattern for a number of award-winners over the next 20 years.

"Although Mr and Mrs Gerald McDonell's postal address is Elgin Street, Gordon, the postman himself will advise you not to try and drive along Elgin Street, but to approach the building from the parallel road at the back of it.

The house, as a matter of fact, if not in the bush as the snapshots suggest, is on the very outer fringe of the suburb – a delightful walk up hill and down dale from the railway station. Its position is remarkable. Its site is unusual. Its outlook is magnificent. And, as a home, Mrs McDonell thinks that the adjudicators have been justified in awarding the Sulman Medal to her husband who designed it, and who, at the moment is 'away up North' with the Air Force. 'It was inexpensive to build, easy to manage and lovely to live in' is her own judgment. Who should know better! ...

The sky-blue door opens into a squarish vestibule. Three steps lead up to the living room – or, rather, the living area, for although on the plan the north end is labelled Living Space, the whole rectangle is planned as one large room. The terrace, which has a floor of cement slabs, an overhead trellis, and a

dado of flower boxes, might itself be described as part of the living area, for a great deal of the family life is lived on it...

Though the day was dull the large room was filled with light from the tall glass doors that open on to the terrace. One gathered the impression too, that on the hottest of days the place would be cool, for there are ample curtains, whilst the ceiling is high and the cement-rendered walls are the palest shade of green – or perhaps the green carpet squares created that feeling. These, by the way harmonise very happily with the curtains and the honey colored floor. The fireplace, too, is light in colour and the flanking bookshelves painted grey-blue with white edges.

The furniture in the Dining Space should have been photographed specially. It was – in fact all the furniture was – designed by Mr McDonell, and the glimpse of the table, chairs and sideboard conveys but little idea of their form and finish. Mr McDonnell apparently has a fondness for fine timbers, has chosen them for various uses with care, and has treated them well: that is, he has allowed them to retain their natural colour and grain, using as a general rule a waxed finish.

A glimpse of the judge's report may be added as a final comment: 'The design is simple, logical and straightforward ... The construction – four walls of brick and a pitched roof of tiles – is simplicity itself ... The exterior is a complete expression of the interior and of the purpose of the building.'

(Somerset, W.A., "Glimpses of a prize winner", *Australian Home Beautiful*, July 1944)

PX\*D 272 ; PXD 907/5 ; PXD 846/Box 2

**Architect: D.T. Morrow and Gordon  
New Residence for Mrs P.J. Gordon,  
16 Livingstone Avenue, Pymble, 1957**

Percy James Gordon (1892-1976) joined the firm of de Putron and Gordon in about 1908. After completing his articles, he studied architecture in Europe and the USA. He was accepted as a junior partner in the firm of de Putron and Gordon in 1921 and the firm became Morrow, de Putron and Gordon. With the departure of de Putron in 1925 the firm became D.T. Morrow and Gordon. After Morrow resigned in 1932 Gordon became the senior partner, but the firm continued under the same name until 1992. Morrow and Gordon were one of Sydney's most substantial architectural practices from the 1930s to the 1960s, with many major clients, including the Grace family, AWA, Soul Pattinson, the Bank of NSW and the Ford Motor Company. P.J. Gordon was president of the NSW chapter of the RAI from 1944 to 1946 and in 1956, when this house was designed, he was still a prominent member of the architectural profession.

Grace Irene Spry (1893-1982) married Percy Gordon in 1917. By 1938 they were living in Abbotsford Road, Homebush and they were still there in 1956

when planning for the house in Pymble was begun. The house is flat roofed, as had become typical for architect-designed dwellings by this time. The stone and ironwork however is more decorative than the work of avant-garde architects such as Sydney Ancher and Russell Jack, who were designing similar houses at this time.

PXD 529/11668a and 11670 ; PXD 922/112-114

**Architect: Glen Murcutt**  
**Preston House, 48 Warrimoo Avenue, St Ives, 1992**

This house was designed for barrister Brian Preston and his wife Judith Preston and their two children, replacing an earlier fibro cottage on the site. The site slopes down from Warrimoo Avenue to a reserve on Cowan Creek.

Brian Preston specialised in environmental law and was a councillor of the Australian Conservation Foundation. Both Brian and Judith Preston were interested in the natural environment and numerous mature trees, especially native Angophoras, on the site were to be retained. They emphasised that they did not want “too big a house”, their original conception being a “treehouse”, preferably on a single level.

Planning for the house was begun in 1989 and plans were completed in 1992. Some of the trees on the block had been levelled by a severe thunderstorm that struck Sydney in January 1991. Described by the Prestons as a “mini tornado”, this ferocious storm destroyed many mature trees in Ku-ring-gai.

The Preston House is pushed toward the southern boundary of the site, with most rooms facing north to maximise winter sun. Bedrooms are on the upper level, with living space on the lower level, opening onto a terrace. The house was to be painted “Angophora tree colour”, a pale pink/orange and any rocks excavated were to be “kept and placed where Brian [Preston] directed”. (Quotations from Glenn Murcutt notebook, Glenn Murcutt collection, PXD 728/Roll 237/C2)

Landscape design was by Sue Barnsley who wrote to Glenn Murcutt, “the form of the Angophora costata is dictated by environmental conditions – specifically soil depth, fertility, water holding capacity and wind conditions. The gnarled and contorted habit is not linked to a hybrid or genetic factor.” (Sue Barnsley to Glenn Murcutt, Glenn Murcutt collection, PXD 728/Roll 237/C28)

PXD 728/Roll 237

**Architect: Nixon & Adam (John Shedden Adam)**  
**House for J.S. Adam, 1187 Pacific Highway, Turramurra, ca. 1905**

John Shedden Adam (1868-1941) was articled to architect James Hine in 1887. After completing his articles he worked in the office of John Bede



Barlow and later in the Government Architect's Office. In 1902 he joined William Nixon in the partnership of Nixon & Adam. He married Ruth Eliza Harris in 1897 and when they moved into their new home in Turramurra in 1905 they had four children.

In 1908 John Sulman retired from the partnership of Sulman & Power and Adam was invited to join. The partnership, known as Power & Adam and later Power, Adam & Munnings survived until 1937. With the deaths of Joseph Porter Power (1856-1923) and Joseph Fearis Munnings (?-1937) Adam was the sole remaining partner. He joined Wright & Apperly in 1937, which became Adam, Wright & Apperly.

Over a period of 40 years, Adam was involved in the design of many buildings, including churches, schools and residences. Prominent clients included Scots' College, Angus & Robertson, David Jones, Sydney Woollen Mills and Arthur Yates.

PXD 751/1445

### **Pettit, Sevitt & Partners Exhibition Houses**

**Architect: Ken Woolley of Ancher, Mortlock, Murray & Woolley**

**Mona Vale Road and Richmond Avenue, St Ives**

**Landscape Architect: Bruce MacKenzie**

**Interior Decoration: Artes Studios Pty Ltd**

In 1964 merchant builders Pettit, Sevitt & Partners opened a display village of four architect-designed small homes on the edge of bushland in northern St Ives. The four, later six, houses were the standard designs by Ken Woolley available from Pettit, Sevitt & Partners, including the Lowlane, Courtyard and two split level designs. The display village, while not the first in Sydney, proved enormously popular and influential. Aspiring home-builders and architects visited in droves and the village was extensively published in the press. The homes were furnished by Artes Studios and cookware and tableware was provided by Beard Watson. Pettit, Sevitt & Partners eventually completed 3,500 houses, many on the steep bush fringes of the upper North Shore.

“Young couples with more taste than money dream of building a home that's original in design, distinctively Australian in aspect, and well planned for family life. All too often unable to afford an architect, they settle for a dull commonplace brick box. Now two imaginative young merchant builders in Sydney, Brian Pettit and Ron Sevitt, are meeting the housing needs of their own contemporaries with a range of high-standard, low-cost homes. By skilful designing, detailed planning and efficient building techniques they keep costs down and speed up construction. Operating north of the harbour, Pettit, Sevitt & Partners retain a brilliant young architect. Ken Woolley of Ancher Mortlock Murray & Woolley, to design prototypes and advise their clients on variations of floor plans, materials and finishes. Two of the four houses in the current range cost less than £5,000 and the plans allow for extra rooms to be added at minimum outlay. “Clients, especially those in the younger executive and

professional groups want original homes to suit their particular status and way of life” says Mr Sevitt. “We adapt our base designs for them.” His firm carries out expert (and free) investigations of proposed sites, and helps to arrange finance. So streamlined is its operation that usually construction is completed in seven to nine weeks Great pains are taken in positioning to preserve the natural bush setting: these four exhibition houses at St Ives are surrounded by a “nature garden” of native shrubs.”

(“Status homes for young families”, *Vogue Australia*, November 1964, p.54-7)

“The exhibition group was required from which the four standard houses could be demonstrated and sold by the merchant building method for construction on their client’s own land. The repeated houses are built at the rate of three per week and are available with a limited range of variations and additions. The site was selected with the co-operation of the architects for suitability of location and was required to be bush-covered so as to be as typical as possible of the areas in which the houses are built. There are in fact four normal building blocks and the demonstration houses had to be fitted on the individual sites for ultimate resale yet were to relate to each other and in a suitable arrangement for the circulation of hundreds of visitors.

The standard houses themselves are the current models of an expanding range of low-cost houses aimed at a section of the housing market. They sell for about £350 per square and are erected in four to eight weeks, depending in the site. The design and construction is based on standard detailing, availability of materials of stock, simplicity of erection, off-site manufacture of as many components as possible and acceptance of design by the market in order for the volume of production to be maintained. All of these items are following a process of gradual development in such a way that experimentation is becoming more rewarding and hopes are held of creating new building techniques and components and moulding public acceptance of design. There is an attempt to develop a current vernacular of building so that the attitude of architects may play a bigger part in the mass of housing which goes on inevitably, unaffected by single designs.”

(“Four exhibition houses”, *Architecture in Australia*, December 1964, p.88-90)

PXD 1013/103-104 ; ON 173 16398-16407, 16880-16892, 17666-17670  
(Australian Photographic Agency Photographs)

**Architect: Ross Brothers (Herbert Ernest Ross and Colin John Ross)**  
**'Red Hill', residence for Judge Grantley Hyde Fitzhardinge,**  
**19 (now 21) Beecroft Road, Beecroft, 1894**  
**Builder: Dalkin and Parkes**  
**Cost: £1600**

Judge Grantley Hyde Fitzhardinge (1845-1939) was the Australian-born son of solicitor and attorney William George Fitzhardinge. Grantley Fitzhardinge was an early law graduate from the University of Sydney, practised as a

barrister and was for 28 years a District Court judge. The Fitzhardinge family lived in Balmain, where Grantley Fitzhardinge had been born.

With the opening of the railway from Sydney to Hornsby via Strathfield in 1886, the rural north of Sydney became attractive to Sydney's professional classes. Fitzhardinge bought 4.5 acres (2 hectares) of land in Beecroft in 1893. The site was elevated, with extensive views over Sydney and was named Red Hill, because of the red soil exposed by railway construction. Soon after, a house was built to a design by Ross Brothers. Originally intended as a holiday house, the Fitzhardinges moved there permanently in 1896. Judge Grantley Fitzhardinge lived at Red Hill until his death in 1939 and the family retained the property until 1966.

PXD 528

**Architect: Ernest A Scott (Green & Scott)**  
**Residence for J. McF. Rossell,**  
**Gootanarrawa, 15 Orinoco St, Pymble, 1935**  
**Builder: S.C. Molineaux**  
**Cost: £ 2,300**

Dr Jock (or Jack) McFadzean Rossell (1893-1975) graduated in medicine from Sydney University. He enlisted for military service in 1917, joined the Australian Army Medical Corps and served on the Western Front. He was discharged with the rank of captain in 1919. Rossell joined the Australian Aerial Medical Service (now the Royal Flying Doctor Service) and was based in Cloncurry, in north west Queensland, in 1934-35. He took part in the 1936 survey which resulted in the establishment of a Broken Hill base. He and his wife Alice moved into their new house at about this time.

The exact derivation of the name "Gootanawarra" is unknown, though presumably it is an Aboriginal word that Rossell encountered in his travels. By 1955 the property had been sold and in 1968 Dr Rossell was living in Waverton, where he died in 1975. Rossell Place, Flynn, Canberra was named after Dr Rossell.

PXD 497/135-36

**Architect: Harry Seidler**  
**Rose Seidler House**  
**69-71 Clissold Rd Turrumurra, 1948-1950 (Sulman Award)**  
**Builder: B. Lake ; Engineer: R.E. McMillan**

The Rose Seidler House was Harry Seidler's first Australian commission, designed for his parents Max and Rose Seidler. The Seidlers moved in late in 1950 and lived there until Rose Seidler's death in 1967. The house was tenanted and in 1988 it was donated, along with its furnishings to the Historic Houses Trust as a house museum. The Rose Seidler House has been

extensively published and awarded and is arguably the most important Modernist house in Australia. It was all the more striking, emerging as it did in the era of austerity and materials shortages after the Second World War. It was carpeted, lit by fluorescent light, and had a comprehensively equipped kitchen. Its open planning, high-quality designer furniture and bold use of colour were a striking contrast to other housing of the period. The Rose Seidler House served as an exemplar for fashionable housing for decades after its construction.

“Houses of a style new to Australia are appearing on Sydney’s North Shore. One is at Turramurra in wild country ... The style is still novel in Europe and America, and the architect, a Canadian, Harry Seidler, believes that Australians will accept the new style now that they can see houses that have been built here. Cantilever construction makes the utmost use of site and outlook. Glass walls diffuse daylight through living areas shaped to suit family needs, providing play and study space for children without interfering with grown-ups.

Inside wall partitions are reduced to a minimum, creating a feeling of space and restful vistas while preserving the unity of sections for dining, study or entertainment. Garden outlets are plentiful and sliding wall sections do away with the noise of banging doors. Concealed lighting and softly blended colors encourage relaxation and make housework pleasant...

Timber trim and wall sections are a dazzling white. The four exit doors are painted red, yellow, brown and blue according to the indoor section to which they belong. Set in walls of clear glass they appear to float in air... Fluorescent tubes concealed in the light troughs diffuse soft general light through the house. For particular seeing, there are spun aluminium gooseneck or swivel wall lights with tulip-shaped shades at various points...

The colour scheme of grey, brown, blue and yellow is carried right through the house. Grey of the walls is varied by pale yellow on one wall of the study section and dark brown on the wall behind the main bedroom divan.”

(Cooper, Nora, “Sydney showpiece”, *Australian Home Beautiful*, Feb 1951 p.14-7, 39-40)

PXD 613/Tube No. 1 and 4 ; PXA 6900 ; PXD 320

**Architect: Harry Seidler**

**Julian Rose House**

**69-71 Clissold Road, Turramurra, NSW, 1949-1950**

**Builder: P. Cussel ; Engineer: R.E. McMillan**

This was the third of three houses built by Harry Seidler on a large block overlooking Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and its structure is markedly more adventurous than the others, utilizing a steel frame. It appears to have been designed for Harry Seidler’s brother Marcell Seidler, but was sold to

family friends prior to completion. Like the Rose Seidler House it was extensively published. The photography was one of Max Dupain's first photographic commissions from Seidler, who was to become one of Dupain's most loyal customers.

"The house is for a couple and their grown-up daughter, who wanted her own self-contained quarters for occasional visits. The house is raised off the ground to get a better view of the superb natural setting, which surrounds the building. All rooms face toward the valley reserve, which coincides with Northern exposure. The continuous terrace roof affords sun-protection to the complete glazing in sliding doors on the side.

The plan is a basic IN-LINE arrangement with kitchen and bath back to back, separating living and sleeping quarters. The daughter's bedroom is provided on the ground floor with the second shower room doubling as a utility laundry.

The structural system restricts all supports to 4 columns only from which a cratwork of steel beams is suspended by diagonal steel hangers. The infill is of timber for the upper level and of brick below.

All structural supports are freely exposed and become a decorative feature in the general theme of complete suspension and visually negligible support. To offset the clearly suspended rectilinear building form, the diagonal lines of the suspension members find their counterpoint in both stair shapes. Plastic interest is added by these to the simple silhouette by the solid stair end on the 'void' Northern terrace glass side and the projecting stair form on the more solid south side.

The interior reflects the lightness of structure by merging completely with the outdoors, through two long sides entirely glazed in the living area."

(Seidler, Harry, *Houses, interiors and projects*, Sydney, Associated General Publications, 1954, p. 70.)

PXD 720/30 and PXD 720/13 ; PXD 613/Tube No. 1 and 4

**Architect: Harry Seidler**  
**Marcus Seidler House**  
**69-71, Clissold Road, Turramurra, NSW, 1949-51**  
**Builder: B. Lake**

The Marcell Seidler House was the second of three houses built by Harry Seidler in a bushland setting at the northern edge of Turramurra. It was designed for Harry Seidler's uncle Marcus Seidler and his family and has been (2008) continuously occupied by family members.

"The house is elevated to gain the superb view of the bushland reserve of Kuring-gai Chase to the North, which could not have been fully enjoyed from the ground ... The plan is almost square with the central core of kitchen and main

access stair lit by an overhead clerestory window. All other rooms are arranged around this core with all plumbing on a central stack ...

The master bedroom arranged in two separate portions subdivided by a heavy curtain, has its main Western glass wall protected by moveable exterior metal louvres, manually operated from inside. These completely exclude or admit all direct sun, but always allow diffused daylight to enter.

Both bedrooms open with full height sliding doors toward the main living area to gain continuous floor space for entertaining. The bedrooms are generally treated as multi-purpose subsidiary living spaces flexibly subdivided.

A feature of the Western approach is a decorative mural on a brick screen wall, dividing the carport from the outdoor terrace. A spiral stair connects this space with the upper terrace ... The structural skeleton is of small steel beams and channels on full height 4" diameter pipe columns. Upper storey walls and roof are of timber, the lower floor walls of common brick, some of which extend into the main floor"

(Seidler, Harry, *Houses, interiors and projects*, Sydney, Associated General Publications, 1954, p. 29.)

PXD 613/Tube No. 20

**Architect: Harry and Penelope Seidler**  
**Seidler House, 13 Kalang Avenue, Killara, 1967**  
**Structural engineer: P.O. Miller, Milston & Ferris**  
**Lighting: Edison Price (New York)**  
**Landscape: Bruce Mackenzie**  
**Builder: Peter Cussel**

13 Kalang Avenue was the first house designed by Harry (1923-2006) and Penelope Seidler for their own family. Seidler's architectural practice was thriving and this house represents the state of the art for the period. It was won the 1967 Wilkinson Award for Residential Buildings and was extensively published in Australia and abroad. The family resided in the property for many years and it is still (2008) owned by the Seidler family.

"When an architect and his wife, who is also an architect, set out to build their own house for the first time, the choice of site and location is as telling of their attitudes as the design of the house itself. Living in Sydney, a city of two-and-a-half million people with very far flung low density suburbs, the required irreconcilables of closeness to the city (to avoid lengthy travel to work), coupled with an insistence on completely natural surroundings, posed a great problem. Sydney has a beautiful harbour and of course most people want to build a house overlooking the water – which invariable means not only accepting small sites but also the intrusion of other buildings on the environment.

The site chosen is inland only eight miles from the centre of the city, and a mile and a half from a suburban train station. Although located in an established living area it has no neighbours as it is surrounded by natural bush reserve which assures complete privacy. The site is however, very rugged which would discourage most people from building. In this case this was considered an advantage and even a challenge. It provided scope for a 'vertical' dimension, not only in the siting and approach of the house but also in the interior due to the resulting multi-level design, following the contours. The site is on the low side of a narrow dead end street. It is a broken, ruggedly sloping area cut by large rock ledges and overshadowed by huge Eucalyptus trees 60ft and 80 ft high. Being below the street the area is completely secluded with outlook only onto unspoilt nature and a creek running along the bottom of the site, which turns into a gushing waterfall during rainy periods ...

The plan has essentially a simple rectangular outline but is divided into a sunny northern part of 'daytime active uses' and a shady southern part of 'quiet, passive uses'. The division is formed by the central half flights of steps connecting the various levels.

The top level on the north accommodates kitchen and dining, on the south the library-study. The entrance hall serves as a gallery of artworks, paintings and sculptures. The second level down, on the north consists of the main living area and, on the south, the master bedroom suite. The third level down, on the north contains the children's play room and, on the east and south, three children's bedrooms. This is the only floor which is level with and has direct access onto the ground, garden and outdoor play space. The bottom level had a studio on the north, the laundry and a self-contained guest or housekeeper's suite with its own kitchen, on the south and west. Every level has a bathroom, all of which are grouped vertically.

The main aesthetic aim of the house is not only to have horizontal freedom of space but by fusing and opening the various levels into each other and by 'pulling them apart' and thereby creating a two-and-a-half storey high open shaft between them to add a vertical interplay of space. There are glimpses of through views from the different levels giving always a sense of the areas beyond without any blunt openness of planning."

("Architects' own house", *Architecture in Australia*, April 1968, p.313-7)

PXD 509/48-60, 143-162 ; PXB 237/26-49

**Architect: Douglas Snelling**  
**Palmerston House, Turramurra, 1951,**

Douglas B. Snelling (1916-85) was a widely respected designer, graphic artist and registered architect who operated in Sydney from 1942 to 1975. After the War he designed a range of modernist furniture, which was manufactured by Functional Products Pty Ltd. The company, which was formed in 1947, was

managed and majority-owned by Terry Palmerston (b.1918). The other owners were Douglas Snelling, Douglas Davidson and Robert Shaw. Snelling designed the Functional Products factory that was built in St Peters, Sydney, in 1947. Snelling, Davidson and Shaw left Functional Products in the mid-1950s when it became a public company. The furniture was marketed as the Snelling Line and the Snelling Module.

In 1950 the company described the Snelling Module as “a series of multi-purpose interchangeable storage units scaled to the human form ... carefully planned to ‘go together’ in various groupings to suit architecture of room and requirements of practical living ... a custom built-in effect is achieved through the combination of the units shown here. The ‘Snelling Module’ provides versatile companion units to the ‘Snelling Line’ ... contemporary furniture designed by Douglas B. Snelling.”

(Advertisement for the Snelling Module, *Australian House and Garden*, Sydney, January 1950, p. 5.)

In 1951 the Palmerston family needed a new house and Snelling was the obvious choice to design it. Though the house does not appear to have been published, a very similar butterfly-roof project by Snelling had been published the previous year. Some of the comments he made are applicable to the Palmerston house. “This house is constructed of simple materials – wood, rock and glass on waterproofed concrete slabs, providing economy and flexibility on a small suburban lot with no view ... Wide eaves overhang to the North and East effectively control sun penetration, whilst roof extension to the South West provides shelter at the entrance and covered carport ... bedrooms are lit by South light through clerestory windows and rooms have ample cross ventilation. Storage units back to back separate the bedrooms and make excellent noise insulators ... Built-in storage cabinets in natural wood continue from kitchen out to dining areas, linking these two units, yet screening kitchen operations. All woodwork in kitchen is natural wood, and cooking takes place 3ft. 6ins. off floor.”

(“Small house for a mid-suburban lot”, *Australian House and Garden*, Sydney, April 1950, p. 40-41, 84.)

PXD 874 ; PXD 720/27 (Same image described as ‘Richmond House, Killeaton St, St Ives’, PXD 1013/58).

**Architect: John Sulman**  
**‘Ingleholme’, 17 Boomerang Street, Turramurra, 1895-ca. 1910**

Ingleholme was initially planned as a cottage for John Sulman’s parents, John (Snr) and Martha Sulman, who decided not to live there. John Sulman (1849-1934) and his wife Annie (1864-1949) moved in instead and as their family grew, so did the house. A series of additions turned the cottage into a rambling complex of gables, bays, turrets and chimneys. The construction of



the New Room (later known as the playroom) in 1902 serves as an exemplar of this convoluted process of alterations and additions.

“My wife’s first idea was for a small open shed near the tennis court, but I pointed out that to make it useful in all weathers it should be boarded on two sides at least. This was agreed to and then the question arose whether it could not be used also as a tea room when more visitors arrived than the little Drawing Room could comfortably hold; or when people were playing tennis. This involved closing the shed in all round with flap shutters to keep out the wet, and to be opened when in use. The next thing was to make it larger as an additional room for entertaining, when I pointed out that at night, or in wet weather, it would be very awkward for the maids to serve refreshments to it, and that a serving pantry at least would be needed. The difficulty of approach through the garden at night by strangers who did not know the place and the storage of their hats, coats etc., and access to conveniences still further complicated the problem. By this time, the scheme had developed so considerably that the expense began to be a serious item. A further use for the building as an open air school room had also to be considered as there were then no facilities in the neighbourhood for the elementary teaching of young children – and in connection with this aspect was the desirability of providing a few gymnastic appliances for physical development.

So I put on my thinking cap and ultimately arrived at the solution by which we got a fine large room, approached from the house under cover, but with a separate access from the front drive – on the northern and eastern sides it was provided with hung shutters which would open wide and on the south a glassed bay window above a dais. Adjoining was a large recessed hearth for a log fire with an iron canopy and flue over it enclosed in a small turret. It was separated from the Drawing Room by a lobby open on one side. In this we fitted the gymnastic apparatus. Being attached to the house, the question of serving hats, cloaks, etc., was easily solved. It proved a most useful addition to the dwelling and amply justified the cost, but was another source of wonder to the people of the district as there was nothing like it anywhere in the neighbourhood.”

(Sulman, John, *The story of Ingleholme*, unpublished manuscript in MLMSS 4480/Box 1)

PXD 963/Vol. 5 ; PXD 963/12

### **Architect: War Service Homes Commission Houses built on the Upper North Shore, 1924-1928**

The Commonwealth War Service Homes Commission began building homes in the immediate aftermath of World War I in 1919, to ease chronic housing shortages and as a bulwark against civil unrest. The earliest houses, in 1919 and 1920 were built in groups on land purchased by the Commission, mostly in inexpensive localities like Canterbury and Bankstown. Massive cost overruns, unauthorised expenditure and lax financial control led to a public

scandal. House-building was suspended in early 1921 and when it recommenced in 1922 no further groups of houses were constructed. Individual applicants could apply for a maximum loan of £800 and the Commission managed the design and construction of the house. Applicants were given a choice of standard plans or new designs and “it is interesting to note that the majority of those seeking the Commission’s aid in the erection of a home have decided views and would much rather commence with a new design than convert an existing one to their ideas.” After 1922 many of the more expensive War Service Homes, some costing up to £1,400, were built on Sydney’s North Shore.

“Many of these War Service Homes show little improvement upon the general run of cottage design around us to-day and because they suffer from the same failings. Many exhibit the same lack of restraint and that striving for effect which is so common in the others, the same tendency to break up the walls and roof surfaces, small as they are, into many parts, causing the lines to become confused and the form shapeless is noticeable.

It may be that the commission is faced with the difficulty that confronts the practising architect, an unappreciative public which insists upon the bizarre ... And as for the public, perhaps they can be persuaded, for we are glad to notice shining through the mass of ordinary effort, instances of simple and pleasing design, where balance and proportion are observed, appropriate detail used and restraint in design shown.”

(Berry, John L., “War Service Homes”, *The Home*, April 1928, p. 67.)

“This chaste home in its dainty arboreal setting would seem to stand in mute protest against critiques on the War Service Homes Department, which is doing its utmost to provide returned soldiers and dependents with the amenities of home life, in compensation for the years of sacrifice given in their country’s service. The above type is very distinctive, homelike and modern, with two lamps on either side of an inviting entrance porch. The falling and uneven site lends itself admirably for development of a charming garden which can become the open air room of the occupants. They have the further acquisition of ready grown gum trees, which are most decorative and delightful for their feathery foliage. The plan is a model of compactness and the rectangular shape makes it easy for future additions to be made should these be required.”

(“War Service Home, Lindfield, Sydney”, *Building*, November 1925, p. 1.)

8 Lightcliff Avenue, Lindfield GPO 1 – 18636  
Moree Street, Gordon GPO 1 - 18635  
Shirley Rd, Roseville GPO 1 – 18566  
Moore St, Roseville GPO 1 – 18565  
Tryon Rd, Lindfield GPO 1 – 18564  
Killara GPO 1 – 18398  
Pymble GPO 1 – 18397  
Lindfield GPO 1 – 18396

Barcoo Street, East Roseville GPO 1 – 15129  
Kuring-gai Chase Road, Turramurra GPO 1 – 14569  
Catalpa Crescent, Turramurra GPO 1 – 13172  
Avoca Rd, Turramurra GPO 1 - 13171  
Kissing Point Rd, Turramurra GPO 1 – 13170, GPO 1 - 02571  
Elizabeth St Gordon GPO 1 – 13168  
Lindfield GPO 1 – 03023  
Roseville GPO 1 - 02992  
Captain Thomas's House, Lindfield GPO 1 – 02986, GPO 1 - 03025  
Findlay Ave, Roseville GPO 1 – 02818  
Chelmsford Ave., Roseville GPO 1 – 02815  
Chelmsford Ave, Lindfield GPO 1 – 02566  
Turramurra GPO 1 - 02561

**Architect: Leslie Wilkinson**  
**House for Joseph Beresford Grant,**  
**'Maiala', 7 Warrawee Avenue, Warrawee, 1937**  
**Builder: J.W. Wilson**  
**Cost: £5,160**

When Joseph Beresford Grant commissioned this house he had recently retired as the foundation Managing Director of Raine & Horne Pty Ltd. His daughter Eleanor Beresford Grant (later Eleanor Cullis-Hill) was studying architecture at the University of Sydney and the Professor of Architecture, Leslie Wilkinson, was asked to design a new house for the family. When finished, they moved from their previous house, "Maiala", at 5 Warrawee Avenue. This house had been built for them in 1913 to a design by architect B.J. Waterhouse.

Leslie Wilkinson had previously designed another house for Beresford Grant, (confusingly also called "Maiala") in Heydon Avenue, Warrawee in 1934. Beresford Grant was reputed to have bought a number of properties in the vicinity of Warrawee railway station and built houses on them to forestall commercial development in Warrawee, preserving the purely residential character of the area and it has been suggested that this was the case with the Heydon Avenue house.

"Surrounded by spacious grounds planted with large willows, poplars, eucalypts and other trees, the house of Mrs. G. Beresford Grant is in keeping with the district, which has the best gardens in Sydney. The garden around the house is laid out in terraced lawns with a lily pond on the upper terrace next to the house. The house itself is large with simple lines and nicely proportioned Georgian windows. The sills of the ground floor windows in the main rooms facing the garden are at floor level."

(Beiers, George, *Houses of Australia: a survey of domestic architecture*, Ure Smith, Sydney, 1948, p. 48-49.)

PXD 351/4641-4689 (also plans for "Maiala", 34 Heydon Ave, Warrawee)

**Architect: Wilson & Neave (William Hardy Wilson)  
'Eryldene', 17 McIntosh Street, Gordon, 1913**

Architect William Hardy Wilson designed this house for Eben Gowrie Waterhouse (1881-1977), a lecturer at Sydney Teachers' College. Both had recently returned from work and study in Europe. Wilson had also visited the United States and the design of "Eryldene" was influenced by the American Colonial architecture he had seen. The firm of Wilson & Neave (later Wilson, Neave & Berry and Neave & Berry) continued designing additional structures at "Eryldene" until 1936, long after William Hardy Wilson had retired from architecture and moved to Tasmania. The last building Wilson designed (1927) is the Chinese-Grecian teahouse in the garden at "Eryldene". Waterhouse became a world-renowned expert on camellias and after his death the house, contents and garden became a museum. "Eryldene" is one of Australia's most photographed and published houses; it is perhaps the best-known building on Sydney's north shore.

"'Eryldene' is a long, low, white house, with a pillared verandah and a flagged path leading to it through a garden brilliant with flowers. Two tall poplars stand sentinel at either side of the front gates, and the house and its surroundings might have stepped straight out of the pages of 'Cranford' or some other old world story. Nevertheless, it is satisfyingly modern behind its quaint exterior, and its plan and treatment suffer from none of the disabilities usually inseparable from old world houses...

A fine Georgian doorway opens into the entrance hall, on the left of which is the drawing room, connected by double sliding doors. At the back of the hall a door leads into the corridor ... by which access of obtained to the other parts of the house. The corridor has windows looking on to the courtyard, and does not therefore suffer from the depressing darkness commonly associated with corridors. A grandfather clock stands in exactly the right place – opposite the doorway into the main hall. Consequently the atmosphere upon entering the house is one of friendly invitation, without any embarrassing revelations such as one so often confront one in a bungalow...

Mr Waterhouse has been collecting for years, and his treasures find a perfect setting in the beautifully proportioned rooms and softly neutral toned walls of his home. The library ... is a wonderful place of peace and quiet reflection, as a library should be, yet full of cheer and life. Low bookcases line portion of the walls. An oval Early Victorian table, flanked by a Windsor arm-chair, are in just the right light for reading. The tall, square-paned windows are hung with brocade in rich subdued tones which harmonise with the Persian and Indian rugs on the hardwood floor. The walnut table in the diningroom is of about the same period. Here are more Windsor chairs, lately brought by Mr Waterhouse from England. The sideboard, of similar type to the table, is graced by one or two choice 'bits' of china. A large Indian rug adds the final touch...

But when one has done marvelling at the house – if this be possible – there is still the study. This is detached from the house, and a bit of white wall and vivid blue shutter can be seen through the creeper-covered archway at the entrance to the courtyard. A flagged path leads across a shaven lawn up a short flight of steps guarded by two Ming kylins or Chinese dragons, of a wonderful blue, past the study door to what looks like a miniature temple, but what is really the pigeon house. Facing the study door on left, and connected by a further short flagged path, is a fountain in the form of a low, semi-circular parapet. Here through a grinning gargoyle head, water falls musically into a stone-lined pool...

In the garden the more ordinary suburban treatment has been happily abandoned in favour of flagged paths, masses of color in the shape of flowering shrubs in huge tubs, flower beds and borders let into the stones of the courtyard, slender pillars, some bare others a glowing mass of creepers. It is astonishing what a beautiful and interesting garden can be made on these lines, a source of never-ending joy to its possessor, and incidentally providing an unusual and delightful setting for his home."

("Eryldene", a 'Hardy Wilson' House, the home of Mr E.G. Waterhouse at Gordon, NSW", *The Australian Home Builder*, January 1925, p. 35-37.)

PXA 731/18-19, 53 ; PXD 806/64-69 ; PXD 638/1-7

**Architect: Wilson & Neave (William Hardy Wilson)  
'Purulia', 16 Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga, 1916**

Architect William Hardy Wilson (1881-1955) was the leading light of the Australian colonial revival. He sketched early architecture in NSW and Tasmania and designed colonial-style houses, many on Sydney's upper north shore. When it came to building a house for his own family, he selected an elevated site on Fox Valley Road, overlooking Sydney. Completed in 1916, the Wilson family only lived there till 1922, when it was sold. Purulia was widely published when new and is still regarded as an exemplary design by Hardy Wilson.

"When the decision to build 'Purulia' was reached I had seen most of the old homes in New South Wales and Tasmania. In the office, designs presented no difficulties. But when I came to design a house for myself, there were endless doubts and anxiety. Engaging ideas presented themselves, one after another, and it was likely the house would be a hotch-potch. The temptation to introduce beautiful detail, without sufficient restraint, led me to take 'Clarendon' and use it as a model of simplicity. 'Clarendon' is, I think, the simplest and one of the most charmingly detailed old homes in New South Wales. 'Clarendon' was built by William Cox about 1809, and faces the Hawkesbury River between Richmond and Windsor...

Nevertheless there are brother architects who admire 'Purulia'. They flatter me. The truth is that a few years hence must appear to critical students as a

crude attempt to fashion a beautiful cottage... And if the young architects, emerging from the school under Professor Wilkinson, think otherwise, I shall be disappointed... At 'Purulia' the kitchen adjoins the living room and the front door. There is nothing to distinguish it from other rooms save the utensils of its usefulness. It is, perhaps, the pleasantest room in the house for it is where the most useful work is done...

The construction of 'Purulia' was not uneventful. It is a rectangular cottage covered with an unbroken hipped roof. As the walls arose square, bleak and factory-like, consternation filled the souls of neighbours dwelling in multangular villas. By the time the brickwork was finished their indignation could not be contained. They foresaw depreciated values all along the road. A confidential appeal to Shire Councillors showed the neighbours that there was no building regulation to prevent a four-square dwelling. The builder, who had hitherto showed sympathy, made a gesture of despair when the roof was tiled. I had found an artist making shingle tiles and from him secured curled, uneven, overburnt, and many-coloured rejects from myriads of flawless tiles. They range from grey-white, yellow, orange and red to purple-black. The roof of 'Purulia' is like a venerable Persian rug of quiet and glowing colour. Little irregularities cast little black shadows under the rows and give beautiful texture to the roof. Sometimes I hear explosions in the road early in the morning, and looking from a window, see the artist in his automobile come to admire his handiwork.

When I look from the table and see the old brown mahogany, the Piranesis on the wall, the oleanders outside bowed down with great clusters of white and red flowers; when the hum of myriad bees, toiling amongst the thyme, enters through the window, I say to myself: 'Here is tranquillity'. Yet it fills me with discontent. No longer does the house and garden awaken curiosity; the creative work is done. A bare wall, an empty room, vacant site, blank canvas or paper – these are exhilarations in an artist's mind."

(Wilson, W. Hardy, "Building Purulia", *Domestic architecture in Australia*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1919, np.)

PXD 362/Vol 11-12 ; PXA 731/15-17, 24 ; Also illustrated in *The Home*