HO101 – Sumiya, 6 Wattamolla Avenue, Werribee

Heritage Place: Sumiya	**HO Reference:** HO101 **Date updated:** 15 October 2026

Address: 6 Wattamolla Avenue, Werribee



Figure 1. 'Sumiya' at 6 Wattamolla Avenue, Werribee. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.

Item Group: Residential buildings (private) **Item Type:** House	**Key Theme:** Building towns and cities **Key Sub-theme:** Postwar housing
Designer: Norman & June Thompson (owners), Maurice John Flynn (Architect). **Builder:** Unknown	**Construction:** 1973 **Style:** Modernist

Significance Level: Local

Recommendation: Retain solar energy controls. Remove tree controls.

Controls:	○	External paint controls	○	Internal alteration controls	○	Tree controls

	○	Included on Victorian Heritage Register	○	Incorporated Plans	○	Outbuildings and fence not exempt
	○	Prohibited uses may be permitted	○	Aboriginal Heritage Place	●	Solar energy system controls

Curtilage



Figure 2. Sumiya at 6 Wattamolla Avenue, Werribee. *Basemap source*: Nearmap. 2025. Spatial data source: VicMap & Department of Transport and Planning

HERCON Criteria Assessment

A	*Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history*	Sumiya is of historical significance for its association with a later phase of subdivision and suburban expansion in Werribee during the post-war period. Following the breakup of larger estates during the interwar years, and the continued growth of Werribee driven by the success of immigrant farming communities, remaining tracts of land were subdivided for residential development from the 1950s to the 1980s. This pattern of development demonstrates the increasing prosperity of the region and is reflected by the establishment of this residential subdivision and the construction of Sumiya.
B	*Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history*	The place does not meet this criterion.
C	*Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history*	The place does not meet this criterion.
D	*Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments*	The place does not meet this criterion.
E	*Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics*	Sumiya is of aesthetic significance as an exemplary demonstration of a modernist residential dwelling. Characterised by a cubic, rectilinear composition, cream brick cladding, unique fenestration detailing, as well as flat skillion roofs highlighted with painted brown fascia boards and white eaves, Sumiya is highly demonstrative of the modernist style that developed during the post war era.
F	*Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period*	The place does not meet this 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 the continuing and developing cultural traditions*	The place does not meet this criterion.

H	*Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.*	Sumiya is of significance for its association with Maurice John Flynn, a local architect. Flynn began his architectural career designing residences and is credited as the architect of a number of dwellings within the City of Wyndham. With a keen interest in ecclesiastical architecture, having undertaken his thesis on Vatican II, Flynn also explored designs for church and alterations to existing ecclesiastical buildings. The firm established by Flynn remains in operation today from premises on Wedge Street, Werribee.

Statement of Significance - Sumiya, 6 Wattamolla Avenue, Werribee

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Figure 3. 'Sumiya' at 6 Wattamolla Avenue, Werribee. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.

What is significant?

The house known as 'Sumiya', including the overall form, roof, materiality, and fenestration, and external elements including the pathway arrangement to Anembo Court and original slate stone letterbox, is significant. Later additions including the garage door, side door and louvres, new window awnings and side fence and gates, are not significant.

How is it significant?

Sumiya is of historical, aesthetic and associative significance to the City of Wyndham.

Why is it significant?

Sumiya is of historical significance for its association with a later phase of subdivision and suburban expansion in Werribee during the post-war period. Following the breakup of larger estates during the interwar years, and the continued growth of Werribee driven by the success of immigrant farming communities, remaining tracts of land were subdivided for residential development from the 1950s to the 1980s. This pattern of development demonstrates the increasing prosperity of the region and is reflected by the establishment of this residential subdivision and the construction of Sumiya. (Criterion A).

Sumiya is of aesthetic significance as an exemplary demonstration of a modernist residential dwelling. Characterised by a cubic, rectilinear composition cream brick cladding, unique fenestration detailing, as well as flat skillion roofs highlighted with painted brown

fascia boards and white eaves, Sumiya is highly demonstrative of the modernist style that developed during the post war era. (Criterion E).

Sumiya is of significance for its association with Maurice John Flynn, a local architect. Flynn began his architectural career designing residences and is credited as the architect of a number of dwellings within the City of Wyndham. With a keen interest in ecclesiastical architecture, having undertaken his thesis on Vatican II, Flynn also explored designs for church and alterations to existing ecclesiastical buildings. The firm established by Flynn remains in operation today from premises on Wedge Street, Werribee. (Criterion H).

Primary Source

Sumiya citation, Extent Heritage, 2026.

Description

Physical Analysis

Located on the corner of Wattamolla Avenue and Anembo Court, 'Sumiya' is a single storey modernist dwelling. It is part of a low rise contemporary residential streetscape, with the Werribee River Linear Reserve and the Werribee River to the east. The modernist dwelling is characterised by a cubic, rectilinear composition with cream brick cladding, unique fenestration detailing, as well as flat skillion roof highlighted with painted brown fascia boards and white eaves. The dwelling has a small setback from the street, which is primarily grassed lawn and some small plantings.

The north façade facing Anembo Court demonstrates a stepped arrangement of three rectilinear forms, with the tallest section to Wattamolla Avenue encompassing the entry portico, a lower central section, and the lowest section incorporating the garage to the western extent. The elevation includes narrow vertical windows set between brick piers. From Anembo Court, a short, pebbled path leads to a tiled landing and three steps up to the entry portico. The entrance is a full height space inset below the primary roof, with a corner face cream brick column and brown tiled floor. The doorway is of timber construction with carved detail and includes an adjoining large, glazed window. Above the doorway the roofline and boxed eave of the central section of the dwelling extends across, painted in dark brown. Above, between the two rooflines, is a blind horizontal stained timber panel. At the western end, the garage is enclosed with a contemporary timber panelled roller door

The east façade facing Wattamolla Avenue reflects the rectilinear modernist architectural approach. To the northern extent is a balcony, clad in brown tiling with a simple black metal balustrading and timber handrail. A large four-panelled glazed section composed of two doors and highlights open up to the balcony, with another triplet window overlooks. A third smaller window is located to the southern extent of the elevation. Each window and opening includes retractable striped window covers. Whilst the primary façade is fairly minimal, specific details include the nameplate 'Sumiya' in cursive text hung on a central brick walled section between openings, as well as a number six to the corner. Simple orb lighting is also located below the extended eaves.

The south elevation is partially visible from Wattamolla Avenue, composed of a bricked wall with an inset portico to the rear. The portico includes metal posts and similar balustrading to the front balcony. The broader internal south elevation is not visible from the public domain. The west elevation includes louvred timber panels to the side of the garage as well as a small rear addition, creating an inset garden bed from Anembo Court. The broader west elevation is obscured by fencing and boundary plantings.

The surrounding setback area is mostly grassed lawn with small select trees and bushes as well as volcanic rock clusters with succulents. An aggregate concrete pathway with an organic edge extends around the public perimeter of the house, adjoining the garage side door to the primary entrance, and around the Wattamolla Avenue frontage to a side gate. The driveway, located west of Anembo Court is composed of pebbled aggregate. Adjacent to the front entry pathway is a low slate stone pier mail and garden box.

Alterations and Additions

- New enclosed garage including contemporary timber garage door, new side door and timber louvred panels constructed c.2010.*
- New window awnings to the east façade.*
- New landscaping to the front setback including the removal of established trees and the planting of new trees, bushes and flowers as well as the introduction of large rocks.*
- Removal of brown tiled pathway from Anembo Court, for a new pebbled path.*
- New concreted perimeter pathway wrapping around the north and eastern elevations.*

The dwelling is in good condition and of high integrity.

**** Denotes element that does not contribute to the cultural significance of the place.***

History

Sumiya is located on the traditional and unceded lands of the Wadawurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of Country. Wadawurrung people are deeply connected to Dja (Country), including the lands, waters and skies, and to Yaluk (waterways), Murran (nature), Weeagoon (living things) and Wiyn (fire). Wadawurrung Country encompasses vast volcanic plains and mountains, Little River (Worrin-yaloke) to the west and the mighty Werribee River (Wirribi Yaluk) in the east, and abundant coastlines and wetlands, all of which hold the stories and memories of Wadawurrung ancestors.

Despite the impacts of colonisation, including dispossession of land and disruption to cultural practices, Wadawurrung people have maintained and continue to sustain their deep connection to Country, Land, Waters and Culture. The memories embedded in Country remain alive today, including intangible cultural heritage and song lines, reflecting the continuity of cultural knowledge, custodianship and resilience passed down through generations.

Sumiya is located in close proximity to the Werribee River (Wirribi Yaluk), a significant waterway for the Wadawurrung peoples. Functioning as a major linking corridor across Country, the river formed an important travel route for movement and exchange and served as a 'spine' within the broader cultural landscape, marking the eastern boundary of Wadawurrung Country. As a major and reliable source of permanent freshwater, food and other resources, the river and its waterholes were central to cultural, social and economic life, each with their own names and stories. Areas of remnant bush along the river corridor continue to provide a rare and tangible connection to the pre-colonial landscape and Wadawurrung ways of life.

The early settlement of Werribee was positioned in proximity to a ford over Werribee River, connecting the route between Melbourne and Geelong (Murray 1974, 11; Lovell Chen 2024, 51). As traffic grew along the Melbourne to Geelong route, the Werribee settlement expanded. In 1849, Surveyor General Robert Hoddle reserved land for a township—gazetted as 'Wyndham' in 1850 (James and Pritchard 2008, 15; Hocking 2013, 177; Murray 1974, 14). The arrival of the railway in 1857 firmly positioned the commercial centre on the east side of the river. A post office, churches, schools and additional inns soon followed (James and Pritchard 2008, 103).

Closer Settlement schemes in the 1890s through until the 1930s marked a turning point, where large estates were subdivided for cropping, boosting population and transforming land use (Lovell Chen 2024, 15; James and Pritchard 2008, 49; Penrose 2001, 9). Beginning during the interwar period with the soldier settlement schemes, then increasing significantly in the post-war period with the wave of European migration, Werribee transformed from a semi-rural township to an expansive and populous suburb of Melbourne over the latter half of the twentieth century (Lovell Chen 2024, 48 & 138).

Place *History*

Early Allotment History

Settlements within the Wyndham area initially developed as stopping points along the early tracks between Geelong and Melbourne. Werribee River proved a suitable place to rest and water horses and became the location for the settlement of Werribee (Lovell Chen 2024, 51).

The early township of Wyndham developed on either side of the Werribee River, with subdivided blocks arranged in a mostly gridded arrangement (Lovell Chen 2024, 32). The rectangular extent of the village survey area was often indicated in parish plans, with land outside subdivided into larger Allotments; the size of the Allotments increased exponentially in relation to the distance from the town centre.

Mambourin covers the land north and northwest of Werribee township, bound by the Werribee River to the east, and the early Wyndham (Werribee) township to the south. In c.1880. George Christian Darbyshire was the owner of a number of available lots within the area, including Lots 5a, 5b, 6, 7 and 8, bordering the Werribee River. Allotment 5a would come to encompass the site of 6 Wattamolla Avenue (Figure 4).

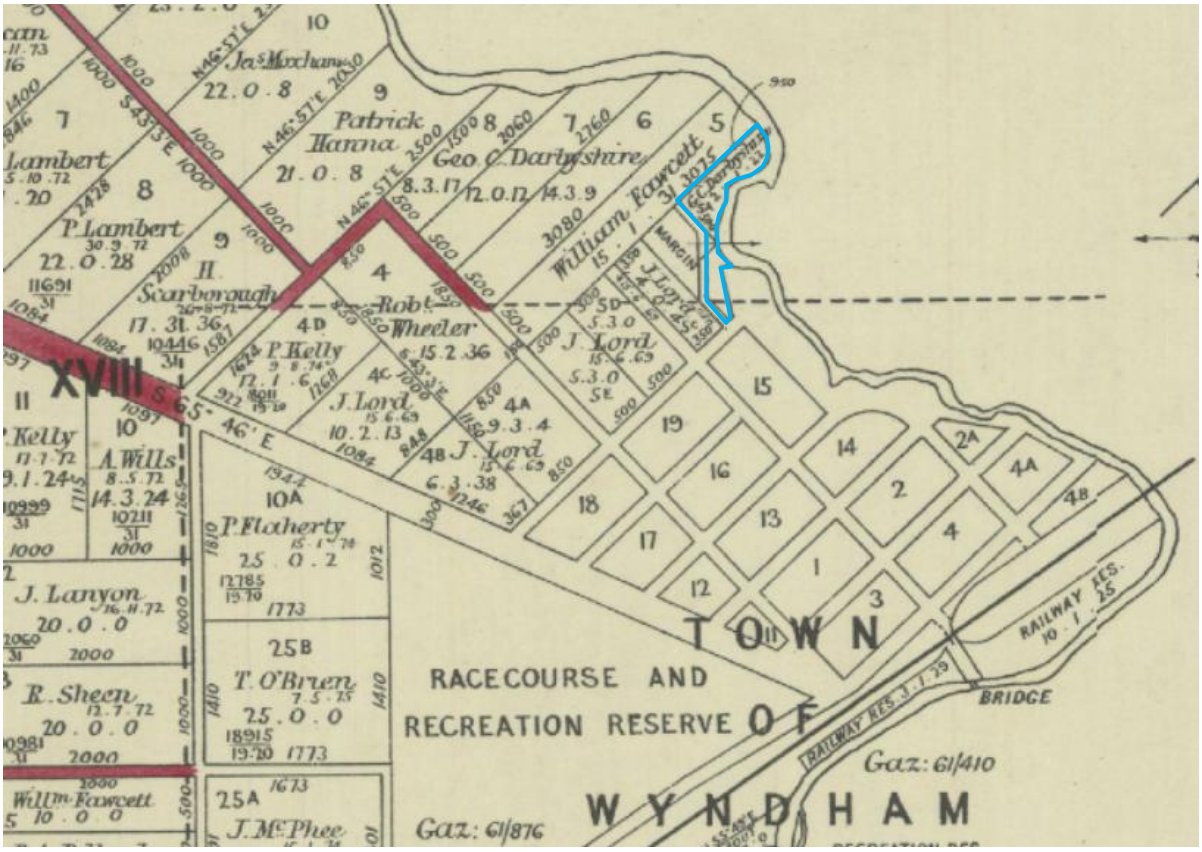


Figure 4. Extract from 1880 parish plan, with the larger allotment encompassing the subject site, outlined in blue. *Source*: Department of Crown Lands and Survey. 1880. 'Deutgam.' Public Record Office Victoria. https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/A6EDA490-F843-11E9-AE98-13F3897B06A2/content?image=1

George Christian Darbyshire was a well-known figure within the western areas of Victoria, as he had spent much of his life working and living in and around Werribee. Derbyshire had purchased a number of lots in Werribee during the land boom of the mid-1800s, including plots within Deutgam and Mambourin (The Age 1898, 5). Originally from England, George Darbyshire had been involved in significant railway developments across his homeland, and upon completion of its major lines, left for Australia in 1853 (Table Talk 1892, 10). He landed at Point Gellibrand, and quickly took up work as District Surveyor at Williamstown and his area of survey

included all the lands from the coast to the Dividing Range, and from Williamstown to Geelong. He then took the position of Engineer-in-Chief for the Victorian Railways, surveying for new rail lines from Melbourne to Bendigo, Harcourt to Castlemaine and Geelong to Ballarat. Darbyshire noted that "These surveys enabled me to obtain a tolerable knowledge of the contour of the country…" (Table Talk 1892, 10). As a local resident, he was also a member of the Wyndham Shire Council in the late 1800s and was involved in the establishment of the Werribee Irrigation Scheme (Weekly Times 1886, 2).

An 1898 newspaper article noted that Darbyshire had once owned land which was subsequently purchased by Captain Percy Chirnside and became the site for The Manor (HO102) (The Bacchus Marsh Express 1898, 3). Percy Chirnside purchased the land from Darbyshire to build a stately home following the death of his father, notable early pastoralist Andrew Chirnside, and the subsequent transference of ownership of Werribee Park (HO64) and Werribee Mansion (VHR H1613) to his elder brother George Chirnside (Links with the past, 1). The Manor was one of Werribee's landmarks as a grand 30-roomed house which was located to the northern end of Wattamolla Avenue overlooking the Werribee River (The Age 1939, 12), with Lot 5a making up part of the manor grounds, towards the entry gates facing Edgar Street (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Extract from 1959 aerial photograph, showing the Manor, sheds and paddocks prior to subdivision. Edgar Street runs into the driveway entrance. 6 Wattamolla Avenue was encompassed within the estate, its location indicated by red arrow. *Source:* Heritage Alliance. 2017. 'Manor Estate, Werribee – Preliminary Heritage Assessment.' Unpublished report prepared by Heritage Alliance for the Wyndham City Council. PDF file.

By c.1897 Percy Chirnside had begun selling subdivided plots of land from the estate, including the 'extreme south-west corner of the Manor Estate' (The Argus 1897, 3). By c.1910, he had embarked on splitting the land into farming plots ranging from 150 to 1,100 acres (The Bacchus Marsh Express 1909, 4). It is presumed the subdivision was prompted by the passing of the Closer Settlement Act in 1904 (Heritage Alliance 2017, 8), however a 1910 article noted that "Captain Chirnside wanted to sell his property…He was anxious to sell, because there was a land tax talked about and other things" (The Herald 1910, 8). On 25 July 1966 'The Manor' burnt

down in a domestic fire (Heritage Alliance 2017, 8), however stone wall remnants and a number of large mature trees of the surrounding gardens remained (HO102).

Development of Sumiya

By 1970, the Wattamolla Avenue, Guyra, Nadda and Anembo Court subdivision was created, with the first homes sold in 1972 (Heritage Alliance 2017, 8). The plot at 6 Wattamolla Avenue, Werribee, was purchased by Norman and June Thompson who were then the proprietors of the GTH Engineering works nearby in Edgar Street, Werribee. They designed a unique modernist residential house for the site in consultation with the architect Maurice John Flynn (Figure 6)

Maurice John Flynn, architect

Maurice John Flynn was a local architect who completed a number of projects within Werribee. Born in Albury, NSW in 1938, he completed his studies at the Department of Architecture at RMIT before opening his own practice 1968. His works were primarily residential and religious, with notable projects within Werribee including Former Convent of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart (HO128) and internal renovations of St. Andrews Church (HO59) (Built Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025).

Designed and built after Flynn's work on the Former Convent of St. Joseph and St. Andrews, Sumiya reflects similar modernist features, including a play on verticality, cream brick and dark brown accents, shallow brick buttressing, narrow windows, and flat roofs. The name was reputedly chosen by June Thompson, naming the house after the New York home of Barbara Hutton, the American Heiress to the FW Woolworth future. The name "Sumiya" is a Japanese word for a house that is on a corner, and the house was planned to maximise views of the Werribee River (Peter Andrew Barrett 2004, 183).



Figure 6. Aerial photograph of Werribee 1979, with Sumiya indicated with red arrow. *Source:* Landata 1979. Digitised Photograph. https://www.landata.vic.gov.au/tpc_from_landataonline.aspx



Figure 7. Photograph of Sumiya in 2008, looking southwest from the intersection of Wattamolla Avenue and Anembo Court. Source: Strong, Bill. 2008. Sumiya. Photograph. Flickr. https://www.flickr.com/photos/87791108@N00/2762683842

Sumiya has continued to be occupied as a private residence into the twenty-first century, with minimal alterations to its exterior including enclosure of the garage, new front window awnings, changes to the entry pathway to Anembo Court, and new landscaping including the removal of trees, new pathways and plantings (Figure 7).

Comparative Analysis

Sumiya is one of a few examples of modernist residential architecture within the City of Wyndham. While there was significant development in Werribee in the post-war era, as a result of subdivision and an increase in population, there are limited examples of dwellings that adopts the architectural refinement that is displayed at Sumiya. The place is however comparable to other examples of the architect Maurice John Flynn's work in Werribee including the following:

Convent of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart (HO128)

Sumiya is directly comparable to the Convent of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, Werribee, constructed in 1969-71, as an example the work of architect Maurice John Flynn. The Convent has a near identical architectural appearance to Sumiya, reflecting Flynn's distinct style and expression, characterised by the vertical pilasters, long vertical windows and tiled Neo-Mansard eave type detailing. Sumiya is a an example of Flynn's residential work, while the Convent is a civic in design and use, but expressing similar architectural detailing.

75 Princes Highway, Werribee

Sumiya is comparable to the property at 75 Princes Highway, Werribee as an example of Maurice John Flynn's residential work. Constructed in 1968, this dwelling adopts a similar rectangular profile, constructed of face brick with a skillion roof and integrated car port. While a comparable example of Maurice John Flynn's work, Sumiya is a more outstanding example designed to take in views of the river incorporating a side front door to enable greater appreciation of the vista, where this property adopts a simple street facing presentation. It is noted that this property is not included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Wyndham Planning Scheme and has not been proposed for any heritage controls.

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Images



Figure 8. Overview of east elevation, looking southwest from the intersection of Wattamolla Avenue and Anembo Court. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 9. Eastern most section of the north façade, including entrance. Looking south from Anembo Court. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 10. Overview of east elevation garage, looking southwest from Anembo Court. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 11. Overview of east elevation looking east from Anembo Court. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.