

# Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

**RSTCA No:** R040

**Name of Place:** Birch House

**Other/Former Names:**

**Address/Location:** 3 Arkana Street YARRALUMLA 2600

Block 32 Section 26 of Yarralumla

---

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	
Date of Listing:	1984	Level of Significance:	Local
Citation Revision No:	1	Category:	Residential
Citation Revision Date:	October 1988	Style:	Modern

---

Date of Design:	1967	Designer:	Noel Potter of Bunning & Madden
Construction Period:	1968	Client/Owner/Lessee:	Romaldo Giurgola
Date of Additions:		Builder:	Wheeler of Anderson Pty Ltd

---

## Statement of Significance

The innovative U-shaped plan looks inward to a courtyard with a pool. Detail throughout the house is interesting and unique, and reflects the freedom given to the architect by his clients. The selection of the site was most unusual as the architect made the selection from a choice of four in which his client was interested. The client's requirement for privacy was well met by the battle-axe site and the design of the house which has very few windows to the front. The siting and design of the building allows the courtyard to capture the northerly sun, while allowing a retreat from the Australian climate with a wide verandah surrounding the courtyard. Awarded C S Daley Medal 1969.

## Description

The house is designed to take full advantage of the Australian climate and opportunities for outdoor living. A modern version of the Australian Colonial homestead, with verandahs facing inward to a private enclosed courtyard with outdoor living areas and swimming pool. The house displays a simplicity of line and design. Maximum privacy is achieved by the U-shaped plan, with all areas facing into the atrium like, quarry tiled courtyard. Windows in the exterior walls tend to be discreetly located to avoid being overlooked. The living and dining area are open plan, divided by a marble topped bar. Heavy cross-beams give a feeling of space to the living room, the end wall of which is a redwood and glass curtain wall with a view over the Brindabella Ranges. The fireplace is set into a low brick screen dividing the entrance hall from this area, the floor is paved with German floor tiles on a heated concrete slab. External and internal brickwork painted white, with Canadian redwood timber trim and windows. Skylights in roof admit extra light, pierced brickwork used to form screens to some windows and lighten the solidity of brickwork.

## Condition and Integrity

Excellent. Fence to surround pool has been added.

## Background/History

---

### **Analysis against the Criteria specified in Schedule 2 of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991**

*(i) a place which demonstrates a high degree of technical and/or creative achievement, by showing qualities of innovation or departure or representing a new achievement of its time*

*(ii) a place which exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group*

*(iii) a place which demonstrates a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function which is no longer practised, is in danger or being lost, or is of exceptional interest*

*(iv) a place which is highly valued by the community or a cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations*

*(v) a place which is the only known or only comparatively intact example of its type*

*(vi) a place which is a notable example of a class of natural or cultural places or landscapes and which demonstrates the principal characteristics of that class*

*(vii) a place which has strong or special associations with person, group, event, development or cultural phase which played a significant part in local or national history*

*(xi) a place which demonstrates a likelihood of providing information which will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of natural or cultural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality or benchmark site*

---

## References

---

## Other Information Sources