Statement of Significance: Kensington Close, 21 Kensington Road, South Yarra (June 2026)

Heritage Place:	Kensington Close 21 Kensington Road, South Yarra	**PS ref no:**	HO802



Figure 1: *Street frontage of Kensington Close, 21 Kensington Road, South Yarra* (November 2024).

What is significant?

Kensington Close at 21 Kensington Road, South Yarra, constructed 1968-69.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include:

- Group of two-storey townhouses designed in a post-war Modernist style
- Townhouses arranged in rows north and south of a central bluestone pitcher-paved driveway
- Simple geometric compositions with low-pitched, metal tray deck-clad roof forms and deep eaves with broad fascias
- Pale brick construction with stained timberwork and beige-coloured steel tray deck wall cladding
- High brick parapet walls, wing walls and garden walls providing privacy
- Expansive glazing including bands of windows below the eaves and at ground level
- Prominent sections of raked wall below the windows, clad with metal decking, between raked wing walls
- Integrated carports recessed under upper levels
- Integrated landscaped setting including north-facing courtyards

- Mature Mulberry (Morus nigra) and oak (Quercus sp.) trees dating from earlier residences on the site
- High brick garden walls to the street boundary and courtyards with sections of horizontal timber fencing to courtyards.

How is it significant?

Kensington Close at 21 Kensington Road, South Yarra is of local historical, representative (architectural) and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

Kensington Close at 21 Kensington Road, South Yarra has a clear association with the project homes industry in Victoria and higher-density development in the post-war period in the City of Stonnington. Constructed by highly influential project home building company Merchant Builders in 1968-69, Kensington Close is an early example of townhouse developments which became widespread across Melbourne in the late 1960s and 1970s following changes to the Strata Titles Act 1967. The townhouses demonstrate the shift towards more affordable and higher density living, which characterised suburban development throughout the City of Stonnington, and Melbourne more broadly, in the late-twentieth century (Criterion A).

Kensington Close at 21 Kensington Road, South Yarra is a fine and highly intact example of a Modernist townhouse development constructed during the post-war period. The complex displays the key characteristics of a Modernist style townhouse development from this period including rows of attached two-storey residences accessed via a communal thoroughfare, simple, geometric plan forms, low-pitched metal-clad roofs with deep eaves with broad fascias, expansive glazing including bands of highlight windows, integrated and recessed carports, wing walls and high garden walls enclosing north-facing courtyards to provide privacy and a restrained material palette of pale brick, timber and steel tray deck-cladding (Criterion D).

Kensington Close at 21 Kensington Road, South Yarra is of aesthetic significance as a sophisticated and well-executed example of Modernist style townhouse development of the 1960s. Designed for Merchant Builders by renowned architect Graeme Gunn, the townhouses are characterised by their repetitive use of bold angled forms with raked walls and wing walls, their neutral colour palette of pale brickwork, beige steel tray deck-cladding, stained timberwork and bluestone pitcher-paving, and their integrated landscaped setting designed by renowned landscape designer Ellis Stones, including private north-facing courtyards and a mature Mulberry (Morus nigra) and Oak (Quercus sp.) tree from earlier gardens on the site. Kensington Close demonstrates the key aesthetic qualities of Modernist design in the City of Stonnington to a very high standard (Criterion E).

Primary source

South Yarra Heritage Review (GJM Heritage, March 2025).