

Place Citation HOXX 15 Fawckner Drive, BENALLA

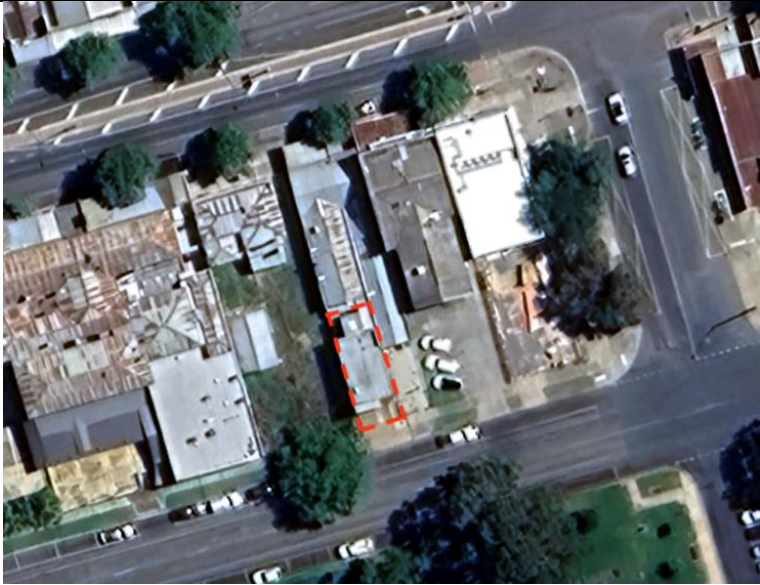
Address	15 Fawckner Drive, BENALLA		
Heritage Overlay	HO number to be allocated		
Heritage Overlay Map <i>(proposed)</i>			
Designer/s	Ian Robinson	Dates	c1970s
Significance	Local	Builder/s	unknown
		Survey Date	March 2024



Figure 1 The south facing façade on Fawckner Drive (Source: Google Streetview)



Figure 2 Oblique view of south facing façade on Fawckner Drive (Source: Google Streetview)

Assessment against criteria

The following analysis is based on Victorian Government Planning Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay (August 2018).

Criterion A: Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

Criterion C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to understanding our cultural or natural history (research potential).

Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

Criterion G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

What is Significant?

15 Fawckner Drive Benalla is significant.

The context provided by the front setback contributes to its significance.

Significant fabric includes, but is not confined to: the ground floor rendered columns; the solid side walls without any penetrations; the glazed upper floor section without balustrading.

Alterations and additions from the c1980s and later are not significant. This includes the extant glazing pattern which replaced the original solid glazed panel.

How is it Significant?

The building is of local historical and aesthetic cultural heritage significance to the Benalla Shire.

Why is it Significant?

15 Fawckner Drive is historically significant as it provides evidence of the post war growth in the city of Benalla. Criterion A

The building is of aesthetic significance for its distinct post-war design that appears to draw on the work of the Finnish architect Eero Saarinen. This building contributes to a number of modernist icons found in Benalla including but not limited to the Benalla Shire Council building (1958) the Benalla Art Gallery (1975) and the Robin Boyd Science wing at the Benalla High School (1969). Criterion E

Additional Controls

External paint controls apply	Yes
Internal alteration controls apply	No
Tree controls apply	No
Outbuildings or fences not exempt under Clause 43.01-4	No
Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Heritage Act 2017	No
Prohibited uses permitted	No
Aboriginal heritage place	No
Solar energy system controls apply	Yes

Place History

In General

The following history was produced by historian Dr Jacqueline Durrant.

15 Fawckner Drive was designed by real estate agent Ian Robinson as his personal office space.¹ Although the exact date of construction is not known, the early 1970s is most likely.

Ian was the son of Carlisle 'Carl' Robinson, who was a trained architect and had an architectural practice in Melbourne prior to returning to Benalla to join his father, George Robinson, at Robinson & Monds real estate agency. (Carl Robinson designed 1 Benson Street, Benalla, as a residence for his parents in 1937.)

Ian Robinson's design for his office takes in views of Lake Benalla and surrounding mature River Red Gums. With the main office space sitting at second-storey height perched atop a plinth of four tightly gathered columns, the building has been designed in the full knowledge of Benalla's history of flooding. Its style is neo-futuristic, recalling the architecture of Finnish architect Eero Saarinen.

The original (south-facing) facade was designed to be as sleek as possible, and featured just one large plate of glass, which at some point was broken. The subsequent owner of the building, who was a glazier by trade, took the less expensive option whereby rather replacing the large single sheet of glass, compromised the original design by breaking up the glazing into panels, of which the doors, which effectively serve no function, were a component.² Also worth noting is that Robinson's original design was intended to have all the concrete and rendered elements of the building uniformly painted in white or cream.

In the context of Benalla, Ian Robinson's office is emblematic of Benalla's long-running love-affair with adventurous and quality architecture. Although comparatively diminutive, this fondly-regarded office building belongs with Benalla's other icons of modernist architecture, including but not limited to the Benalla Shire Council building (1958) and the Benalla Art Gallery (1975).

Relevant Historic Themes as identified in the *Benalla Rural City Gaps Heritage Study: Thematic History* Prepared by Dr Robyn Ballinger

6. Building towns, cities and the garden state

6.1 Making regional centre

Physical Description

The south facing façade presents as a concrete box elevated above the open ground floor level by central paired concrete columns. The first floor is cast in concrete with the south face an open section of glazing divided up by aluminium window frames and central glazed doors. The original glazing was articulated as a single pane of glazing. The glazing plane is recessed within the concrete frame to create a perimeter ledge.

¹ pers. comm. John Hanlon,

² pers. comm. Michael Smyth, to Jacqui Durrant, 7 June 2024.

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There are two pairs of concrete columns, set centrally underneath the suspended box.