

## SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

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### REGISTER ENTRY

Entry in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

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**NAME:** Bruceden Court (flats)

**PLACE NO.:** 26582

**ADDRESS:** Karna Country

2A Deepdene Avenue, Westbourne Park

CT 5861/232 UN 1; CT 5861/233 UN 2; CT 5861/234 UN 3; CT 5861/235 UN 4; CT 5861/236 UN 5; CT 5861/237 UN 6; CT 5861/238 UN 7; CT 5861/239 UN 8; CT 5861/240 UN 9; CT 5861/241 UN 10; CT 5861/242 CP SP 14467 Hundred of Adelaide

### STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Bruceden Court (flats), constructed in 1940-1941, demonstrates an important evolution in the way South Australians lived during the twentieth century by providing the middle class with a popular alternative to conventional detached housing. Bruceden Court (flats) possesses many of the key features of purpose-built interwar flats and was one of the last such developments to be built before the Second World War halted the construction of dwellings. As such, Bruceden Court (flats) demonstrates the increasing sophistication of purpose-built interwar flat design over time and is an uncommon and high-quality example of this new, modern way of living. Designed by architect, Gordon Beaumont Smith, Bruceden Court (flats) is an outstanding example of interwar streamlined architecture articulating many key attributes of the style. The design also demonstrates a high degree of aesthetic accomplishment that responded directly to public concerns about flats. The asymmetrical massing and variation of elements and features creates the impression of a single, large residence, allowing Bruceden Court (flats) to conform to its residential context more successfully than many other examples.

## **RELEVANT CRITERIA (under section 16 of the Heritage Places Act 1993)**

### ***(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history***

In the early twentieth century modern flat living emerged as an entirely new lifestyle in South Australia, albeit one predominantly for the very wealthy. The first bespoke multistorey flat complex was Dwelling – Ruthven Mansions (SHP 13368), constructed in the City of Adelaide in two stages, 1912 and 1915. The disruptive impacts of the First World War subsequently halted the further construction of flats and only a few bespoke flats were built before the 1930s. Purpose-built flats offered occupants a convenient, low-maintenance lifestyle and were especially attractive to single, middle-class people who did not have time to care for a detached house and garden.

Bruceden Court (flats) demonstrates many of the new modern ways of living associated with purpose-built interwar flats that emerged in line with social change and came to be within the reach of middle-income earners during the interwar period. It also illustrates the reshaping of the suburbs that began to take place during that time due to urban infill, only to be halted by the Second World War. Located near several public transport options and on a main road, Bruceden Court (flats) responded to the demand for housing in a popular area, while the high quality of the design exemplifies the ways in which interwar flats increased the number of occupants who could be housed on a suburban block while simultaneously improving the quality of life for those occupants.

Built near the end of the heyday of purpose-built interwar flats, Bruceden Court (flats) represents an important evolution in the way South Australians lived in the twentieth century. As one of the last flat developments built before the Second World War brought an end to the construction of new dwellings, Bruceden Court (flats) demonstrates a culmination in the increasing design sophistication of purpose-built interwar flats over time. Bruceden Court (flats) demonstrates an unusually high level of integrity, notably retaining features which typically do not survive, such as fences, an extensive garage, laundry and incinerator block and some original bathroom features.

### ***(b) it has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance***

Purpose-built flats emerged during the interwar period as the first popular alternative to conventional detached housing for middle income earners. Purpose-built flats also brought profitable real estate investment within reach of the middle classes and were predominantly built as infill development to satisfy demand for modern accommodation on public transport routes and/or in desirable residential areas such as seaside suburbs. At least 50 purpose-built flat

developments were built in metropolitan Adelaide and regional centres between 1912 and 1942, when the Second World War halted the construction of dwellings. It is the introduction of this new modern way of living that is considered to be of cultural significance to South Australia.

With the passage of time purpose-built interwar flats have become increasingly uncommon, as a result of their positioning on transport corridors and in seaside suburbs. These popular sites are now again prime locations for redevelopment and urban densification. Owing to such pressures, only 35 purpose-built interwar flats are known to remain. Of these 35, Brucceden Court (flats) is one of only a few that remains highly intact, including rare features such as original bathroom fitouts in at least two of the flats and incinerator facilities. Brucceden Court (flats) is thus an uncommon example of modern flat living in South Australia.

***(d) it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of place of cultural significance***

Brucceden Court (flats) is associated with the class of place known as purpose-built interwar flats.

Flats emerged during the interwar period as an alternative to conventional detached housing. Hundreds and possibly thousands of existing homes were converted into flats during the interwar period to satisfy demand. However, unlike converted flats, which were typically constrained by the envelope of the existing buildings they were created from, the plan, form, features and fittings of purpose-built flats directly addressed the values, aspirations and lifestyles associated with modern flat living.

To be considered an exceptional example of a class, the place must display a large number or range of characteristics that are typical of the class, at a higher quality, intactness or historical relevance than are typical of places of the class. Brucceden Court (flats) demonstrates many of the principal characteristics of the class 'purpose-built interwar flats' including:

- ten flats arranged in a multi-storey block to minimise the building footprint,
- design features to secure privacy, including acoustic measures, spatial arrangement of spaces and views and features to disperse circulation, including wing walls to protect entrances and balconies; and rear exits and stairs,
- design features to facilitate access to natural light and ensure adequate ventilation, such as sleepouts and arrangement of windows, and provision of openable windows and balconies,
- design features to mitigate domestic labour and enhance convenience, such as built-in furniture,

- provision for sheltered car parking, in this case a large seven-bay garage and associated vehicle access, including a driveway passing through the main block, reflecting rising private vehicle ownership,
- communal facilities such as laundries, a car wash-down pad, and an incinerator with chimney,
- architectural expression emphasising modernity, in this case, in an interwar streamlined style,
- amenity through outstanding visual conformity to surrounding residential context through features such as a hipped, terracotta-tile roof and setback from the street, and a varied, asymmetrical composition employed to suggest a single large residence, rather than a block of individually recognisable flats.

Compared to other surviving purpose-built interwar flats, Bruceden Court (flats) is unusually intact, retaining most principal characteristics of the class, while in many similar places, key elements, notably original communal facilities and features such as timber rear stairs, have been lost over time. Changes that have occurred, such as new kitchen and some new bathroom fitouts, have not diminished the place's ability to demonstrate the principal characteristics of the class.

***(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics***

Bruceden Court (flats) is an outstanding example of interwar streamlined architecture, demonstrating a high degree of aesthetic accomplishment. Gordon Beaumont Smith's design successfully responded to public concerns about flats by using asymmetrical massing and variation of elements and features to create the impression of a single, large residence rather than a building subdivided into discrete living units. This approach allowed Bruceden Court (flats) to conform to its residential context more successfully than many other examples.

Bruceden Court (flats) articulates many key attributes of interwar streamlined architecture, namely:

- bold massing of simple geometric shapes,
- clean lines, rounded corners and minimal decoration,
- plain surfaces, light-toned cement (now painted) and face brick,
- horizontal emphasis, achieved through recessed horizontal bands, balconies, and flat-roofed verandahs, and long balconies,
- contrasting vertical relief, expressed through arrangement of chimney 'towers' expressed in relief,
- cantilevered elements, in this instance balconies and balcony hoods,
- corner windows,
- hipped, Marseille terracotta-tiled roofs,

- architecturally integrated lettering, in this instance 'Bruce den Court' and 'Bruce den House.'

Bruce den Court (flats) also demonstrates a high degree of technical accomplishment and attention to detail in construction, including high quality bricklaying and pointing, rendering and joinery.

Architecturally, Bruce den Court (flats) is highly intact. Modifications such as replacement of kitchens and some bathroom fitouts have not compromised the integrity of the building's architectural expression, nor diminished its ability to illustrate the main attributes of interwar streamlined architecture.

# SITE PLAN

**Bruceden Court (flats)**

**PLACE NO.: 26582**

**2A Deepdene Avenue, Westbourne Park**



**Bruceden Court (flats) (CT 5861/232 UN 1; CT 5861/233 UN 2; CT 5861/234 UN 3; CT 5861/235 UN 4; CT 5861/236 UN 5; CT 5861/237 UN 6; CT 5861/238 UN 7; CT 5861/239 UN 8; CT 5861/240 UN 9; CT 5861/241 UN 10; CT 5861/242 CP SP 14467 Hundred of Adelaide)**

Elements of heritage significance include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Block of flats,
- Laundry, garage and incinerator block and incinerator,
- Original exterior materials, including brick, terracotta tile and terrazzo,
- Original layout of internal rooms,
- Original bathroom fitouts,
- Rear staircases and sleepouts,
- Original interior details, fittings and finishes where remaining, including fireplaces, built-in furniture, picture rails, cornices, skirtings, architraves, floorboards and doors.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Non-original kitchen and bathroom fitouts,
- Non-original interior paint and floor coverings,
- Reverse-cycle air conditioning units, hot water services, and television aerials,
- Trees, shrubs and landscaping,
- Garage roller doors,
- New shed on southern elevation of main block,
- Non-original fences.

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## LEGEND

-  Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)
-  Outline of Elements of Significance for State Heritage Place

Summary of State Heritage Place: 26582 6 of 21

Provisionally entered by the South Australian Heritage Council on 23 May 2024

Confirmed by the South Australian Heritage Council on 14 November 2024

## COMMENTARY ON THE LISTING

### Description and notes with respect to a place entered in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

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#### Physical Description

Bruceden Court (flats) is a two-storey block of brick and reinforced concrete flats, built on a suburban corner allotment. The block of flats forms an irregular, shallow U-shape, and is covered by tiled, hipped roofs. An associated laundry, garage and incinerator block is located at the rear of the allotment behind the flats and encloses one side of an internal service courtyard.

The block of flats comprises ten flats, namely three duplex (two-storey) flats fronting Cross Road, four small simplex (single-storey) flats facing Deepdene Avenue, a further two large simplex flats also facing Deepdene Avenue, and a small caretaker's flat, located on the ground floor between the large and small simplex flats. A schedule of rooms comprising the flats is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1: Bruceden Court (flats) room schedule**

*Flats 1, 2 and 3 (duplex)*

- |                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| • Porch                | • Main bedroom    |
| • Entry vestibule      | • Second bedroom  |
| • Under stairs storage | • Bathroom        |
| • Downstairs toilet    | • Upstairs toilet |
| • Lounge               | • Linen press     |
| • Dining               | • Sleepout        |
| • Kitchen              |                   |

*Flats 4, 5, 6 and 8 (simplex)*

- |                   |                                       |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Porch           | • Combined bathroom and toilet        |
| • Entry vestibule | • Linen press                         |
| • Lounge          | • Front balcony (upstairs flats only) |
| • Kitchen         | • Sleepout                            |
| • Bedroom         |                                       |

*Flat 7 (former caretaker's flat)*

- |           |                   |
|-----------|-------------------|
| • Lounge  | • Kitchen         |
| • Bedroom | • Bathroom/toilet |

*Flats 9 and 10 (simplex)*

- |                   |                                      |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Porch           | • Bathroom                           |
| • Entry vestibule | • Toilet                             |
| • Lounge          | • Linen press                        |
| • Dining          | • Front balcony (upstairs flat only) |
| • Kitchen         | • Sleepout                           |
| • Main bedroom    |                                      |
| • Second bedroom  |                                      |

The laundry, garage and incinerator block comprises five laundry rooms; seven garage bays; an incinerator bay and incinerator with associated brick chimney; a toilet; and is covered by flat and lean-to roofs. A concrete car wash-down pad stands adjacent.

A driveway passes through the block on the Deepdene Avenue side, with the bedroom of a simplex flat located overhead forming a bridge. An attached single-car garage is located at the southern end of the block.

Additional exterior features include:

- open eaves,
- mixed glazed face brick base courses with rowlock course (bricks laid on side with header exposed) in relief,
- flush-rendered street elevations,
- recessed parallel bands to upstairs street elevations,
- timber double-hung sash window frames with integrated flyscreens and horizontal muntins,
- corner windows,
- timber glazed and half-glazed doors with horizontal mullions,
- cantilevered balconies and balcony hoods on Deepdene Avenue elevation,
- welded-steel balcony railings with decorative scroll motif in stanchions,
- steel tube drain spouts to balconies,
- sconce light fittings (original) associated with upstairs balconies,
- straight and curved face brick wing walls associated with balconies and entries, with horizontally-raked pointing,
- flat-roofed verandahs on Cross Road elevation, supported by welded-steel stanchions featuring decorative scroll motif,
- brick rowlock course below still-level upstairs on street elevations,
- feature windows upstairs on Cross Road elevation, with curved Roman brick reveals and corner reveals, with horizontally-raked pointing,
- decorative pressed-cement spandrel on Cross Road elevation between feature windows, featuring stylised fern motif,
- porthole windows with brick settings,
- terrazzo porches with 'BC' monogram,
- timber letter boxes,
- built-in planters on Cross Road elevation,
- chimneys with face brick caps,
- 'Bruceden Court' and 'Bruceden House' lettering on street elevations,
- two-storey timber-framed sleepout structures and staircases,
- louvred windows to sleepouts.
- louvre windows to laundry rooms,
- low brick fences (original) with integrated earthenware letterboxes on Deepdene Avenue,



- pier extensions to original fence and powder-coated aluminium fence on Cross Road side, returned along Deepdene Avenue (not original fabric),
- diagonal firing marks to stamped face brick.

Typical interior features include:

- welded steel and timber stair balustrades,
- fireplaces,
- skirtings, architraves and picture rails,
- ceilings and cornices,
- glazed and fielded panel plywood doors and door fittings,
- floorboards,
- original bathroom fitouts (full original fitouts in Units 1 and 3, partial original fitout in Unit 2 and Unit 10),

### **Elements of Significance:**

Elements of heritage significance include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Block of flats,
- Laundry, garage and incinerator block and incinerator,
- Original exterior materials, including brick, terracotta tile and terrazzo,
- Original layout of internal rooms,
- Original bathroom fitouts,
- Rear staircases and sleepouts,
- Original interior details, fittings and finishes where remaining, including fireplaces, built-in furniture, picture rails, cornices, skirtings, architraves, floorboards and doors.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Non-original kitchen and bathroom fitouts,
- Non-original interior paint and floor coverings,
- Reverse-cycle air conditioning units, hot water services, and television aerials,
- Trees, shrubs and landscaping,
- Garage roller doors,
- New shed on southern elevation of main block,
- Non-original fences.

## History of the Place

*Please refer to the Assessment Report for the full history.*



**Bruceden Court (flats), c.1941, showing front elevation of duplex (two-storey) flats**

Source: David Beaumont/University of South Australia Architecture Museum

In September 1940, George Levant, an associate director of Myer Emporium (S.A.) Ltd,<sup>1</sup> acquired a portion of Section 73 in the Hundred of Adelaide, on the corner of Napier Terrace (now Cross Road) and Deepdene Avenue, Westbourne Park.<sup>2</sup> Around this time, Levant commissioned Adelaide architect Gordon Beaumont Smith to design a two-storey block of flats on his portion of Section 73. Levant named the flats 'Bruceden Court.' The origin of the name 'Bruceden' is not known.

Bruceden Court (flats) comprises ten flats, namely three duplex (two-storey) flats fronting Cross Road, four small simplex (single-storey) flats facing Deepdene Avenue, a further two large simplex flats also facing Deepdene Avenue at the southern end of the block, and a small caretaker's flat, integrated into the main block on the ground floor between the large and small simplex flats. A large, combined laundry, garage and incinerator block was located on the western side of the allotment, creating an internal courtyard. Unusually, a driveway passed through the main block on the Deepdene Avenue side, with the bedroom of a simplex flat located overhead forming a bridge.

Smith used asymmetrical massing and variation of design elements, such as windows, verandahs and balconies, to create the impression of a single, large residence when viewed from the street, rather than a block of flats subdivided into externally recognisable living units. This approach helped Bruceden Court (flats) conform to its

residential context and reflects the increasing sophistication in the design of purpose-built flats over time.

Smith paid careful attention to the privacy of flat occupants through such measures as acoustic isolation of individual flats; wing walls provided adjacent to entries and dividing balconies to protect entrances; and the careful arrangement of windows to avoid facing windows.

With the exception of the small caretaker's flat, which comprised only four rooms, each flat was planned like 'an individual house', with main rooms accessed from a central vestibule, meaning it was not necessary in most cases to pass through one room to reach another. Each flat featured a small room with extensive fenestration that could serve as either a 'sunroom' or a sleepout, while the duplex flats included downstairs 'powder rooms' containing a second toilet. The flats also featured an unusually extensive suite of amenities including:

- glass doors to porch,
- sliding doors between living and dining rooms in larger flats,
- 'Modern' chrome, bakelite or cut and moulded glass light fittings,
- built-in linen press,
- under-stairs storage in duplex flats,
- 'Instantaneous' gas hot water system to bathroom and kitchen,
- electric refrigerator,
- gas stove 'coloured green and cream',
- kitchen hood and flue,
- stainless steel sink,
- breakfast nook with built-in table,
- 'Wide variety' of kitchen cupboards,
- trade hatches in kitchens,
- fully-tiled bathroom with recessed soap holders,
- separate shower compartment with bracket light,
- chromium-plated bathroom fittings,
- flush-mounted medicine cabinet.<sup>3</sup>

The laundry, garage and incinerator block featured five laundry rooms, each fitted with gas-fired copper boilers fed from roof mounted rainwater tanks; seven garage bays; an adjacent concrete 'wash-down' pad for cleaning cars; and a tall brick chimney for carrying incinerator smoke well clear of the flats. An additional single-bay garage building was attached to the southern end of the main building.

Bruceden Court (flats) was built by the Architectural Homes Company (AHC),<sup>4</sup> a design and building firm business begun by Adelaide architect Ronald Leslie (Ron) Golding in 1935, which specialised in purpose-built flats. Notably, Golding designed and built both Everard Court (flats) (SHP 26529) and Shandon (flats) (SHP 26560). Additional firms and suppliers associated with Bruceden Court (flats) include:

- Hurren, Langman and James: consulting engineers,<sup>5</sup>
- Geo. Soulsby: carpentry,
- West Croydon Joinery Ltd: timber mouldings, flooring, roofing timber, joinery, supplied and fixed,
- Wunderlich Limited: supply and erection, tiled roofs,
- J. E. Gill & Sons: electrical installation,
- Ceilings Ltd: fibrous plaster ceilings,
- Fowler's Sanitaryware: basins and toilet bowls,
- Wallis Refrigeration and Service: manufacture 'Arcticaire' refrigerators.<sup>6</sup>

Bruceden Court (flats) was advertised for lease during May 1941 and completed soon afterwards. On 31 May, a part-page advertising feature on Bruceden Court (flats) appeared in the *Adelaide Mail* newspaper. This feature noted the location of Bruceden Court (flats), facilitating 'easy access' to 'trains, trams and busses' including the nearby Unley Park Railway Station and both the Colonel Light Gardens and Hyde Park tram routes, all within easy walking distance; the 'charm of facing tree-lined avenues'; and 'an excellent view of the hills'.



**Bruceden Court (flats), c.1941, showing front elevation of simplex (single-storey) flats**

Source: David Beaumont/University of South Australia Architecture Museum



**Bruceden Court (flats)**

Source: DEW Files, 22 March 2024

## **Chronology**

### **Year Event**

**1940** 17 September, George Levant acquires a portion of Section 73 in the Hundred of Adelaide on the corner of Napier Terrace (now Cross Road) and Deepdene Avenue, Westbourne Park.

George Levant commissions Adelaide architect Gordon Beaumont Smith to design Bruceden Court (flats).

**1941** **May, Bruceden Court (flats) is advertised for lease, then completed soon afterwards.**

**2005** **22 September, Bruceden Court (flats) is listed as a Local Heritage Place.**

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**Archival**

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CT 1440/35



## SITE DETAILS

**Bruceden Court (flats)**

**PLACE NO.: 26582**

**2A Deepdene Avenue Westbourne Park**

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<b>DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:</b>	Two-storey block of brick and reinforced concrete flats and single-storey block containing laundry, garage and incinerator.
<b>DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:</b>	1940-1941
<b>REGISTER STATUS:</b>	Identified 8 December 2022 Provisionally entered 23 May 2024 Confirmed 14 November 2024
<b>LOCAL HERITAGE STATUS:</b>	Listed 22 September 2005
<b>CURRENT USE:</b>	Flats 1941-Present
<b>ARCHITECT:</b>	Gordon Beaumont Smith 1940-1941
<b>BUILDER:</b>	Ron Golding, Architectural Homes Company 1940-1941
<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:</b>	City of Mitcham
<b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>Street No.:</b> 2A <b>Street Name:</b> Deepdene Avenue <b>Town/Suburb:</b> Westbourne Park <b>Post Code:</b> 5041
<b>LAND DESCRIPTION:</b>	<b>Title</b> CT 5861/232 UN 1; CT 5861/233 UN 2; <b>Reference:</b> CT 5861/234 UN 3; CT 5861/235 UN 4; CT 5861/236 UN 5; CT 5861/237 UN 6; CT 5861/238 UN 7; CT 5861/239 UN 8; CT 5861/240 UN 9; CT 5861/241 UN 10; CT 5861/242 CP SP 14467 <b>Hundred:</b> Hundred of Adelaide

## PHOTOS

**Bruceden Court (flats)**

**PLACE NO.: 26582**

**2A Deepdene Avenue Westbourne Park**

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All images in this section are from DEW Files and were taken on 22 March 2024, unless otherwise indicated.



**Bruceden Court, Cross Road elevation**



**Rear elevations, with garage doors on left**

## PHOTOS

**Bruceden Court (flats)**

**PLACE NO.: 26582**

**2A Deepdene Avenue Westbourne Park**

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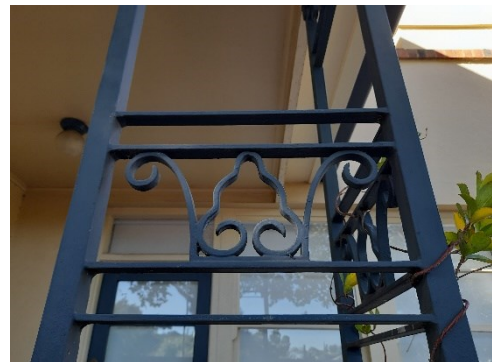
**Driveway through main block**



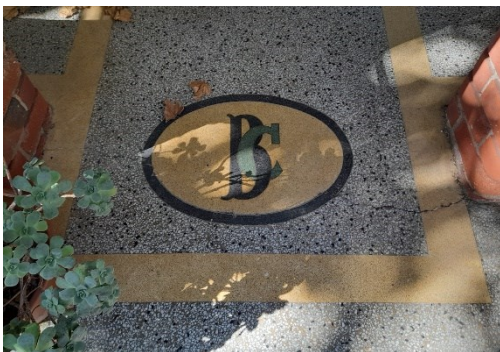
**Detail of Cross Road elevation**



**Balcony detail on Deepdene Avenue elevation**



**Wrought steel decoration**



**Terrazzo detail**



**Entry with curved brick wing wall**

## PHOTOS

**Bruceden Court (flats)**

**PLACE NO.: 26582**

**2A Deepdene Avenue Westbourne Park**

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**Typical rear staircase structure**



**Sleepout structure**



**Laundry, garage and incinerator block,  
note chimney at eastern end**



**Laundry doors**



**Incinerator furnace and ashpan doors**



**Letterboxes**

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<sup>1</sup> "Company Meeting, Myer Emporium (S.A.) Ltd., Increase In Profit Of 15,037" in *Advertiser* 26 November 1938 p. 21

<sup>2</sup> CT 1440/35

<sup>3</sup> "Comfort, Charm, Homeliness Given, Bruceden Court Flats Have Many Modern Advantages" in *Mail* 31 May 1941 p. 26

<sup>4</sup> Giles Walkley, 'Adelaide's Supreme Flats' in *Spirit of Progress* (Summer 2016) p. 25

<sup>5</sup> Proposed Residential Flats – Napier Tce – Unley Park for G. Levant Esq. Structural Details, November 1940, S247/183/1 University of South Australia Architecture Museum Collection

<sup>6</sup> "Comfort, Charm, Homeliness Given"