

# Heritage Council Determination

<b>Determination date</b>	23 December 2024
<b>Place/Object name</b>	Reed and Mora Houses ('the place')
<b>Location</b>	9–11 Gladstone Avenue, Aspendale, Kingston City, Bunurong Country
<b>Relevant Legislative provision/s</b>	Not to be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to section 49(1)(b) of the <i>Heritage Act 2017</i>
<b>Regulatory Committee</b>	Anna Foley (Chair), David Helms, Ruth Redden.

## REGULATORY COMMITTEE OF THE HERITAGE COUNCIL

The Heritage Council of Victoria determined at its meeting HC282, on 5 December 2024, in accordance with section 13 of the *Heritage Act 2017* ('the Act'), that the determination in relation to the Reed and Mora Houses is to be delegated to a Regulatory Committee of the Heritage Council ('Committee').

## BACKGROUND

On 16 September 2024, pursuant to section 37 of the Act, the Executive Director recommended to the Heritage Council that the place is not of State-level cultural heritage significance and should not be included in the Victorian Heritage Register ('Heritage Register'), pursuant to section 49(1)(b) of the Act. The Executive Director recommended that the recommendation and any submissions be referred to the relevant planning authority to consider inclusion of the place or part of the place in a planning scheme, pursuant to section 49(1)(c)(i) of the Act.

The Recommendation was advertised publicly for a period of 60 days, beginning on 20 September 2024.

## SECTION 44 SUBMISSIONS

During the 60-day public advertisement period, two submissions were received pursuant to section 44 of the Act, neither requested the Heritage Council conduct a hearing. The submissions are summarised below:

- The current owner of the Place made a submission supporting the Executive Director's recommendation.
- City of Kingston, as the Local Government Authority in which the area is situated, made a submission seeking to be kept informed during the Heritage Council's process. City of Kingston neither supported nor objected to the recommendation.

## REQUEST FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

In accordance with section 47 of the Act, the Heritage Council may request the Executive Director to provide any information in relation to a recommendation made under section 37, 38 or 39 of the Act.

On 16 December 2024, the Committee (as a delegate of the Heritage Council) sought further information from the Executive Director in relation to the Executive Director's assessment of the place against Criterion A and Criterion H of the Heritage Council's *Criteria for assessment of places and objects of cultural heritage significance* ['Criteria for Assessment'] (**Attachment 1**). The Heritage Council's request for further information is provided as **Attachment 2**.

The Executive Director responded to the request on 20 December 2024, the response is provided as **Attachment 3**.

## COMMITTEE'S FINDINGS

The Committee thanks the Executive Director for responding to its request for further information. The Committee has carefully considered the response.

The Committee notes that the history in relation to Georges and Mirka Mora was helpful in its consideration, as were the further comparative examples provided in response to the Committee's queries about the relationship and work of the architects.

In relation to Criterion H, the Committee acknowledges that the Executive Director agrees that the Moras (in addition to the Reeds) could meet step test H3 for creating spaces where artists and others could meet and explore new ideas. Ultimately however, the Committee accepts that step SH2 is not met. Based on the information before it, the Committee finds that Criterion H has not been satisfied at a State-level.

In relation to the Committee's queries about the association between the four eminent architects and the place, the Executive Director notes that while the work of these architects at one location is of interest, it does not indicate that the place is of State-level significance. The Committee finds the comparative examples provided to be particularly useful, and accepts that, based on the information before it, neither Criterion D nor Criterion H have been satisfied at a State-level.

The Committee notes that the Executive Director suggests that this place, as a retreat for Melbourne's artistic set, is potentially of local or regional significance. The Committee agrees, and notes that the Reed and Mora Houses may satisfy the threshold for local-level heritage protection within the planning scheme of the City of Kingston.

## DETERMINATION

The Heritage Council of Victoria determined on **23 December 2024**, that the Reed and Mora Houses located and 9–11 Gladstone Avenue, Aspendale:

- is not of State-level cultural heritage significance and is not to be included in the Victorian Heritage Register ('VHR') in accordance with section 49(1)(b) of the *Heritage Act 2017*; and
- the recommendation and any submissions are to be referred to the relevant planning authority for consideration for an amendment to the planning scheme in accordance with section 49(1)(c) of the *Heritage Act 2017*.

### Regulatory Committee members –

Anna Foley (Chair)  
David Helms  
Ruth Redden

### Date of determination –

23 December 2024

# Attachment 1

## HERITAGE COUNCIL CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF PLACES AND OBJECTS OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

CRITERION A	Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.
CRITERION B	Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.
CRITERION C	Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.
CRITERION D	Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.
CRITERION E	Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.
CRITERION F	Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.
CRITERION G	Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.
CRITERION H	Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

These were adopted by the Heritage Council at its meeting on 1 December 2022, and replace the previous criteria adopted by the Heritage Council on 6 December 2012.

## Attachment 2

**Heritage Council request for further information,  
pursuant to section 47 of the *Heritage Act 2017* (16  
December 2024)**

[page intentionally left blank]

Event number: **RHC20260**

**16 December 2024**

Steven Avery, Executive Director, Heritage Victoria  
C/o: Geoff Austin, Manager, Heritage Register  
Via email to: [steven.avery@transport.vic.gov.au](mailto:steven.avery@transport.vic.gov.au); [geoff.austin@transport.vic.gov.au](mailto:geoff.austin@transport.vic.gov.au)

Dear Steven,

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION TO NOT INCLUDE – REED AND MORA HOUSES, 9-11 GLADSTONE AVENUE, ASPENDALE, KINGSTON CITY**

On 16 September 2024 the Executive Director recommended to the Heritage Council that the Reed and Mora Houses ('the place'), at 9-11 Gladstone Avenue, Aspendale, is not of State-level cultural heritage significance and should not be included in the Victorian Heritage Register ('VHR') pursuant to section 49(b) of the *Heritage Act 2017* ('the Act') (**Attachment 1**).

On 20 September 2024, pursuant to section 41 of the Act the Heritage Council caused notice of the recommendation and sought submissions. Two submissions were received, one in support of the Executive Director's recommendation and one seeking to remain informed during the process. Neither sought a hearing.

On 5 December 2024 the Heritage Council considered the recommendation at its bi-monthly meeting (HC282) and determined during that meeting to delegate the determination to a Regulatory Committee ('the Committee') of the Heritage Council pursuant to section 13 of the Act.

The Committee has given due consideration to the recommendation, and pursuant to section 47(1) of the Act now seeks further information from the Executive Director with respect to the recommendation.

**Interior condition of the Reed and Mora Houses**

The Committee notes the historical and recent photographs included in the recommendation and appreciates the Executive Director has undertaken a site inspection of the place.

The Committee queries whether the Executive Director has any additional photographs of the interior of the residence taken on the site inspection that could be provided to the Committee. The Committee deeply respects the privacy of the owners and will accommodate any confidentiality requests.

**Connection between the Reed and Mora families**

The Committee appreciates that the association between the place and each of the Reed and Mora families is addressed separately under Criterion H of the Heritage Council's Criteria for inclusion. The Executive Director found that the association between the place and John and Sunday Reed meets the Step-1 test in the Criteria and Threshold Guidelines for Criterion H.

In reading the Recommendation, particularly the history, the Committee has understood that the land on which the houses sit was purchased by Georges Mora and Sunday Reed as tenants in common. The Committee understands the Reed and Mora families were close friends who chose to build their respective holiday homes on the same land, sited within very close proximity to one another, and that the place regularly hosted members of the Heide Circle and other influential friends of the families.

The Executive Director has suggested that the contributions of the Reed family and Mora family to Victoria's cultural life are represented more appropriately in the Heritage Register by Heide I (VHR H0617) and Heide II (VHR H1494) for the Reeds, and by Tolarno Hotel (VHR H2207) and Mirka Mora's public artworks (for example at Flinders Street Railway Station VHR H1083) for the Mora family.

The Committee observes that neither the assessment under Criterion A or Criterion H address the friendship and connection between these two significant families, beyond their association from the 1950s in the Heide Circle of artists.

The Committee queries whether the Executive Director had considered whether the place allows the association between the two families, as demonstrated by the proximity of their holiday homes, to be 'readily appreciated better than most other places in Victoria'. What is the Executive Director's view about this association and does it have relevance to Criterion A or H?

In the Executive Director's response, it would be useful for the Committee to have additional information (if known) about:

- The relationship between the Reeds and the Moras - how they met, what professional and personal associations they had at and beyond this place and what led to its purchase.
- A brief biography of the Moras, as has been provided for the Reeds (on page 9 of the recommendation).
- A brief overview (c.150-250 words) of the cultural changes in post-war Melbourne due to migration and the influence of people such as the Reeds and the Moras and the relationships and networks they formed.

More specifically,

- It could be said that one aspect of the Reeds and Moras contribution to Victoria's cultural history was as people who separately and together played an important role in the development of the contemporary art and design scene in Melbourne by creating spaces where artists, poets, writers and designers could meet and explore new ideas. What is the Executive Director's view about this in relation to Step H1?
- If this contribution was considered to be part of their achievements, does the Executive Director consider that the association between the place – as one of these spaces – and the Reeds and Moras, relates directly to their achievements, and has an enduring and/or close interaction to them, with respect to Step H2 and H3?

### **Step-2 test under Criterion H**

The Committee observes that the Step-1 test for Criterion H is met, but that the Step-2 tests only refer to the association of the place to John and Sunday Reed. There is no reference to the Moras, because in Step H3 the Executive Director did not find that the place relates to the achievements of the Moras.

The Committee understands that the Reed House can be said to contribute to the achievements of John and Sunday Reed because the design of the place is emblematic of their support of emerging architects and innovative design principles.

The Committee queries why the Mora House isn't said to relate directly to the achievements of the Moras. The Moras had emigrated to Australia in 1951 and within 10 years had become prominent members of Victoria's cultural scene and commissioned architect Peter Burns to design their holiday home.

Specifically, the Committee seeks the Executive Director's views on:

- whether the place relates directly to the achievements of the Moras (at H3), for example as evidence of their rise to prominence in Victoria's cultural scene as post-war migrants who established strong connections with the Reeds and others within and outside the Heide Circle. What is the Executive Director's view about this with respect to SH1 and SH2, and, can the achievements and importance of both the Reeds and Moras be *readily appreciated better than most other places*, at this place?

### **Association between architects**

The Committee understands that throughout the course of the history of this place, it has been associated with four eminent architects; David McGlashan and Neil Everist, Peter Burns, and Suzanne Dance.

The Committee notes that the association between these architects and their responses to each-others work, has not been explored in the assessment against the Heritage Council's Criteria for Inclusion.

Specifically, the Committee seeks the Executive Director's view on the following points:

- Does the place allow the association (under Criterion H), between the four eminent architects to be understood, and readily appreciated better than most other places and objects in Victoria?
- Is this association interesting or significant?
- Does the Executive Director know of any examples in the VHR that demonstrate multiple eminent residential architects working on one site and responding to each-others work over-time?
- Does the place allow the association between the architects and the Reed and Mora families (under Criterion H) and their importance in Victoria's history to be readily appreciated better than most other places or objects in Victoria?
- Is the level of integrity of the place such that the association and relationship between the architects and their clients can be clearly understood?

### **Integrity of the Reed and Mora houses**

The discussion of the alterations to the place in the recommendation gives the impression that the changes over time diminish the cultural heritage significance of the place. However, the Committee notes the key changes (first floor addition to the Mora House and the link between the Reed and Mora Houses) were instigated by one of the original owners.

The Committee notes that additions and alterations made to a place over time can be a reflection of the ongoing use of the house by its owners and their close and enduring relationship to the place, and do not necessarily detract from its significance. What is the Executive Director's view on this point with respect to this place and the additions and alterations listed on page 11 and 12 of the Recommendation?

Additionally, does the Executive Director know who designed the 1981 first floor addition to the Mora House? Page 15 of the recommendation includes elevations of the additional story that are held in the collection of Suzanne Dance, but it is unclear if Dance was the architect.

**Date for response**

The Executive Director's response to the Committee's request for further information is sought by **Friday 10 January 2025**. The Committee appreciates that pursuant to section 49(2)(a) of the Act it has 40-days from the date submissions close to make its determination. However, given the proximity to the Christmas/New Year period the Committee advises that the 40-day timeframe for a determination will cease to run upon receipt of this letter, and start to run upon receipt of the response.

If you require any further assistance, contact the Heritage Council secretariat at [heritage.council@transport.vic.gov.au](mailto:heritage.council@transport.vic.gov.au) or by telephone on (03) 8572 7949.

Yours sincerely



**Hannah Fairbridge**  
**Acting Hearings Manager, Heritage Council Secretariat**

*Copies to: [clare.chandler@transport.vic.gov.au](mailto:clare.chandler@transport.vic.gov.au); [heritage.registrations@transport.vic.gov.au](mailto:heritage.registrations@transport.vic.gov.au); the Owner of the place, Kingston City Council (emails withheld for privacy reasons)*



# Attachment 3

## Executive Director response to request for further information (20 December 2024)

[page intentionally left blank]

# Reed and Mora Houses

## Response to request for further information

**The Committee queries whether the Executive Director has any additional photographs of the interior of the residence taken on the site inspection that could be provided to the Committee.**

The owner has supplied additional photographs which are attached to this response.

**The Committee queries whether the Executive Director had considered whether the place allows the association between the two families, as demonstrated by the proximity of their holiday homes, to be 'readily appreciated better than most other places in Victoria'.**

The relationship between the Reed and Mora families is an interesting element of the history of the place. However, Criterion H does not refer to the association between people but to the association between people and a place or object. It is not relevant to the consideration of Criterion H whether a place allows a particular relationship to be readily appreciated. If this were the case, there would be an argument for multiple places to be included in the VHR, if they had been the site of socialising between prominent families.

It is not unusual for families with similar interests to socialise and enjoy recreational time together, as the Reeds and Moras did at Aspendale. In the Executive Director's view, the dynamics of the relationship between the Reed and Mora families is not relevant to the consideration of Criterion A or H.

**In the Executive Director's response, it would be useful for the Committee to have additional information (if known) about the relationship between the Reeds and the Moras, a biography of the Moras and an overview of the cultural changes in post-war Melbourne:**

Georges Mora (1913-1992) was born in Leipzig in 1913 and later relocated to Paris where he supported the Resistance and was later head of an orphan organisation. Mirka Zelik (1928-2018) was born in Paris in 1928 and studied mime and drama at the Barrault School of Theatre. Both were Jewish. The two married in 1947 and migrated to Melbourne with their first son in 1951. After a brief stay in suburban McKinnon, they moved to a space in the Grosvenor Chambers at 9 Collins Street in Melbourne. The space was the former studios of the artists Arthur Streeton, Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin, John Longstaff, Jane Sutherland and Ola Cohn.

Mirka painted from the time they arrived there, but made extra money dressmaking, and a dress commissioned by Sunday Reed led to long friendship between the two. The Reeds invited the Moras to [Heide in Bulleen \(VHR H0687\)](#) which was the focus for a circle of artists in post-war Melbourne. The two couples had shared interests, and the Moras appreciated the Reeds' cosmopolitan worldview and appreciation of art, literature and food.

From 1953, Georges and Mirka both joined in the revival of the Contemporary Art Society (CAS), with Georges as President and John Reed as Director. The Moras' apartment on Collins Street was the meeting place and gallery for the CAS in the early years. In 1956 the CAS Gallery of Contemporary Art opened in an old warehouse in Tavistock Place off Flinders Street in central Melbourne, with early shows in the lead-up to and during the Olympic Games by artists such as Charles Blackman, Arthur Boyd and Joy Hester. The Moras' Collins Street home was also used for exhibitions of modern artists. The Moras lived in Grosvenor Chambers for fifteen years. Their studio became a centre of cultural life in Melbourne.

In 1954, Georges and Mirka opened a cafe at 183 Exhibition Street in Melbourne, on the corner of Little Bourke Street. It was affectionately known as Mirka's Café and hosted numerous exhibitions and parties. It was an early example of a French cafe in Melbourne and was also the first cafe to put chairs and tables for patrons on the footpath, in the fashion of European cities. It acted as a salon for Melbourne's avant-garde and a focus for international visitors. It was decorated with murals, furniture and artworks by key Melbourne artists, as well as significant works from the private collection of the Reeds.

The success of the Moras' cafe on Exhibition Street led to the need for larger premises, and the couple opened Café Balzac in 1958 at 62 Wellington Parade, East Melbourne. A new restaurant liquor licence was introduced in 1960 allowing alcohol to be served with food. Balzac restaurant held the first restaurant licence in Victoria, allowing alcohol to be served with meals until 10 pm. Balzac is also credited with introducing many Melburnians to authentic French Provincial cooking. In 1959, the Reeds and Moras holidayed together in Aspendale. In 1960 they purchased adjoining allotments on the foreshore at Aspendale for their respective beach houses.

In 1965, Georges purchased the [Tolarno Hotel \(VHR H2207\)](#) at St Kilda, and later announced the news to Mirka. It became a combined hotel, gallery and restaurant, as well as a studio for Mirka and home for the Moras. The family lived in rooms on the first floor and the restaurant was on the left of the lobby. Mirka used the hotel's bridal suite as her studio. Mirka painted numerous mural on the walls and other surfaces.

Tolarno French Restaurant and Bistro opened later in 1965, and rapidly became the most fashionable French bistro in Melbourne. The building was included in the Victorian Heritage Register in 2009, with the murals by Mirka Mora being recognised in the registration as a significant feature. The statement of significance for the Tolarno Hotel states that the place:

*'is of historical significance for its association with the great changes which occurred in the cultural and intellectual life of Melbourne in the post-war period, and with the role played in these changes by cultured European immigrants. It is historically significant for its association with Georges Mora, a prominent restaurateur and art gallery owner, and his wife Mirka, one of Victoria's best-known and loved artists, both of whom had an important influence on Melbourne's cultural and culinary life in the post-war period, and introduced to Victoria a more European way of life that has since become normal.'*

Georges began a transition from restaurateur to art dealer. The rear dining room at the Tolarno Hotel was converted into the Tolarno Gallery, which opened in 1967 and became one of the best-known galleries in Melbourne in the 1960s. Many of the exhibitions held there were of international standard, particularly the work of modern masters such as Chagall. Georges travelled to Paris frequently and returned with shows for art-conscious Melburnians.

In 1967, Mirka exhibited a series of large, mural-scale paintings at the Tolarno Hotel. The exhibition attracted widespread reviews and signalled Mirka's arrival as a serious artist. Mural commissions from private collectors followed as a result of the exhibition. Mirka also began an ambitious series of murals painted throughout the restaurant, which became some of her most celebrated works. The Tolarno Hotel became synonymous with Mirka's distinctive and highly personal artwork.

Eventually, the management of the hotel became too onerous for the Moras, and that part of the business was sold. The Mora bedrooms and studio moved to the basement, and a second gallery was opened at the rear, next to the kitchen. In 1970 the Moras separated, and Mirka moved out. From 1974, Georges concentrated his efforts on the Tolarno Gallery, becoming a key figure in the Australian art dealing world, founding the Australian Commercial Galleries association in 1976. He and painter Caroline Marsh Williams married in 1985. Georges assisted in the organisation of the Australian Contemporary Art Fair during the 1980s before his death in 1992.

Mirka Mora is one of Melbourne's best-known and loved artists. Her public commissions include a tram, and mosaic murals at Flinders Street Station and the St Kilda Library. She worked in a variety of materials and techniques, pigments, pastels, tempera, oils, watercolours, tapestries and mosaics, and her voluminous output includes soft sculptures (dolls). Examples of her work are held by the NGV. All her work is strongly autobiographical, its symbolism deriving from her Russian heritage, her interest in literature and history, and later from her own three children and her love affairs. Mirka conducted many highly popular workshops around Australia and held solo exhibitions since 1956, the first being held at the Tolarno Hotel. Her work was included in the exhibition *Joy Hester and Friends* at the NGV. In 2000 her autobiography *Wicked by Virtuous* was published. Her commissions include a Federation Tapestry design for the Victorian Tapestry workshop, and Christmas stamp designs for Australia Post 2003. She was made an *Officier de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by the French Government in 2002.

**It could be said that one aspect of the Reed's and Mora's contribution to Victoria's cultural history was as people who separately and together played an important role in the development of the contemporary art and design scene in Melbourne by creating spaces where artists, poets, writers and designers could meet and explore new ideas. What is the Executive Director's view about this in relation to Step H1?**

As explored above, the Reeds and Moras were key figures in the Melbourne art and cultural scene in the post-war period. The Executive Director agrees that an aspect of their contribution can be characterised as 'creating spaces where artists and others could meet and explore new ideas'. However, it should be noted that these individuals were associated with multiple locations that played this role, including restaurants, galleries, residences and studios. In the Executive Director's view, the houses at Aspendale are not distinctive in this respect. In the Executive Director's view, it is Heide, as a locus of Melbourne's creative community over many decades, that stands out in this regard.

**If this contribution was considered to be part of their achievements, does the Executive Director consider that the association between the place – as one of these spaces – and the Reeds and Moras, relates directly to their achievements, and has an enduring and/or close interaction to them, with respect to Step H2 and H3?**

In the recommendation, the Executive Director has recognised that the place meets H3 in relation to the Reeds as patrons of the arts and supporters of emerging architecture and design. The Executive Director acknowledges that if the Moras are also understood as people who played a role in creating spaces where artists could meet to explore new ideas, then H3 is likely to apply. The Executive Director notes that the Moras' achievements, in large part, relate to their role in hospitality and introducing European-style dining to Melbourne. This achievement is not seen in Aspendale residence, but again relates to the Tolarno Hotel.

The Executive Director maintains that the Reed and Mora Houses are unlikely to meet the Step 2 State-level test for Criterion H, namely SH2, for either the Reeds or the Moras. This is explored further below.

**The Committee seeks the Executive Director's views on:**

- **whether the place relates directly to the achievements of the Moras (at H3), for example as evidence of their rise to prominence in Victoria's cultural scene as post-war migrants who established strong connections with the Reeds and others within and outside the Heide Circle. What is the Executive Director's view about this with respect to SH1 and SH2, and, can the achievements and importance of both the Reeds and Moras be readily appreciated better than most other places, at this place?**

Both Georges and Mirka Mora are compelling historical figures who were influential in both hospitality and the arts in Melbourne. In the Executive Director's view, however, the Reed and Mora Houses do not allow the association between the Moras and their importance in Victoria's history to be readily appreciated better than most other places or objects in Victoria. Criterion H requires that the association between a person or group relates directly to their achievements (H3). In the Executive Director's view, as a place of relaxation and socialising, the Reed and Mora houses do not directly relate to the achievements of the Moras.

As energetic and accomplished people, Georges and Mirka have associations with multiple places and objects in Victoria, predominately in Melbourne. As explored above, this includes places like the Grosvenor Chambers on Collins Street, 62 Wellington Parade in East Melbourne (the site of Café Balzac) and the Tolarno Hotel, all of which are extant. These places relate to the creative and business interests of the couple and were also places of socialising for Melbourne's artistic set.

Mirka Mora is also associated with locations on the outskirts of Melbourne that attracted artists. These include the Alma Shanahan Adobe Residence (HO9) and Dunmoochin (HO8), both located in Cottles Bridge, which are included in the Heritage Overlay of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme. In the Executive Director's view, the houses at Aspendale share similar associations. The role of Aspendale as a location of retreat for Melbourne's artistic set potentially reflects the local or regional cultural heritage significance of the Reed and Mora Houses, rather than their state-level cultural heritage significance.

As highlighted in the Executive Director's recommendation, the accomplishments of Georges and Mirka Mora are clearly demonstrated by the Tolarno Hotel which was the Mora's home, restaurant, studio and gallery. It represents the Mora's diverse interests and their achievements in business, hospitality and the arts. The close association between the Moras and the place is particularly evident because of the numerous murals by Mirka that are a distinctive feature of the interior. In the Executive Director's view, the Reed and Mora Houses are not comparable in their ability to represent the achievement of the Moras.

The Executive Director notes that SH2 asks whether a place or object allows a person's importance in Victoria's history to be readily appreciated better than most other places or *objects* in Victoria (emphasis added). As a prolific and celebrated artist, Mirka Mora's achievements are more readily appreciated through objects, ie, her artworks, than through the house in Aspendale.

Although it is true that the Moras were established enough by the early 1960s to purchase land and commission an architect to design their beach house, the house Burns' designed for the Moras has been greatly altered, predominately

during Caroline Williams occupation of the place. These alterations impact on the ability of Moras' commissioning and occupation of the place to be appreciated.

The house in Aspendale appears to have been part of the lives of Georges and Mirka Mora for only approximately 10 years until their separation in 1970. As a place predominately of relaxation and socialising, in the Executive Director's view, it does not demonstrate their achievements well.

**The Committee notes that the association between these architects and their responses to each other's work has not been explored in the assessment against the Heritage Council's Criteria for Inclusion.**

As explored above, Criterion H does not relate to associations or relationships between people, but to associations between people and places or objects. As related on page 29 of the recommendation, the Executive Director has acknowledged that the place has an association with several architects. The association between the various architects themselves is not relevant.

Additionally, there appears to be little evidence that these architects could be said to have associated or responded to each other's work. All architects were commissioned by separate owners at different times to respond to specific briefs. Peter Burns, McGlashan and Everist (specifically David McGlashan who took the lead in the partnership's Melbourne-based work) and Suzanne Dance worked independently of one another. No evidence has been found, for example, that McGlashan and Everist's design for the Reed House attempted to respond to Peter Burns' design for the Mora House, which preceded it. In addition, the Mora House was substantially altered in the early 1980s, likely done without oversight by an architect. These changes were not sympathetic and overwrote rather than responded to Burns' original design.

Although Dance was responsible for the design that combined the two residences and carried out this commission with an understanding of the original houses, this was in response to a highly unusual brief from Caroline Williams, who was not one of the original occupants of the house. It is not a good example of Dance's architectural excellence.

**Specifically, the Committee seeks the Executive Director's view on the following points:**

- **Does the place allow the association (under Criterion H), between the four eminent architects to be understood, and readily appreciated better than most other places and objects in Victoria?**

As above, the association between people is not a relevant consideration for Criterion H. Architects working at different times, for different clients to different briefs do not necessarily have an association with one another.

It is noted that architects have an association with every place they design, and that many places they design might relate to their achievements. In recognition of this, the Executive Director carefully applies Criterion H to the work of eminent architects. It is most often used for architects' own homes, as can be seen, for example, in the registration of the [Robin Boyd House II \(VHR H2105\)](#), the [Edith Ingpen House \(VHR H2416\)](#) and the [River House \(VHR H2455\)](#).

- **Is this association interesting or significant?**

It is of interest that several noted architects of the middle decades of the twentieth century have associations with the place. However, this does not necessarily indicate that the place meets the State-level threshold for cultural heritage significance under Criterion D or H.

As explored in the Executive Director's recommendation, although Burns, McGlashan and Everist and Dance have all produced designs for the place, it is not amongst the finest work of any of these architects. McGlashan and Everist's most celebrated works are the [Grimwade House \(VHR H2209\)](#) and [Heide II \(VHR H1494\)](#), both of which are already included in the VHR. Peter Burns' own house, [Kangaroo \(VHR H2314\)](#), which is exemplary of his approach to residential design, is already included in the VHR. The Heritage Council included Suzanne Dance's awarded work, the [Actor's Studio House \(VHR H2420\)](#), in the VHR in 2022.

- **Does the Executive Director know of any examples in the VHR that demonstrate multiple eminent residential architects working on one site and responding to each-others work over-time?**

As above described above, in the Executive Director's view it cannot be assumed that Burns, McGlashan and Everist, and Dance responded to one another but rather to the specific briefs of their clients.

Nonetheless, the following are provided as examples that may assist the Committee:

- The [Baker House in Long Forest \(VHR H2118\)](#) which comprises three buildings, the Baker House (1966) and Elizabeth Stricklen House (1968) which were designed by Robin Boyd, and the Library, built during the 1970s, designed by Roy Grounds. The cluster of buildings are recognised as particularly innovative examples of the work of both architects.
- The [Ramsay House in Mt Eliza \(VHR H2181\)](#), which was built in 1937 to a design by Roy Grounds which was later extended by Frederick Romberg when he purchased the house.
- [Coombe Cottage in Coldstream \(VHR H2443\)](#) which was a farmhouse purchased in 1909 by Dame Nellie Melba. Under the direction of Melba, architect John Harry Grainger, father of Percy Grainger, designed additions to the house. In the 1920's Melba commissioned further construction of a gate lodge designed by prominent architect Walter Butler. Melba also commissioned prominent horticulturalists and landscape designers – including William Guilfoyle and Carlo Catani – to contribute to the place. Coombe Cottage is significant as the home of Melba who directed the design and development of the place which clearly reflects her achievements and aesthetic tastes.

- **Does the place allow the association between the architects and the Reed and Mora families (under Criterion H) and their importance in Victoria's history to be readily appreciated better than most other places or objects in Victoria?**

As above, the association between people, or groups of people, is not relevant to the consideration of Criterion H. Architects have an association with their clients at every architect-designed residence in Victoria.

- **Is the level of integrity of the place such that the association and relationship between the architects and their clients can be clearly understood?**

Changes made to the place since the 1980s, largely during Caroline Williams' occupation of the place, have diminished the distinctiveness of the architects' designs for the original two houses. Peter Burns' design, in particular, has been almost completely overwritten by later changes. The association between the clients and architects cannot be clearly understood at the place.

**The Committee notes the key changes (first floor addition to the Mora House and the link between the Reed and Mora Houses) were instigated by one of the original owners.**

Georges Mora and Caroline Williams (Georges second wife) came to occupy the house in the early 1980s. They dramatically redesigned the house for the first time in 1981, and again in the early 1990s. One of the most impactful changes, the addition of a second floor to the Mora House, was made to accommodate Williams' studio. Although these changes were made before Georges Mora's death in 1992, they relate to a later phase of occupation of the place, rather than its heyday of the 1960s. John and Sunday Reed both died in 1981 and none of the subsequent alterations relate to their occupation of the place.

**The Committee notes that additions and alterations made to a place over time can be a reflection of the ongoing use of the house by its owners and their close and enduring relationship to the place, and do not necessarily detract from its significance. What is the Executive Director's view on this point with respect to this place and the additions and alterations listed on page 11 and 12 of the Recommendation?**

Given that the place is associated with several prominent architects, it follows that the potential cultural heritage significance of place under Criterion D should be considered closely. In the Executive Director's view, alterations to the place have detracted from its potential architectural significance.

In relation to Criterion H, the Executive Director concurs that the development of a place over time can be evidence of a close and enduring association with a place. Usually though, this would be more apparent than it is at the Reed and Mora

Houses. As with the example of Coombe Cottage above, Dame Nellie Melba directed the design, development and decoration of the place over several decades. Although changes were made at different times, they clearly reflect her vision for the place. Coombe Cottage can be clearly interpreted as record of the achievements and aesthetic tastes of Melba, unlike the houses at Aspendale.

**Additionally, does the Executive Director know who designed the 1981 first-floor addition to the Mora House?**

The Executive Director is not aware of who designed the first-floor addition. The addition is rudimentary and may have been designed by a building contractor or similar. It was not designed by Suzanne Dance, whose association with the house did not begin until the 1990s. It presents as a pragmatic attempt to provide additional space and does not have any architectural distinction. Rather, it detracts from Peter Burns' original design and cannot be considered sympathetic.



**Steven Avery**  
Executive Director  
Heritage Victoria

20/12/2024