

Preliminary Heritage Assessment: 6 Springdale Road, Killara

Description

Lot 1 DP 505522

Zoned R2

6 Springdale Road, Killara (also known as the Eastment House) is a c.1976 split-level Sydney School style house designed by renowned architect Ken Woolley. The dwelling is predominately single storey with high ceilings but contains an office and an additional bedroom in the roof space, and a rumpus room, garden shed and bar in the lower level. It is constructed of smooth brown face brickwork with timber infill panels above, timber framed windows, timber cladding and a grey brown skillion tiled roof with copper gutters. It has asymmetrical massing with a split-level design that features a prominent clerestory window, which maximises the light to the interiors and integrates the indoor/outdoor entertaining spaces.

The property retains its original gourmet kitchen fitted with rock maple and European beech cabinetry, as well as striking original light fittings, soaring high cedar-clad ceilings, exposed brickwork and solid cedar entry door. It has a striking visual character and presence with its use of rich cedar coupled with dramatic high ceilings, curved forms and the warmth of wood fireplaces.

Rooms include a master suite with dressing room, ensuite and access to jacuzzi courtyard, children's wing with three double bedrooms and original family bathroom, upper and lower-level home offices with custom-built fixtures/drawers, entertainer's deck overlooking a grass tennis court in need of refurbishment, and court-side games room with wet bar and wine cellar.

There is no fence to the front of the property with low perimeter plantings and garden beds. There is a double garage to front of the property with brick paved driveway.

History of the site

This property was originally part of a 660 acre crown grant to the reverend Doctor John Dunmore Lang and James Bradley in 1839. By 1890 it was part of a large 172-acre landholding of Rebecca Edwards, who subdivided the land under the Springdale Estate, DP3400, specifically the subdivision of parts 4 and 5 occurring 1897. In January 1898, lots 1-4 and 49-52 of Section 4 were obtained by Florence Lillian Edwards of North Sydney. The subject site was contained in lots 3-4.

In March 1899, the relevant lot 4 was transferred to Richard Pickering Sellars of Roseville, astronomical observer. Lot 4 was 2 roods, 28 ½ perches. In February 1906, it was transferred to Alexander Denovan of Sydney, merchant. In July 1909, the property was transferred to Constance Ellen Jackson wife of Herbert Moore Jackson of Sydney, Clerk. In May 1911, the property was transferred to William Bremmer Carmichael of Sydney, merchant. In April 1923, the property was transferred to Adrian William Hildebrand of Sydney, public accountant and Alfred Bremmer Carmichael of Molong, Grazier. In March 1924, the property was transferred to Alfred Bremmer Carmichael and Charles Wostenholm Rundle of Sydney, solicitor.

In February 1926 the property was transferred to the Permanent Trustee Company of NSW Limited. In July 1930 the land was leased to Jules Lippensahn of Sydney, Company Manager. In October 1936, the property was transferred to John Thomas McKee of Sydney, merchant. In December 1936, the previous lease expired. On lots 3 and 4, which McKee was in ownership of at the time, McKee commissioned a grand art deco residence designed by Architect J Aubrey Kerr.

In November 1962, the property was transferred to Harold Hamilton Moore of Sydney, solicitor, and Patricia Margaret McKee of Killara, spinster. In February 1962, the property was transferred to Avril Clarice Jones of Epping.

In July 1963, lots 3 and 4 were re-subdivided to create a total of four lots, of which the subject site became the northern-most Lot 1.

This house was constructed for Mr Barry Eastment and his wife Mrs Margaret Eastment, and is known as 'Eastment House' (according to 2019 sale info and Davina Jackson thesis).

This house was designed by Ken Woolley in the 1970s, during his time with the firm Ancher, Mortlock, Murray & Woolley. The exact build date is unclear. A PhD Thesis by Davina Jackson gives the build date of the 'Eastment House' as 1970, whilst the 2019 real estate advertisement gives the build date as 1976. However, no BAs were lodged between 1973-1988 for the construction of a house on this site, suggesting it must have occurred prior to this point. Electoral rolls do not aid the clarification of the date; in 1972 and 1977 Barry and Margaret were still listed at 11 Yirgella Avenue, Killara, and not at the subject property until 1980.

The Eastment family occupied the house from its construction until November 2019 when it was sold to a new owner. As a result, it is highly intact, and there appears to have been little change to the interiors, and no building applications to change the house have been lodged since 1973.

History of Architect

Ken Woolley, certainly the designer of the dwelling, was a prominent architect active from the 1950s onwards. Upon his passing in 2015 the following biographical article was published in Architecture Australia, which gives an overview of his career:

"Ken Woolley was the most complete architect of the modern era in Australia. He designed buildings of every type and scale – from small homes and project houses to office towers, apartments, churches, corporate headquarters and civic squares, for public and private clients from prestigious to poor. He was the quintessential Sydney architect; almost all of his work can be found within forty kilometres of the Sydney Town Hall (for which he designed an office tower and public square). He was a founder of the "The Sydney School" in houses, and notably his AS Hook RAI Gold Medal address in 1994 was entitled "State of the Art in Sydney". Every building he designed was different (there being no repetition or house style) but everyone seems right for its place and purpose, particularly as they respond to the sharp sunlight and forceful topography of Sydney. His design approach, particularly the planning, was rooted in the modern humanism of his early study and travels, together with sensitive but uncompromising forms and materiality, often with stepping outlines following the underlying Sydney sandstone.

"The basis of the Woolley House design was derived from a series of garden terraces, most of which were covered by sections of timber roof sloping parallel to the land. A geometric order was applied to the plan as a series of 12-foot square units that combine to make up the main central space. Natural materials were exploited, with neutral colour schemes of dark tiles, western red cedar boarding and panelling, and painted bricks, creating a feeling of warmth in the house. The open plan living spaces were connected with volumes containing variations of ceiling height and changes in direction, enabling floor areas to be narrow but for the feeling of space to still be maximised." (Source: Vale Ken Woolley, 1933-2015 - <https://architectureau.com/articles/vale-ken-woolley-1933-2015/>; accessed 20 November 2019)

Figure 1: Interior of 6 Springdale road, Killara. Note the use of exposed brick, cedar panelled ceilings and stained timber window, doorframes and screens. (Source: <https://www.realestate.com.au/property/6-springdale-rd-killara-nsw-2071> accessed 9 December 2019)



Figure 2: Interior of 6 Springdale road, Killara. Note the raked cedar clad ceiling and the feature brick fireplace ceiling (Source: <https://www.realestate.com.au/property/6-springdale-rd-killara-nsw-2071> accessed 9 December 2019)



Figure 3: Front façade of 6 Springdale road, Killara. Note the split-level configuration of the house. (Source: <https://www.realestate.com.au/property/6-springdale-rd-killara-nsw-2071> accessed 9 December 2019)



Figure 4: Aerial photograph of 6 Springdale Road, Killara (2018)



Brief heritage assessment against heritage listing criteria

b) **Historical association significance**

6 Springdale Road has historical association with its designer the renowned architect Ken Woolley. Woolley is acknowledged as one of the founders of the “Sydney School” of architecture, and was recognised as a nationally significant and award winning architect.

c) **Aesthetic significance**

The house is an architecturally designed representative example of the Late Twentieth-Century Sydney Regional architectural style. The style and 6 Springdale Road are characterised by split-level houses of timber post-and-beam construction, which are responsive to their site and interior featuring exposed brick and exposed timber beams that are oiled or stained. The style is described as relaxed and informal, though carefully contrived.

f) **Rarity**

Houses from the 1970s are not rare. The rarity of this house arises from its provenance as an architect designed home, built for a single client that has retained ownership until December 2019 with no documented significant change to the main building, resulting in a high level of intactness of the interior.

g) **Representativeness**

The house is a representative example of the Late Twentieth-Century Sydney Regional architectural style.

Preliminary statement of significance

The house at 6 Springdale Road, Killara may have local or state cultural significance based upon the historical association with the designer architect Ken Woolley, aesthetic significance as a representative example of the Late Twentieth-Century Sydney Regional architectural style and be potentially rare due to its mostly intact interior.

Recommendation

This house is considered to have high potential as a local heritage item for its architectural significance as a very intact example of the Late Twentieth Century Sydney Regional architectural style designed by renowned architect and one of founders of the Sydney School of architecture Ken Woolley. It is recommended an Interim Heritage Order be sought from the Minister to protect the property from deleterious changes that will greatly impact on the cultural significance and relative intactness of the house and to give Council time to undertake a full heritage assessment of the property.