

Historic Heritage Evaluation

Kahn House
53 Trelissick Crescent, Ngaio



June 2020

Historic Heritage Evaluation

Prepared by	Ian Bowman and Elizabeth Cox on behalf of Wellington City Council
Author(s)	This report was prepared by Michael Kelly in 2011 and updated by Ian Bowman, architect and conservator, and Elizabeth Cox, historian, in 2020.
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Reviewed by	Danielle Campbell, Heritage Advisor Reuben Daubé, Heritage Advisor Moira Smith, Senior Heritage Advisor
Revisions	
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Executive Summary

Kahn House, 53 Trelissick Crescent, Ngaio, was evaluated because it was listed on the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga New Zealand Heritage List/ Rārangī Kōrero as a Category 1 Historic Place in 2005.

The Kahn House is a notable example of Modernist architecture, conceived by Austrian émigré architect Ernst Plischke and encouraged by its German-born owners Joachim and Gertrud Khan. The house, built in 1941, was architect Ernst Plischke's first Wellington design and displays the typical characteristics of the Modern Movement style, including open planning, intersecting rectangular forms, large areas of glass, and wide overhanging eaves.

Plischke is recognised as having a significant influence on the development of architecture and design in New Zealand, particularly through his work on private residences. Although the house was a statement of Plischke's design intent, it required willing and receptive clients to realise such an outcome. The Kahn family has occupied the house ever since, and it is largely unmodified.

The recognition of the house's value has grown considerably in recent decades. Kahn House is held in high public esteem within the architectural and design community and is an important part of New Zealand's architectural landscape.

The place is recommended for scheduling and requires a site visit to establish the extent of significant features including any landscaping or interior fixtures or fittings.

Summary Statement of Significance

- The Kahn House is a notable example of Modernist architecture, conceived by Austrian émigré architect Ernst Plischke and encouraged by its German-born owners Joachim and Gertrud Kahn. Built in 1941, it exhibits many qualities of international Modern Movement architectural style, including open planning, intersecting rectangular forms, large areas of glass, and wide overhanging eaves. Plischke's concern for orienting the house for sun and views is common with his designs, while his innovative adaptation of industrial sliding doors at the house was unique at the time.
- The Kahn House has significant national historic value for its association with European émigrés who came to New Zealand to escape Nazism, in this case both Austrian-born architect Ernst Plischke and his clients Joachim and Gertrud Kahn. Many of these refugees from Nazism had a significant impact on New Zealand art, design and architecture, in particular, the spread and promotion of Modernist principles.
- The house has significant technical value for the use of materials and innovative construction techniques employed by Plischke. Plischke eschewed the standard New Zealand stud frame construction and designed a 'wooden

skeleton', which, together with the flat roof, give the building a definable lightness. Likewise, his innovative use of an industrial style sliding door added a new element to domestic design.

- Kahn House is held in high public esteem within the architectural and design community and was entered onto the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero as a Category 1 Historic Place in 2005. It has featured in articles on Plischke's work in New Zealand and is an important part of New Zealand's architectural landscape.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to consider the Kahn House located at 53 Trelissick Crescent, Ngaio, against Wellington City Council's criteria for evaluation of historic heritage for inclusion in the District Plan heritage schedules.

The document is based on the report prepared by Michael Kelly in 2011, and was updated by Ian Bowman, architect and conservator and Elizabeth Cox, historian, on the specific instructions of our client, Wellington City Council. It is intended solely for the use by Wellington City Council in accordance with the agreed scope of work.

Scope

This report is a desktop study based on a previous report that has been updated, revised and assessed against the current GWRC and WCC heritage criteria and thresholds. The north elevation of the house was viewed from the road, and is clearly visible. The south of the building was also viewed from the road but was less visible because of dense vegetation. The interior of the house was not viewed.

Heritage Inventory Report

Site Detail	
Site address or address(es) and/or location	53 Trelissick Crescent
Property name	Kahn House
Other names	
Legal Description(s) and Record of Title identifier(s), Deeds register and/or Gate notice information	Lot 1 DP 8974 Certificate of title WN413/69 (Wellington Registry)
NZTM grid reference	Google grid reference (not converted) = 41°15'26.5"S 174°46'15.9"E -41.257355, 174.771076
District Plan Reference Number	None
Sites of significance to Māori	None
WCC Heritage Area	None
HNZPT listed	Historic Place 7633
HNZPT category	1
Archaeological site (Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, Section 6)	Unknown
New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) site record number(s)	
Constructed	1941-1942
Significant alterations or additions	None
Architect	Ernst Plischke
Builder	Herbert Bradshaw
Former uses	House
Current uses	House
Earthquake-prone Building Status at date of assessment	



Extent: WCC OneMap June 2020



Historical Summary

The rise of the Nazi Party in Germany in the 1930s had a profound effect half a world away in Wellington, New Zealand. In the late 1930s, thousands of German and Austrian refugees, mostly Jewish refugees, fled their country to escape almost certain persecution and ended up in various havens around the world. Several hundred of these refugees arrived in Wellington and they introduced progressive ideas and concepts into what was a conservative colonial city. Perhaps the most celebrated of these arrivals was Viennese architect Ernst Plischke, who was largely ignored for most of his 25 years in New Zealand but who came to be recognised as one of the country's greatest architectural practitioners.¹

Many of these immigrants went on to make their own contribution to their adopted country. Among them were the Jewish couple of Joachim (also known as Joachim-

¹ Note that this historical summary was prepared by Michael Kelly for WCC in 2011 and updated by the authors in 2020. Note that Plischke spelled his name "Plischke" without a 'c' while in New Zealand to make it easier for New Zealanders to spell.

Friedrich, b.1907) and Gertrude Kahn (née Lerchenthal, 1911-2005). Gertrude hailed from the Bavarian city of Augsburg and went to Munich University where she met Joachim, who was studying law. They married in 1932. The following year, Joachim graduated to the Bar but anti-Jewish legislation introduced by the Nazis meant he could not work as a lawyer. So Gertrude and Joachim moved across the border to France and spent a year running a grocery shop in Paris (with another married couple). They then moved briefly to Barcelona and three months later to London. Their son Claude was born in London in 1935.

As German Jewish immigrants, Joachim and Gertrude found it difficult to find work in London, so Joachim left for New Zealand in late 1935 or early 1936. Gertrude and Claude followed in October 1936. The next year, Gertrude's widowed father Robert Lerchenthal immigrated to New Zealand. He founded Ados Chemicals in Wellington, manufacturing adhesives and cosmetics, among other things. The Ados brand became very well known.

The Kahns made friends with other refugees in Wellington as well as local academic John Beaglehole. In 1938, Beaglehole mentioned Joachim in a letter, "Poor blighter...he is a Harvard as well as a German univ man, who quotes Greek as well as Latin French German & English, & now he has to help his father-in-law in some dud chemical factory at Miramar."² Beaglehole also noted that Joachim was a fine singer and actor, while the Kahns all spoke three languages and "make us feel very inferior and uncultured and raw."³ Joachim soon got work lecturing in political science at Victoria University.

Although not well off, the Kahns put what money they had towards a house to be built on land they purchased in December 1940 in Trelissick Crescent, high on the hills opposite Wadestown and overlooking the Kaiwharawhara Stream.⁴

The Kahns chose Ernst Plischke to design their house, which was to be the architect's first domestic design in Wellington and only the second domestic commission he received in New Zealand. The design was prepared in 1941, with work on construction completed later that year. Local builder Herbert Bradshaw was the main contractor and the cost was just over £2,100. The Kahns worked closely

² Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J. C. Beaglehole: New Zealand Scholar* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006), p.240. A footnote observes, "The factory proved far from dud. As Ados, it became a leading manufacturer of adhesives."

³ Ibid.

⁴ CT WN 413/69, Land Information New Zealand.



with Plischke to ensure that they had the kind of house they wanted. Plischke considered the house was 'Gertrud's design',⁵ although it seems likely that her husband also played a significant role in the planning.⁶ Prompted by Joachim's interest in acting, a raised platform or stage, still a singular major feature of the L-shaped living room/dining room, was included in the plan.⁷

The design was deliberately Modern in its conception, obvious examples being the floor to ceiling glazing, the flat roof, the positioning of the living spaces to take advantage of the sun, and the exterior sliding door, located on the north-west elevation and fixed to the outside of the house. This was the first time such a door – essentially an adaptation of the kind of door used on an industrial building – had been used on a Wellington house. Plischke was proud of its execution, to the extent that he brought Housing Department colleagues up to the house to look at it.⁸ The window and door glass has stood the test of time, with very few yielding to the wind.

The house was filled with furniture that was either brought to New Zealand from Germany or that Plischke designed specifically for the house. Many of these pieces still survive and are still in the house. A washhouse was installed beneath the house, while the garden was laid out and planted by Gertrud and Joachim.

Plischke clearly perceived how different the house was, and where it fitted in a changing awareness of New Zealand design. In a piece for *Design Review*, published in early 1950, he compared Kahn House with one he designed in the Austrian Alps for the painter Walter Gameraith, and built during 1933-34. Writing partly to promote an internationalisation of architecture, he attempted to demonstrate the aptness of the same sort of design in two different parts of the world.⁹

The house's lofty position, with views in most directions, soon led to gossip that it was being used by the Kahns for spying purposes.¹⁰ The Kahns, like their architect, were regarded as 'enemy aliens' by the New Zealand government, despite the fact that they had escaped the very tyranny that the country was fighting.

During or soon after the war, Gertrud's brother Hans Lerchenthal also arrived in New Zealand, but unfortunately died in a mountaineering accident in 1946. In 1952,

⁵ Linda Tyler, 'The Urban and Urbane: Ernst Plischke's Kahn House', in *Zeal and Crusade: the modern movement in Wellington*, ed. John Wilson (Christchurch, Te Waihora Press, 1996), p.80.

⁶ Son Claude Kahn was quoted in NZHPT registration report on Kahn House, prepared by Christine McCarthy in 2005, pp.8-9.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid. p.9.

⁹ Ernst Plischke, "Two Houses" in *Design Review* Volume 2, Issue 5 (Feb-March 1950): pp.93-94

http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Arc02_05DesR-t1-body-d2.html

¹⁰ Gertrud Kahn quoted in Tyler p.37.



having been unable to obtain a position that matched his professional training, Joachim returned to Germany.¹¹ Gertrud stayed behind with Claude. Robert Lerchenthal died at Akaroa in 1956, and Gertrud took over the running of the business. She was succeeded by her son Claude, who had been Ados' sales manager. Ados was eventually sold to CRC but the brand name continues.

A sweeping driveway was added in 1964, and there was just one significant change to the house a year later when a garage was built beneath the house, alongside what the original plans describe as a workshop and laundry.¹² Some bedroom windows have also been replaced.

Gertrud Kahn, née Lerchenthal, died in 2005 and the house was inherited by a family member.¹³ A newspaper article in 2011 noted that Claude Kahn had “lived in Kahn House nearly all his life” and noted that he had “no plans to ‘pull it down or disfigure it’.”¹⁴

In 2013, a thematic heritage study of Wellington city was undertaken by the Wellington City Council's Heritage team. Themes in the history of the city that have shaped it physically, culturally, socially and politically were identified. Plischke houses were identified by the thematic study as an example of places that represent “World War II and post-war refugees and migrants (e.g. Polish & British children, Greeks, other Europeans).”¹⁵ Using this study, a thematic heritage analysis of Council's scheduled heritage listings was undertaken in order to identify under-represented themes.

This analysis was continued in 2020 and heritage sites that had been proposed for listing in the District Plan were thematically coded. Kahn House was shortlisted for consideration for scheduling as a HNZPT Category 1 Historic Place and for its association with the theme of “World War II and post-war refugees and migrants

¹¹ Tim Beaglehole, *A Life of J. C. Beaglehole: New Zealand Scholar*, p.241.

¹² Kahn House Registration Report p.11. This report notes that “Beneath the main floor, at the level of the driveway is a laundry and a garage. The garage was added in March 1965, but there was always a washhouse down there. This is referred to in the original building specifications, and shown on the south-eastern and south-western elevations, but not in plan on the original drawings submitted to the city council”.

¹³ Much of this account of the Kahns' lives is derived from material provided by Claude Kahn to a website containing biographies and family images of a group of girls from Augsburg who attended Maria-Theresia-School.

www.datenmatrix.de/projekte/hdbg/spurensuche/content_en/content_biografien-liste-L.htm, accessed 9 June 2010. This same information has since been published to the genealogical website Geni <https://www.geni.com/people/Gertrude-Kahn/6000000006323726887>, accessed 19 April 2020.

¹⁴ Lane Nichols, ‘Capital building treasures ‘vulnerable,’ Stuff, 5 Feb 2011, accessed 2 May 2020. <http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/4620546/Capital-building-treasures-vulnerable>

¹⁵ *Thematic Heritage Study of Wellington*, (Wellington: Wellington City Council, 2013), 11.



(e.g. Polish & British children, Greeks, other Europeans).” The building was assessed against Wellington City Council’s criteria for evaluation of historic heritage for inclusion in the District Plan heritage schedules.

The current GWRC/ WCC threshold for inclusion in a District Plan is that a building must contribute to an understanding and appreciation of history and culture under one or more of the assessment criteria. These include historic, physical (archaeological, architectural, scientific, technological, integrity, age, group, townscape or surroundings), social, tangata whenua, rarity and representativeness.

Photographs and Images

Chronologies and Timelines

Timeline of events, including modifications

1941-42	House constructed
1964	Driveway built
1965	Garage constructed
n.d.	Windows on bedrooms on south corner changed from casements to a band of three single lights
n.d.	Some windows altered to aluminium frames

Occupation history

1941-ongoing	Owned by the Kahn family
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Biographies

Ernst Plischke

Ernst Plischke was born 26 June 1903 in Klosterneuberg, a suburb of Vienna, the elder and only son of Anton Plischke, an architect, and his wife, Emma Pflanzer. Plischke’s education included four years at the Kunstgewerbeschule (College for Arts and Crafts) and three years at the Akademie der bildenden Künste (Academy of Fine Arts), both in Vienna, and graduating in 1926. After a stint in New York, Plischke returned to Vienna, working as an architect and qualifying as an engineer

in 1932. Plischke was a member of the Austrian Werkbund, a 'movement for the promotion of high-quality design and craftsmanship'.

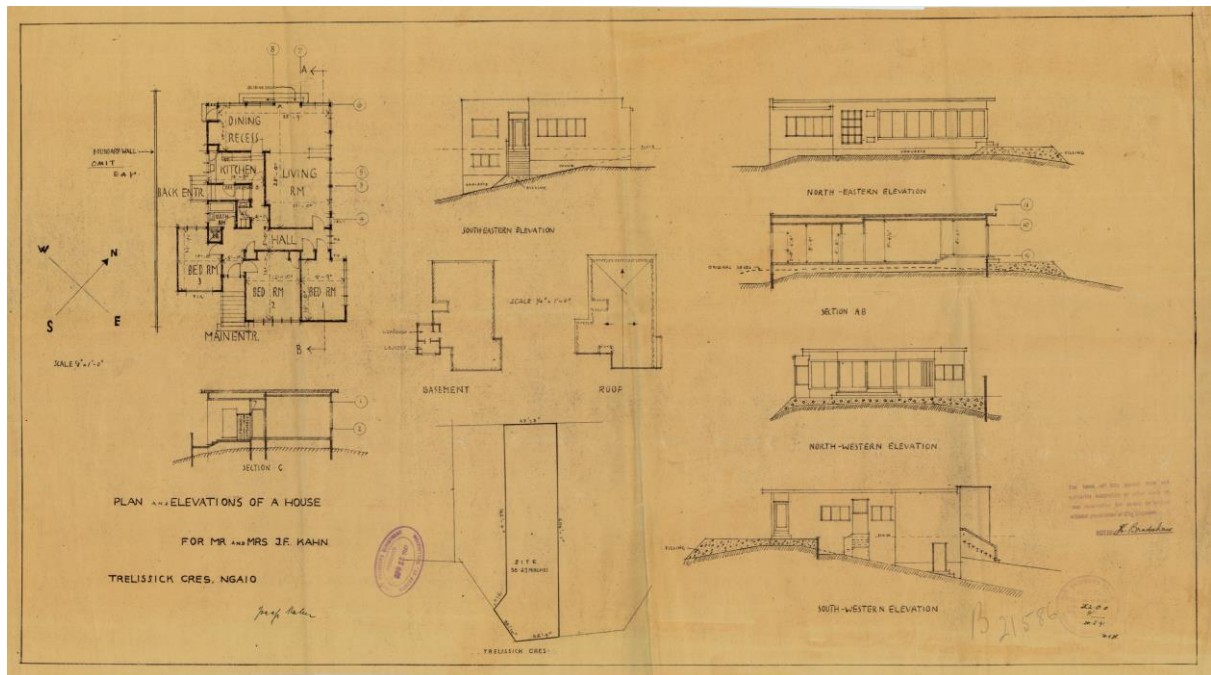
In 1935 Plischke married Anna Lang (nee Schwitzer). Vienna in the 1930s became inhospitable to the Plischkes, due to Ernst's membership of the socialist wing of Werkbund and Anne's Jewish faith. In increasingly hostile circumstances, the Plischkes emigrated to Wellington on 9 May 1939.

Plischke was employed by the Department of Housing Construction, where he worked with other European immigrants such as Fritz Feuer (Frederick Farrar) and Friedrich Neumann (Fred Newman). Working under the chief architect Gordon Wilson, they designed multiple-unit state housing located in Auckland and Wellington. A clash with Wilson saw Plischke become a community planner, designing Mangakino and Kaingaroa and community centres in the Hutt Valley and Auckland. In 1947 Plischke resigned from the Department, and went into work with Cedric Firth, finding success and acclaim designing private residences and churches.

Plischke became one of the foremost exponents of Modernist architecture in New Zealand. In 1963 Plischke returned to Vienna to take up the position of professor of architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts. He returned once to New Zealand in 1969 receive an honorary fellowship of the New Zealand Institute of Architects. Plischke died in Vienna in 1992.

WCC Architects Biography

Plans and Elevations



Building Permit, 1941, Ref: B21586, Wellington City Archives.

Physical Description

Setting – geographical / physical context

Kahn House sits on the top of a knoll above Trelissick Crescent. The house has views in most directions but from the road the house is difficult to see in its entirety. Access is via the original steps or a sweeping driveway that departs from the road some distance to the east of the house. The house has close neighbours, many of which were already standing when it was built. There are some mature trees and it has a garden of some substance on its rear (north-west) side.

Buildings or structures

The building's style is International Modernism, used by Plischke as a response to his clients and the site.¹⁶ However, the materials used are largely vernacular.

The house's foundation is concrete slab. The wall framing and cladding is timber, possibly matai, while the internal joinery is matai (floorboards), rimu and totara. The

¹⁶ Note that this summary was prepared by Michael Kelly for WCC in 2011.

roof is timber framed and the cladding is malthoid.

The building's footprint is, broadly, a rectangle, with the bedrooms at the southern end of the house extending beyond this outline. The flat roof extends out on the north-east elevation to maintain the line of the exterior wall of the bedroom. The arrangement of the internal spaces of the house dictates to some extent its external appearance. As Plischke placed the dining room and living room at the north-west end of the house, wrapped around the north corner, much of the west and north elevations are taken up by substantial glazing, some of it floor to ceiling, supported by post and beam, or 'skeletal', framing. The famous sliding door sits in the middle of the north-west elevation.

The remainder of the house is clad with weatherboards - tongue and groove or rusticated. The two bedrooms either side of the east corner had a bank of casement windows but these have since been replaced by a narrow, horizontal three light window. It is not known when these changes were made. To the west, above the garage, is the main (recessed) entrance and alongside it, the large single pane window of the third bedroom. On the south-west elevation is another entrance.

The main entrance is on the south-east elevation but the focus of attention is at the opposite end of the house. Because the house is small, the various spaces are arranged with some care. With the combined living room and dining room (including its elevated floor, which is directly accessed from the sliding door) taking up the north and over half the east elevation, the other spaces are arranged behind it. The hall, kitchen and bathroom separate the front of the house from the bedrooms, which are arranged, in a general sense, across the rear of the house. The multi-pane windows at the end of the hall have translucent glass. The kitchen, toilet, study and bathroom all feature purpose-designed built-in furniture or fixtures.

Changes

The only significant known changes are the introduction of a garage underneath the house in 1965-66, and the replacement of the casement windows on the bedroom above the garage (date unknown).

Materials

- Concrete foundations and floor slab
- Timber frame, cladding and joinery
- Malthoid roofing

Archaeological sites

Unknown.

Setting – surroundings /site description

The site includes the house along with gardens, mature trees, steps, driveway, and a garage. The surroundings of the house were not assessed in the c.2011 WCC report.

HNZPT Extent of List Entry

The HNZPT extent of list entry has been included in this report to ensure that Council has regard to the full extent of any entry on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rāanga Kōrero.

Registration includes the building, its fittings and fixtures (including the light fitting in the living room), and the land on which the building is placed, as shown on the certificate of title WN413/69.

Comparative Analysis Summary

There are a number of Plischke houses in Wellington, some scheduled by WCC on its district plan and by HNZPT.

The Lang House (81 Hatton Street, Karori; Heritage New Zealand Category I Historic Place and on WCC's district plan) was built in 1952 and is one of Plischke's best-known Wellington works. Like the Kahn House, the Hirschfeld House (49 Waiapu Road, Kelburn; Category 1 Historic Place) was designed by Plischke for fellow Jewish refugees, but whereas the Kahn House was Plischke's first Wellington house, the Hirschfeld House was designed towards the end of his time in New Zealand. The large Sutch-Smith house (Todman Street, Brooklyn; not currently listed by either organisation), built in three levels across a steep site, is considered by some as his best New Zealand house.

The Lang, Kahn, Hirschfeld and Sutch-Smith houses share many features and are characteristic of Plischke's domestic designs and the Modern Movement, including that they are rectilinear form, oriented to the sun, open plan and have a flat roof. Large doors open from the living space of the Lang House onto a flat area of lawn, which is similar to the arrangement of the Kahn House, although the latter has a sliding door. The Lang House is larger than the Kahn House and was designed with the possibility of additions/extensions in mind. The Hirschfeld House is two storeys, and does not have the raised 'stage' found in the Kahn House. The Sutch-Smith

House is much larger than the Hirschfeld House and considered more innovative in its design. The respective clients' budgets are likely to have played a major role in this. The sliding door innovation in the Kahn House can be seen as a direct precursor to the sliding doors in the Sutch-Smith House.

Integration with landscape and outdoor areas is another feature of these houses. Landscaping around the Lang and Hirschfeld Houses was designed by landscape architect Anna Plischke, whereas in the case of the Kahn house, the Kahns designed their own garden.

All four houses have had limited or sensitive alterations and extensions.

Evaluation Criteria

A. Historic values: these relate to the history of a place and how it demonstrates important historical themes, events, people or experiences.

(i) Themes: the place is associated with important themes in history or patterns of development.

The Kahn House has significant national historic value for its association with European émigrés who came to New Zealand to escape Nazism, in this case both Austrian-born architect Ernst Plischke and his clients Joachim and Gertrud Kahn. Many of these refugees from Nazism had a significant impact on New Zealand art, design and architecture, in particular, the spread and promotion of Modernist principles.

The Kahn House has significant historic values at a national level for its association with the important historical themes of European pre-WWII refugee émigrés and contributes to an understanding and appreciation of International Modern Movement principles applied to a New Zealand setting.

(ii) Events: the place has an association with an important event or events in local, regional or national history.

Not assessed.

(iii) People: the place is associated with the life or works of an individual, group or organisation that has made a significant contribution to the district, region or nation

Kahn House has significant historic value to the nation as part of the work of Ernst Plischke, an Austrian architect active in New Zealand between 1939 and 1963. Plischke is recognised as having a significant influence on the development of architecture and design in New Zealand, particularly through his work on private residences.

The Kahns left their own historical mark on the country as Gertrud's father Robert Lerchenthal established Ados Chemicals. The company, which was managed by Gertrud Kahn for many decades, became one of the best known names in the adhesives industry.

(iv) Social: the place is associated with everyday experiences from the past and contributes to our understanding of the culture and life of the district, region or nation.

Not assessed.

B. Physical values: these values relate to the physical evidence present.

(i) Archaeological: there is potential for archaeological investigation to contribute new or important information about the human history of the district, region or nation.

Not assessed.

(ii) Architectural: the place is notable for its style, design, form, scale, materials, ornamentation, period, craftsmanship or other architectural values

The Kahn House is a notable example of Modernist architecture, conceived by Austrian émigré architect Ernst Plischke and encouraged by its German-born

owners Joachim and Gertrud Kahn. It exhibits many qualities of international Modern Movement architectural style, including open planning, intersecting rectangular forms, large areas of glass, and wide overhanging eaves. Plischke's concern for orienting the house for sun and views is common with his designs, while his innovative adaptation of industrial sliding doors at the house was unique at the time.

The house's significance is not confined to its exterior; it has an unusual interior, designed to accommodate the hilltop site and containing unique features, such as the large, split level living / dining room with its unusual L-shaped configuration.

Overall, the house has significant architectural value at a national level.

(iii) Townscape: the place is strongly associated with other natural or cultural features in the landscape or townscape, and/or contributes to the heritage values of a wider townscape or landscape setting, and/or it is a landmark.

Not assessed.

(iv) Groups: The place is part of a group of buildings, structures, or sites that taken together have coherence because of their age, history, style, scale, materials, or use.

The house is part of a group of highly individual Modern Movement homes designed by Ernst Plischke throughout New Zealand, a number of which are statutorily recognised. When considered against other Plischke houses, it is his earliest work in the Wellington Region.

(v) Surroundings: the setting or context of the place contributes to an appreciation and understanding of its character, history and/or development.

The setting of the house contributes to the understanding of its character and is consistent with Plischke's approach to house design; the knoll on which the house was built took best advantage of the sun and view, while also achieving privacy.

(vi) Scientific: The area or place has the potential to provide scientific information about the history of the district or region

Not assessed.

(vii) Technological: the place provides evidence of the history of technological development; and/or demonstrates innovation or important methods of construction or design; and/or contains unusual construction materials.

The house has significant technical value for the use of materials and construction techniques employed by Plischke. Plischke eschewed the standard New Zealand stud frame construction and designed a 'wooden skeleton'. This allowed for large openings and uninterrupted expanses of glazing and, together with the flat roof, gives the building a definable lightness. Likewise, his innovative use of an industrial style sliding door added a new element to domestic design.

(viii) Integrity: the significant physical values of the place have been largely unmodified. This includes the retention of important modifications and/or additions from later periods.

The house has high levels of authenticity and integrity, has had very few substantial changes and is largely unmodified.

(ix) Age: the place is particularly old in the context of human occupation of the Wellington region.

The Kahn House has little heritage value for its age, as the house is not considered to be particularly old in the context of human occupation of the Wellington region.

C. Social values: these values relate to the meanings that a place has for a particular community or communities.

(i) Sentiment: the place has strong or special associations with a particular cultural group or community for spiritual, political, social, religious, ethnic, national, symbolic or commemorative reasons.

Not assessed.

- (ii) ***Recognition: the place is held in high public esteem for its historic heritage values, or its contribution to the sense of identity of a community, to the extent that if it was damaged or destroyed it would cause a sense of loss.***

The house's social value has grown considerably in recent decades, partly as a result of the attention paid to Plischke's career and influence on New Zealand. Kahn House is held in high public esteem within the architectural and design community and was entered onto the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero as a Category 1 Historic Place in 2005. It has featured in articles on Plischke's work in New Zealand and is an important part of New Zealand's architectural landscape.

- (iii) ***Sense of place/ continuity: the place provides evidence of cultural or historical continuity, or contributes to a sense of place for a community***

Not assessed.

- D. Tangata whenua values: the place is sacred or important to Māori for spiritual, cultural or historical reasons.***

Not assessed.

- E. Rarity: the place is unique or rare within the district or region.***

The house is significant as the first house in Wellington design by Plischke, one which he considered was the first modern house in the city. Although there are over 40 of Plischke's house designs throughout New Zealand, most of which are in Wellington, Plischke's house designs are rare in terms of an early use of the Modern Movement style, excellence of design and response to the site and landscape.

- F. Representativeness: the place is a good example of its type, era or class it represents.***

The house design is a good representative example of the work of internationally acclaimed architect Ernst Plischke.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Kahn House be listed in the District Plan as it reaches the threshold for eligibility as a Historic Heritage Building, having significant historic, physical and social heritage values.

Extent of the Place

Subject to confirmation by a site visit, the recommendation is that the extent of the place should include the items identified by HNZPT. These are the building, its fittings and fixtures (including the light fitting in the living room), and the land on which the building is placed, as shown on the certificate of title WN413/69.

Non-heritage fabric / exclusions

None.

Sources and References

Land Information New Zealand
CT WN 413/69

Wellington City Archives
Building Permits: B21586, 1941; Garage: C21930, 1967

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Comparative Analysis



Appendix 2 Wellington Thematic Heritage Study 2013

Appendix 1 Comparative Analysis

Houses designed by Ernst Plischke in Wellington				
Place name	Address/ location/ NZTM	Heritage Listing or recognition of significance	Photographs	Analysis

<p>Hirschfeld House</p>	<p>49 Waiapu Road, Kelburn</p>	<p>HNZPT Category I Historic Place</p>	 <p>Lower entrance to Hirschfeld House, 2011. Michael Kelly.</p>	<p>Like the Kahn House, the Hirschfeld House was designed by Ernst Plischke for fellow Jewish refugees (Sigmund and Gisella Hirschfeld). While the Kahn House was Plischke's first Wellington house, the Hirschfeld House was designed towards the end of his time in New Zealand. Constructed between 1959-60, like the Kahn house, the Hirschfeld House's design has many features associated with Plischke and the Modern Movement, including its orientation to the sun, responsiveness to the site, rectilinear form, a flat roof and open planning in the living and dining areas. Unlike the Kahn House, however, the Hirschfeld House is two-storey, with a covered entranceway on the ground floor, along with two rooms and a stairwell. It does not have the unique raised 'stage' found in the Kahn House and while there is an indoor/outdoor relationship, there is no large sliding door as in the Kahn House. The Hirschfeld House is highly integrated into its surroundings with the landscaping designed by Anna Plischke, Ernst Plischke's landscape architect wife. Both houses remain largely unaltered.</p>
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<p>Lang House</p>	<p>81 Hatton Street, Karori</p>	<p>HNZPT Category I Historic Place, WCC DP Heritage Building</p>	<div data-bbox="1032 161 1420 475"> </div> <div data-bbox="1025 488 1429 560"> <p>Photographed by John Ashton, 1962. ATL: 1/2-199941-F.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1032 600 1413 956"> </div> <div data-bbox="1025 968 1473 1040"> <p>Photographed by Ken Downie, date unknown. Ministry for Culture & Heritage.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1032 1082 1420 1345"> </div> <div data-bbox="1025 1358 1458 1430"> <p>Photographed by Charles Collins, 2015. Wellington City Council.</p> </div>	<p>The Lang House was built in 1952 and is one of Ernst Plischke's best-known Wellington works. Designed for Henry, Plischke's step-son who became a prominent public servant, and Octavia (Tup) Lang, many of its features are characteristic of Plischke's domestic designs and the Modern Movement. Like the Kahn House, it has a rectilinear form, is orientated to the sun and is timber framed with a weatherboard exterior. Both houses are open plan, feature expanses of glazing and a flat roof. Large doors open from the living space of the Lang House onto a flat area of lawn, which is similar to the arrangement of the Kahn House, although the latter has a sliding door. The Lang House is larger than the Kahn House and was designed with the possibility of additions/extensions in mind. Landscaping around the Lang House was designed by landscape architect Anna Plischke to integrate it with its surroundings. Sensitive extensions were made to the Lang House in the 1970s and further alterations more recently, but much of the original layout remains.</p>
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<p>Sutch-Smith House</p>	<p>Todman Street, Brooklyn</p>	<p>Featured in <i>Long Live the Modern: New Zealand's New Architecture, 1904–1984</i>; NZIA Resene Award for Enduring Architecture, 2004</p>	 <p>Photographed by John Ashton, 1962. ATL: 1/2-199947-F</p>  <p>Entrance hall of Sutch-Smith House photographed by Paul McCredie, date unknown. Noted.co.nz.</p>	<p>The Sutch-Smith House was built in 1953 for public servant William (Bill) Sutch and lawyer Shirley Smith. It is another of Plischke's well-known Wellington houses and considered by some as his best New Zealand house. Built in three levels across its steep site, like the Kahn House it is orientated to the sun and to the view across the city to Wellington harbour. It features a glazed entry hall that links the two wings of the house, a bluestone fireplace and outdoor terrace and a sandstone internal courtyard. Julia Gatley has commented that "despite the use of natural stones, the flush weatherboards and steel joinery for the large windows and sliding doors give this house a machine aesthetic belying its wooden construction."¹⁷ The house was sensitively restored in 2002 and won a New Zealand Institute of Architects Resene Award for Enduring Architecture in 2004. While the house shares similarities with the Kahn House and other Plischke houses in terms of its expression of Plischke's international</p>
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¹⁷ Gatley, Julia. 'Sutch House (also known as Sutch-Smith House)', *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand's New Architecture 1904-1984*, pp.74-75.



				<p>Modern Movement principles, such as open plan, flat roof, large glazed areas, integration with landscape and outdoor areas that function like another room of the house, the Sutch-Smith House is much larger than the Kahn House and considered more innovative in its design. The respective clients' budgets are likely to have played a major role in this as the Kahn family were relatively new immigrants to New Zealand with a refugee background, whereas Sutch and Smith had well-established professional careers. However, the sliding door innovation in the Kahn House can be seen as a direct precursor to the sliding doors in the Sutch-Smith House.</p>
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Appendix 2 Wellington Thematic Heritage Study 2013

Refer to the Wellington Thematic Heritage Study 2013

<https://wellington.govt.nz/~media/services/community-and-culture/heritage/files/thematic-heritage-study.pdf>

	Select the themes & subthemes which apply to the place	Yes / some (add explanation)
A1.7	WWII and post-war refugees and migrants (e.g. Polish, British children, Greeks, other Europeans)	
A1.7A	Austrian Architecturally designed buildings	Yes