

Giralang Primary & Infants School, & Neighbourhood Healthcentre

Address Menkar Close, off Canopus Crescent,
Giralang, ACT, 2617

Practice Enrico Taglietti.

Designed 1973 Completed 1975

History & Description The Giralang Primary & Infants School & Neighbourhood Healthcentre complex is located in a spacious landscape park setting in a suburb loosely planned around Radburn principles. It is an important example of Taglietti's organic style of architecture with asymmetrical angular geometric forms & cantilevered roofs. The 'free' plan of the complex is based on a cruciform with interconnecting teaching areas under one roof & was an innovation to teaching for the time. The building is a balanced distribution of forms & spaces about a central library, a space within a space, the heart of the school, surrounded by open plan classrooms on three sides & an internal landscaped courtyard on the fourth side. Smaller internal courtyards are cut into the plan providing natural light and enhancing a feeling of openness. Circulation includes internal ramped paths. The healthcentre is placed near to the neighbourhood shops on the central axis of the school. The steel framed structure of the school is planned on a 6m module with 55 degree angled perimeter walls at the 'corners'. Finishes are a palette of primary colours; metal painted red, carpets blue, vertical gutter overflows yellow, deep clear finished timber eaves with fascias painted white, while the cement bricks were left fair-faced internally & externally.

The school was the third of four public schools designed by Taglietti (1926-) in Canberra who emigrated to Australia in 1956. Along with the Dickson Library, 1969, (altered internally) Giralang is considered by both the architect & the profession to be one of Taglietti's most significant buildings. *The Architectural Review* described the school as being "like an adventure playground turned to education use". The complex was award the Canberra Medallion in 1977 & the 25 Year Award in 2001. Taglietti was awarded the 2007 RAIA Gold Medal.

Statement of Significance The Giralang Primary & Infants School & Neighbourhood Healthcentre complex is a significant example of civic architecture in the Late 20-Century Organic style of architecture by one of Australia's notable architects. The free, asymmetrical massing of the complex in a natural urban parkland setting are shown here to good effect. The place is considered to be one of Taglietti's most important works & being relatively unaltered gives it added significance.

Criteria Applicable N1. Significant heritage value in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or period of design.
N3. Significant heritage value in establishing a high degree of creative achievement.
N5. Having a special association with the life or works of an architect of significant importance in our history.



Primary & Infants School & Neighbourhood Healthcentre. (Source: Aust. Architecture Since 1960; Jennifer Taylor, RAIA)



Primary School Assembly Hall & Canteen c-2003 (Photo: Graeme Trickett c.2005)



Primary School with entry to right (Photo: Graeme Trickett c.2005)



Interior of Primary & Infants School with library balcony. (Source: Aust. Architecture Since 1960; Jennifer Taylor, RAIA)