

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: TERRA DOME HOUSE

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: 14 Bell Street BALMORAL

STUDY NUMBER: 168

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: Balmoral

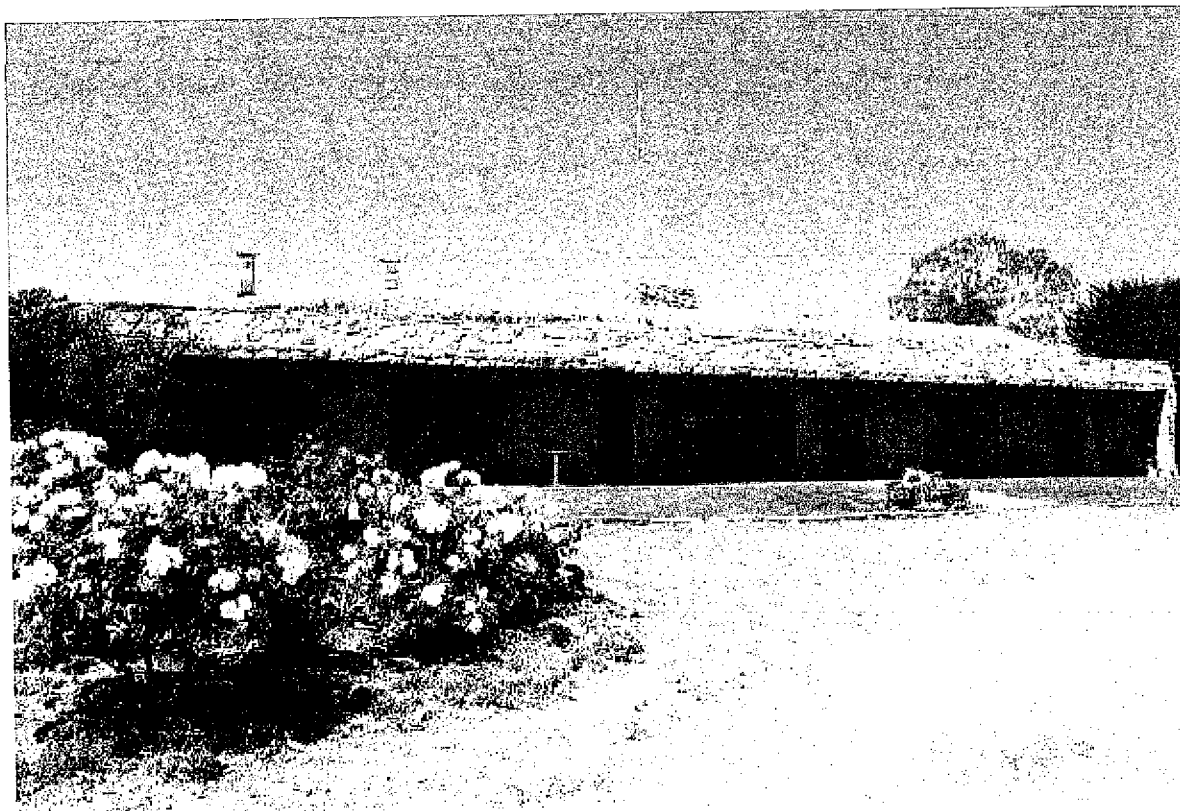
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: 5 & 6 **SECTION:** 9

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 388J B4; VicRoads 227 T3; located on the south-west side of Bell Street in the centre of the township of Balmoral

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Terra Dome, Bell St, Balmoral

Image Date: 30/11/2002

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the building including earthworks but excluding the interiors and all of the land.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The Terra Dome is a single storey semi-subterranean house oriented to the north to maximise sun penetration in winter. It includes a deep overhanging parapet across the façade to create shade in summer. The façade is faced with irregular stone veneer. The large plate glass windows have anodised aluminium frames. There is a central fireplace with a field-stone chimney in the centre of the house. The house is made up from domed, concrete modules poured in situ with special aluminium formwork and steel reinforcing. The whole is covered by earth.

HISTORY:

The land on which the Terradome is constructed, being Allotments 5 and 6 of Section 9 of the Township of Balmoral, was first purchased from the Crown on 29 December 1856 by T F Kelly.

The Terra Dome house was built in 1985 for the present owners, Jim and Lana Howman by Terra Dome Australia Pty Ltd. of Murtoa under licence from an American firm. The method of construction was a response to the oil crisis of the early 1970s and the subsequent rise in energy prices. The house at Balmoral was only the second example to be built in Australia and the first after that at Murtoa built by Mr. David Peitsch, the licensee. Some forty other houses have since been built in Victoria.

The construction uses a modular system of concrete sections, poured in situ, either 7.3m or 8.5m square in plan and capped by domes rising to 3.6m or 4.0m which are then covered by earth. The fenestration is aligned to the north to maximise sun penetration in the winter.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

- 3. Developing local, regional and national economies
- 3.14 Developing an Australia engineering and construction industry
- 3.14.1 Building to suit Australian conditions

- Theme 4: Building settlements, towns and cities
- 4.5 Making settlements to serve rural Australia

- Theme 8 Developing Australia's Cultural Life
- 8.10 Pursuing excellence in the arts and sciences
- 8.10.4 Designing and building fine buildings
- 8.10.5 Advancing knowledge in science and technology
- 8.12 Living in and around Australian homes.

CONDITION:

Excellent condition

INTEGRITY:

Excellent integrity

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The Terra Dome house, Bell Street, Balmoral was built in 1985 for the present owners, Jim and Lana Howman by Terra Dome Australia Pty Ltd. of Murtoa under licence from an American firm. The method of construction was a response to the oil crisis of the early 1970s and the subsequent rise in energy prices. This was only the second example to be built in Australia and the first after that at Murtoa built by Mr. David Peitsch, the licensee. Some forty other houses have since been built in Victoria. It is made up from domed, concrete modules poured in situ with special aluminium formwork and steel reinforcing. The whole is covered by earth. The other detailing, services and materials are relatively conventional. The building is in excellent condition and retains a very high degree of integrity.

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How is it significant?

The Terra Dome house, Bell Street, Balmoral is of architectural significance to the township of Balmoral and to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Terra Dome house, Bell Street, Balmoral is of architectural significance as a rare and relatively early example of design for harsh environmental conditions and as a response to the conservation of natural resources.

COMPARISON:

no comparative examples in study area?

ASSESSED BY: tfh

ASSESSMENT DATE:

22-Jan-02

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR Include in RNE Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
James Howman	Personal Communication	2003	