

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R096

Name of Place: House at 16 Ryrie Street Campbell

Other/Former Names:

Address/Location: 16 Ryrie Street CAMPBELL 2612

Block 9 Section 10 of Campbell

Listing Status:		Other Heritage Listings:	
Date of Listing:		Level of Significance:	
Citation Revision No:		Category:	Residential
Citation Revision Date:	1995	Style:	

Date of Design:	1958	Designer:	Yuncken Freeman Brothers, Griffiths and Simpson Architects
Construction Period:	1960	Client/Owner/Lessee:	
Date of Additions:		Builder:	

Statement of Significance

The residence at 16 Ryrie Street Campbell is an example of significant architecture. The house was built at the end of the Post-War International Style and at the start of the Late Twentieth-Century Stripped Classical Style. It is a good example of the continuation of the application of the classical style in domestic architecture throughout Australia's European history.

The design incorporates the features which are peculiar to the Late Twentieth-Century Stripped Classical Style (1960 onwards) including symmetrical facade and regular bays with height exceeding width. It combines these with the features which are peculiar to the Post-War International Style (1940-1960) including cubiform shape and large sheets of glass.

The division of living and sleeping areas has been achieved in a classical composition with symmetrical massing relying not on the use of classical motifs and details, but by the repetitive rhythm and carefully considered proportions.

Description

The four bedroom house was designed by Yuncken Freeman Brothers, Griffiths and Simpson Architects for Captain Buchanan in 1958 and construction was completed in 1960¹. The building is an example of a combination of two styles:
the Post-War International Style (1940-1960) with its cubiform overall shape, large sheets of glass and;
the Late Twentieth-Century Stripped Classical Style (1960 onwards) with its symmetrical facade and regular bays with height exceeding width².

It is an 'L' shaped split-level house with a central entrance. The internal plan is a compartmentalized arrangement of rooms rather than the open plan generally associated with the Post-War International Style. The entry path is on the central axis set between the front of the house to the west and the carport to the east which is located in the void of the 'L' plan. These two forms align with each other and address the street providing a play of volumes; 'solid' house against 'open' double carport. The matching fascia across both the carport and the house

combine with the pergola over the path to connect the carport to the house and create one uniform structure.

The living room patio brick screen wall directs the visitor to the entry door while the path's axis loosely divides the upper living areas from the lower bedroom and service areas.

The entry double solid timber doors open into a lobby with the living room to the left, the dining room and the rest of the house down three steps to the right and the den directly ahead. When the full height sliding timber doors to the den are open the entry axis flows through the full height glazed external doors of the den into the garden. The carefully considered proportions of the upper level, the ceiling height of 3 metres and the full height glazing 'bays', combine to give these formal spaces a sense of restrained stripped classical elegance. The importance of these rooms is emphasised externally in the greater height and expressive massing of the cubiform shape which extends further to the rear than the lower understated level of the residence. The main features of the living room are the elegant proportions, the flow of space out to the north and south through full height glazing and the recessed painted brick fire place with shelving either side in the south wall.

Access to the rest of the house is along side the dining room which is set down three steps. The dining room also opens out to the rear garden through full height glazed doors.

The kitchen is located next to the dining room with a view to the south rear garden. It has new cupboards, however it does not appear to have lost the appeal of the original kitchen. The laundry and bathroom are set along the west of the lower wing with one bedroom at the northern end and the other three bedrooms to the east, adjacent the entry path.

The ceiling height to the lower level is 2.6 metres. The central hall is lit by borrowed light from the west service rooms through highlights over the doors. The windows to the bedrooms are tall, extending from 750mm high sills to the ceiling. The windows to the west are evenly spaced vertical punctuations in the wall.

The house is set centrally on the block which slopes across the site and to the south west corner. It is constructed of cavity brickwork, timber framed and concrete floors, timber roof framing and galvanised steel roofing.

The fascia, entry door and laundry external door are painted black while the house is white painted bagged brickwork. The inside is painted in a light cream colour.

The rear garden has two circular terraces which were designed by the architect to form integral parts of the house. The larger stone paved 8 metre diameter terrace leads off the lounge room and the smaller 6½ metre diameter grassed lower terrace leads off the dining room. The latter has a central tree and both are retained by stone walls. The interior spaces flow out through the large glazed doors to the terraces.

The major architectural elements that are peculiar to the Post-War International Style and that are displayed by this building relate to the external forms³. They are:

- cubiform overall shape,
- large sheets of glass.

The other architectural element of this style displayed by the building that relates to the external forms is:

- plain smooth wall surfaces.

The major architectural elements that are peculiar to the Late Twentieth-Century Stripped Classical Style and that are displayed by this building relate to the external forms⁴. They are:

- symmetrical facade,
- regular bays with height exceeding width.

Other architectural elements of this style displayed by the building that relate to the external forms are:

- horizontal skyline,
- broad horizontal member echoing classical entablature,
- central entrance.

There are elements described above which at first glance are not readily perceived, however a studied review of the building reveals these:

- The large sheets of glass, an element of the Post-War International Style is present in the glazing of the main rooms. These are divided into regularly sized vertical panels similar to the Post-War Melbourne Regional Style (1940-1960), however none of the other style indicators of this period are applicable to this building.

- The symmetrical facade and regular bays with height exceeding width, elements of the Late Twentieth-Century Stripped Classical Style are present not in a simple cubic building form but in the overall planning and elevational treatment. The front elevation is divided equally between the entry axis by the void of the carport and the solid form of the house, the latter having symmetrical windows. The rear elevation displays symmetry and regular bays with height exceeding width in the two central, equal width openings to the den and dining room, the equal location of the openings from the ends of walls and the symmetrical location of the chimney about the den and living room glazing. The west elevation has regular, symmetrically located openings.

- The broad horizontal member echoing classical entablature is perceived with the black painted metal fascia to the full perimeter of the roof line.

The major architectural elements listed above place this building in both the Post-War International Style (1940-1960) and the Late Twentieth-Century Stripped Classical Style (1960 -).

Condition and Integrity

The house has been well maintained and is unaltered except for the refurbishment of the kitchen and the addition of an external demountable sunshade to the living room north glazing.

The rear garden circular terraces were part of the original design and have been retained.

Background/History

The residence exhibits elements of Yuncken Freeman Brother, Griffiths and Simpson's work that combine rational and economic planning with elegant well proportioned spaces. Their work in Melbourne was recognised as early as the 1930s for its studied proportions and elevational treatment. These features were demonstrated in residences such as the Smith House, 1934 (demolished) and the Middle Brighton house, 1938⁵. The architects were recognised at the time as one of Melbourne's established firms and are considered key practitioners of the Late Twentieth-Century Stripped Classical Style⁶. An example of their work in this style in Canberra is the Law Courts of the ACT (1961).

This was one of about ten houses designed by the architects for Defence personnel in Canberra in the late 1950's, the others appear to be in the more conservative Post-War American Colonial Style (1940-1960)⁷. It is believed by John Yuncken to have been designed by Roy Simpson⁸. Captain Buchanan was a naval captain who moved from Melbourne to Canberra when the Department of Defence relocated to Canberra.

The firm changed its name from Yuncken Freeman Brothers Griffiths and Simpson to Yuncken Freeman Architects Pty by the 1960's; however Simpson remained as one of the main designers in the practice⁹. Roy Simpson was awarded the 1996 Gold Medal for Architecture, 1997.

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

The design of the residence in the Post-War International Style (1940-1960) and the Late Twentieth-Century Stripped Classical Style (1960 -) represents a continuation of the interpretation of the classical styles in domestic architecture throughout Australia's European history.

The house exhibits the particular architectural elements specific to the Late Twentieth-Century Stripped Classical Style including symmetrical facade and regular bays with height exceeding width.

It also exhibits some of the particular architectural elements specific to the Post-War International Style including cubiform overall shape and large sheets of glass.

The carefully considered proportions and the circular rear terraces, which are part of the original architecture and are integral to the flow of internal space into the landscape, are design features that are of additional interest.

Essentially the house is unaltered.

The house is well detailed and well built and is valued by the RAlA as a good example of the combination of these two architectural styles.

(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

- 1 Department of the Environment, Land and Planning (DELP). Building File for Block 9 Section 10 Campbell.
- 2 Richard Apperly Robert Irving Peter Reynolds. Identifying Australian Architecture Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present. Angus and Robertson 1989.
- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 *ibid.*
- 5 *ibid* and Donald Leslie Johnson. Australian Architecture 1901-51 Sources of Modernism. Sydney University Press 1980.

- 6 Richard Apperly Robert Irving Peter Reynolds. *opcit.*
 - 7 *ibid.*
 - 8 Conversation with John Yuncken, son of the founding partner of the architectural firm and the architect who administered the building contract for this residence.
 - 9 Conversation with Don McLagan, employed in Canberra at the time by the architects.
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Other Information Sources