

# SA Heritage Register

## Nomination form

### South Australian HERITAGE COUNCIL

To help your nomination be successful, please fill out this form with as much information as possible.

Feel free to expand the answer fields as much as you require or append information to the form.

Please note that places which have been nominated during past three years will not be reconsidered by the South Australian Heritage Council unless you can provide significant new information not provided through the previous nomination and assessment.

*For assistance with this form you may contact:*

Your local historical society or heritage adviser may be of assistance OR you may telephone an assessment officer in Heritage South Australia on (08) 8124 4960.

## A. Nominated Place

<b>1. Name</b>	
<b>Name of Place / Object:</b>	Michell Residence
<b>Any other or former name(s):</b>	
<b>Is the place already on another heritage list?</b>	

<b>2. Location</b>					
<b>Street Address:</b>	20 Robe Terrace				
	Suburb / Town: Medindie			Post Code: 5081	
<b>Local Council Name:</b>	Walkerville				
<b>Land Description:</b> (if known)	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Volume:</b>	<b>Folio:</b>	<b>Parcel Type:</b>	<b>Parcel No:</b>
	<b>Plan Type:</b>	<b>Plan No:</b>	<b>Section:</b>	<b>Hundred:</b>	
<b>GPS Location/s:</b> (If known)	<b>Longitude / Easting / X</b> -34.90015531991714			<b>Latitude / Northing / Y (Datum = )</b> 138.60400228074232	

<b>3. Ownership</b>	
<b>Name of Owner(s):</b>	
<b>Contact person:</b> (if different from owner explain relationship)	
<b>Postal Address:</b>	
<b>Phone Number:</b>	
<b>Ownership History:</b>	

<b>4. Nominator (your details)</b>	
<b>Your Name/s:</b>	
<b>Organisation/Position:</b>	
<b>Daytime Phone:</b>	
<b>Fax:</b>	
<b>Postal Address:</b>	
<b>Email Address:</b>	

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## B. Description

5. Description of nominated place or object	
Description of the nominated place or object and its current condition:	Modern house and pavillion by Peter Muller. Garden by Robin Hill
Are you aware of any modifications or additions to the place or object? Can you provide dates for these changes?	IN KITCHEN
Do you believe there may be historical items under the ground? Should an archaeological investigation be considered?	unknown
Date you inspected the place or object:	yes
Have you had any contact with the Owner?	yes
Current use of the place or object:	residential
Original or former use(s):	residential
Are there any current or long term threats to the nominated place or object?	unknown
Name of Builder:	BLUNDEN
Any other information:	

## C. History

6. Origins and history	
Years of Construction:	Start: 1964 Finish: 1964 (Freestanding Pavilion 1990s)
Name of Designer / Architect:	Peter Neil Muller
History of the nominated place or object:	<p>The house was designed by Peter Muller, who was born in Adelaide in 1927 and studied architecture at the South Australian School of Mines and Industries (now UniSA) and the University of Adelaide from 1945–48. Muller would later study in the United States before returning to Australia and setting up practice in Sydney in 1952. In 1964 he was engaged to design two properties in Adelaide - the IPEC head office at Frewville, and the Michell House.</p> <p>Located on a corner allotment overlooking the parklands, the site was previously occupied by 'Avenel Gardens,' a grand two storied traditional brick and sandstone villa with a wraparound verandah. With gloomy interiors and maids' quarters spread over two levels, the Michell's considered the house ill-suited to modern family life and sought to live and raise their children in an environment which was open to sunlight, with views and a private garden, changing everyday life, quotidian experiences, daily routines, and maintenance protocols.</p> <p>The Australian Home Beautiful (June 1960) carried a profile of Muller, describing him as 'one of Australia's pace-setters in the move among the coming generation of architects to break away</p>

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from tradition and build houses more in keeping with the Australian landscape'. Having journeyed to Frank Lloyd Wright's home 'Taliesin' in Wisconsin USA, Muller emulated Wright's interest in the horizontal and his houses 'never fail to arouse interest and comment.'

Along with the incorporation of Japanese motifs and shoji (single panels sliding in a groove), the house is tailored to the landscape. Bedrooms and living spaces are arranged linearly on opposing axes on one corner of the site, with the house forming an open court presenting a private frontage and a protected view of the private garden. Internally, spaces are horizontally compressed with internal vistas and views directed outwards, while on the house's exterior, the slope of the site is set against an unbroken horizontal ridge line, deep eaves and constant height of garden walls. Only the arrangement of existing trees interrupts the emphasis on the horizontal line.

The garden was designed by Robin Hill an early landscape designer. Moving out of horticulture, Hill among others shifted from a tradition of imposing rectilinear and self-contained gardens such as the English Rose Garden, which sought to utilise the landscape but made it manmade, and instead created gardens that pursued a continuity of experience with the landscape. At the Michell House the garden was a demonstration of an encounter with existing landscape, with plants bought in from other parts of the world for their beauty and low maintenance and other large areas of lawn introduced.

The Michell house reconfigures how one encounters and accesses it as a domestic home. Presenting a closed 'defensive front' to the street, interior spaces open out to a private north facing garden. The structuring of the house's access points and degrees of accessibility defines levels of intimacy which conspire to complicate a simple distinction between inside and outside. Access points on the south and west define parallel circulation sequences revealing different architectural experiences in which the efficient contrasts with the long and leisurely. From grand axial procession leading to views of the garden to everyday trades entrance, each demonstrate various scales and degrees of accessibility that reflect the circumstances of the social situation.

There is a fine sense of material throughout, expressing Muller's interests in quality without extravagance, and solidity rather than lightness. As Muller's IPEC project had run down the availability of bluestone, sandstone salvaged from the demolition of the original house was repurposed as non-loadbearing piers and placed within the landscape. Along with the manipulation of the ground, the sandstone establishes a relationship with the house and extends it into the garden design.

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### Historical sources used to support your nomination:

Please attach  
copies of pages  
from publications or  
newspaper articles  
as appropriate.

Architectural drawings held by the owner.

Interview with Pat Michell about the house on State Library of SA Youtube at  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbkLqU-4D6s>

James Curry (2022) 'Lust for Lifestyle' catalogue, State Library of South Australia.

Julie Collins and Michael Pilkington (2019) 'Modernist and Modernism Architecture in SA 1934-1977', Exhibition, ODASA November 2022

Stuart Symons (2019) *Modernist Adelaide: 100 Buildings 1940s-1970s*, Adelaide

### Peter Muller Architect and his works:

Drew, Philip (1988) 'Peter Muller', in Muriel Emanuel (ed.), *Contemporary Architects*, St Martins, New York: 679-681.

Irving, R., Kinstler, J. and Dupain, M., (1982) *Fine Houses of Sydney*, Sydney.

Taylor, Jennifer (1972) *An Australian Identity: houses for Sydney 1953-63*, Research Paper, Department of Architecture, University of Sydney.

Taylor, Jennifer (1979) 'Looking at the Sydney School', *Transition*, November 1979, vol.1, no.2: 4-8.

Urford, Jacqueline (1996) 'Heritage and conservation: Peter Muller's Walcott House', *Architecture Bulletin*, September: 16.

Urford, Jacqueline (2003) 'Heritage: Building of significance', *Architecture Bulletin*, November/December: 28.

Urford, Jacqueline (1999) 'Holiday Accommodation: Resort regionalism: The architecture of Peter Muller', *Architecture Bulletin*, December: 16-19.

### Newspapers

(2007) '2 of us', *Good Weekend* supplement to *The Age*, 6-7 October 2007: 20.

### Theses

Urford, Jacqueline (1984) *Peter Muller: Domestic Architecture to 1964*, unpublished honours thesis for Bachelor of Architecture, University of Sydney.

Urford, Jacqueline (1993) *The Architecture of Peter Muller*, unpublished thesis for the Master of Architecture, University of Sydney.

### Archival

Royal Australian Institute of Architects (1983) *RAIA South Australia Significant 20th Century Architecture*, card index, RAIA collection, S301, Architecture Museum, University of South Australia.

### Websites

Peter Muller website, online at <http://www.petermuller.org/>

Peter Muller, Wikipedia, online at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter\\_Muller\\_\(architect\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Muller_(architect))

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## D. Heritage Significance

### 7. Statement of State Significance - Why is the place or object important to South Australia?

It is of State heritage significance because it represents the work of a great architect and the growing influence of the international, and particularly American modern idiom in South Australian architecture. It demonstrates that South Australian architects were working contemporaneously with their peers both interstate and globally.

### 8. Significance Criteria

The South Australian *Heritage Places Act 1993* lists seven criteria by which places are assessed as 'State significant.' Please tick the criteria you feel the place demonstrates and explain your reasons.

☐ It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.

☐ It has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.

☐ It may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history.

☐ It is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.

☒ It demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.

The Michell House, on Robe Terrace is an outstanding example of Peter Muller's modern residential design with reflections of his inspiration from American architecture, including that of Frank Lloyd Wright.

☐ It has strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it.

☒ It has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.

It is associated with Peter Muller who was an important South Australian trained architect with a passion for organic architecture and a profound concern for place for much of the latter part of the twentieth century.



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## E. Additional Information

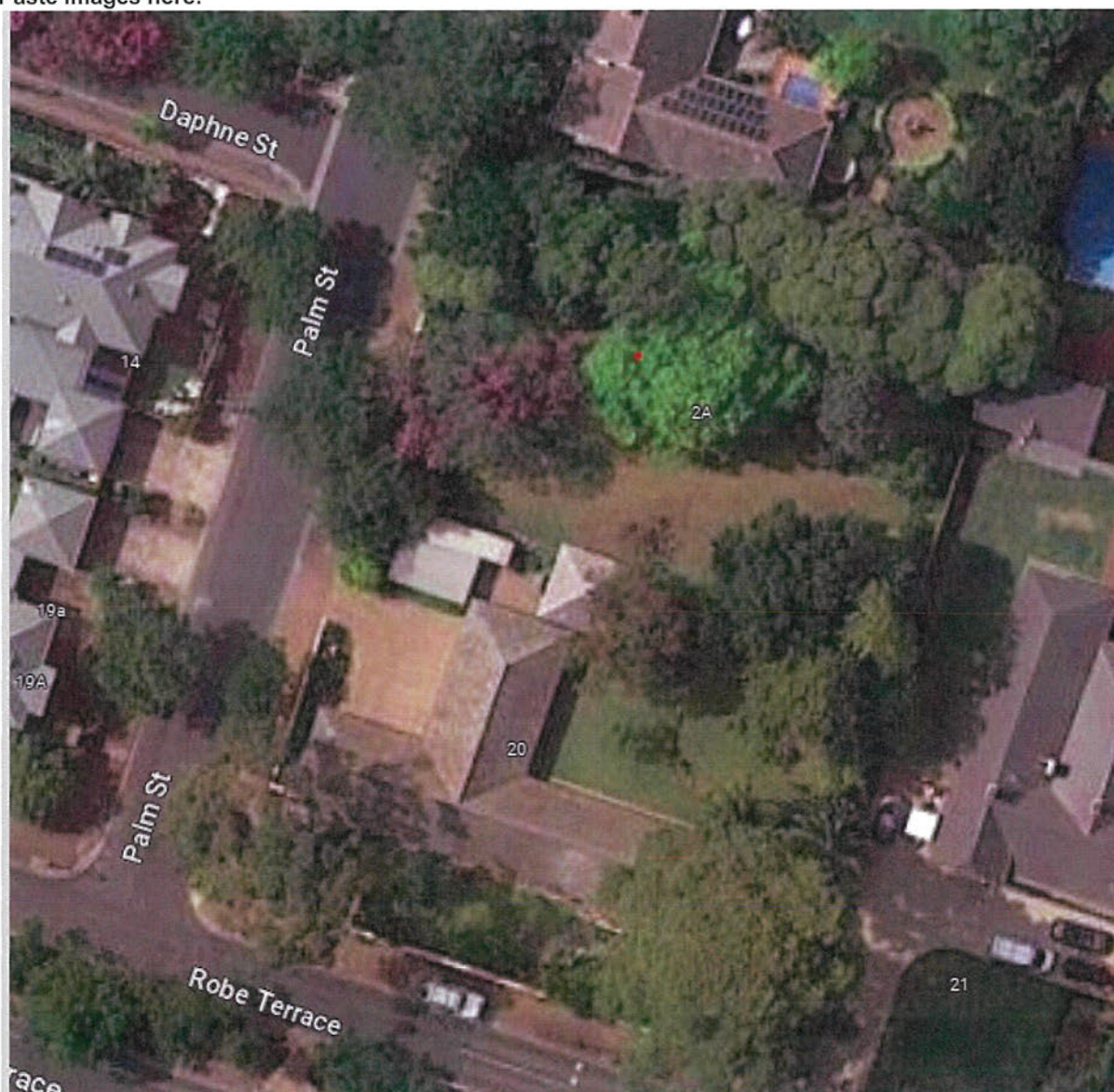
### 9. Images/Maps/Diagrams/Site Plans

A full range of images including maps, site plans, and photographs will help your nomination.

Please provide:

- a clear outline of the place or object being nominated within any maps or plans provided
- high quality images of the place or object (please list the total number of images being provided)
- the subject of each image
- the date each image was created
- the author of each image, and
- the copyright holder of each image (if known)

Paste images here:





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The South Australian Heritage Council is committed to transparency in relation to the listing process and wishes to enhance public confidence in the nomination, listing and decision-making process. The Council's policy is to make nominations for State heritage listing and submissions on provisions entered publicly available via a webpage or to interested parties. The Council will adhere to the Privacy Principles and your name and personal details will not be released.

I/we, [REDACTED] nominate [REDACTED] to be heritage listed.

The information I/we have provided is correct to my/our knowledge.

Your Signature/s:

[REDACTED]

Date: 14/6/2023

#### Nomination Form Checklist

##### Please check that your nomination includes:

- ☒ A clear indication of the location of the place or object (including map/s). Where a number of features are nominated, show the location of each and/or a boundary surrounding the significant elements of the site.
- ☒ A history of the place or object explaining important aspects relevant to the nomination.  
This should generally help support arguments of cultural significance.
- ☒ A clear description of the nominated place or object/s.
- ☒ A statement of significance and indication on how the place or object satisfies one or more of the significance criteria.
- ☒ Have you taken the opportunity to discuss the nomination with a heritage assessment officer? It is strongly advised you to do so prior to submitting this nomination.

Email: [DEWHeritage@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEWHeritage@sa.gov.au)

Post: Executive Officer, South Australian Heritage Council  
Department for Environment and Water  
GPO Box 1047, Adelaide SA 5001