

# Heritage (Decision about Registration of 16 Ryrie Street, Campbell) Notice 2009 (No 1)\*

Notifiable Instrument NI2009—404

made under the

*Heritage Act 2004* s42 Notice of decision about registration

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**1. Revocation**

This instrument replaces NI 2008 – 122.

**2. Name of instrument**

This instrument is the Heritage (Decision about Registration for 16 Ryrie Street, Campbell) Notice 2009 (No 1).

**3. Registration details of the place**

Registration details of the place are at Attachment A: Register entry for 16 Ryrie Street, Campbell.

**4. Reason for decision**

The ACT Heritage Council has decided that 16 Ryrie Street, Campbell meets one or more of the heritage significance criteria at section 10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*. The register entry is at Attachment A.

**5. Date of Registration**

20 August 2009.

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**Gerhard Zatschler**  
**Secretary**  
**ACT Heritage Council**  
**GPO Box 158**  
**Canberra ACT 2601**

**20 August 2009**



ACT Heritage Council

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HERITAGE REGISTER  
(Registration Details)

Place No: 94

For the purposes of s. 41 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, an entry to the heritage register has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council for the following place:

- **16 Ryrie St**

Block 9, Section 10

**CAMPBELL**

**DATE OF REGISTRATION**

Notified: 20 August 2009 Notifiable Instrument: NI2009–

Copies of the Register Entry are available for inspection at the ACT Heritage Unit. For further information please contact:

The Secretary  
ACT Heritage Council  
GPO Box 158, Canberra, ACT 2601

Telephone: 132284 Facsimile: (02) 6207 2229

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## IDENTIFICATION OF THE PLACE

- 16 Ryrie Street, Block 9, Section 10, Suburb of Campbell, ACT.
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## STATEMENT ABOUT THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE

The house at 16 Ryrie Street, Campbell, is significant as a rare and well-preserved example of a late 1950s house, illustrative of the modern architectural styles being introduced to Canberra at the time by the National Capital Development Commission.

The house is important for its association with the provision of housing for public servants moving in large numbers from Melbourne as government departments, especially the Department of Defence, were relocated to Canberra in the late 1950s.

The house is significant as a good example of the work of Roy Simpson, as identified by the RAI. Simpson was a leading architect who played a significant role in Canberra's cultural and architectural history, being recognised by the RAI Gold Medal and as a Life Fellow, as well as being awarded Officer of the Order of Australia.

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## FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE

The physical features of the 16 Ryrie Street, Campbell, that particularly reflect its heritage significance are:

- The original scale, form and fabric of the house, carport and two curved rear landscape terraces. Specifically the cubiform overall shape and carefully considered proportions with the regular bays of glazing combined with the plain smooth wall surfaces and horizontal skyline provided by the flat roof; the broad horizontal black painted fascia; central entrance; the original detailing and finishes.
- The living room fireplace and axial entry aligned with the den.
- The setting of the place that enables its scale and form to be appreciated including the front courtyard wall and open form of the entry path, carport and general view of the house from the street.

“Original scale, form and fabric” shall mean that which was designed and built and is shown on the working drawing titled “House in Ryrie Street Canberra for Captain Buchanan” dated March 1958; approval date stamped 7.5.59; by Yuncken, Freeman Brothers, Griffith & Simpson Architects; Planning Authority of the time “Plan No. 114.”

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## APPLICABLE HERITAGE GUIDELINES

The Heritage Guidelines adopted under s27 of the *Heritage Act* 2004 are applicable to the conservation of 16 Ryrie Street, Campbell.

The guiding conservation objective is that 16 Ryrie Street, Campbell, shall be conserved and appropriated managed in a manner respecting its heritage significance and the features intrinsic to that heritage significance, and consistent with a sympathetic and viable use or uses. Any works that have a potential impact on significant fabric (and / or other heritage values) shall be guided by a professionally documented assessment and conservation policy relevant to that area or component (i.e. a Statement of Heritage Effects – SHE).

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## REASON FOR REGISTRATION

*16 Ryrie Street, Campbell, has been assessed against the heritage significance criteria and been found to have heritage significance against 2 criteria under the ACT Heritage Act.*

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## ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Pursuant to s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, a place or object has heritage significance if it satisfies one or more of the following criteria. Significance has been determined by research as accessed in the references below. Future research may alter the findings of this assessment.

**(g) it is a notable example of a kind of place or object and demonstrates the main characteristics of that kind**

Designed by Roy Simpson of Yuncken Freeman Brothers, Griffiths and Simpson Architects in 1960, the house at 16 Ryrie Street Campbell, exemplifies both the Post-War International (1940-1960) and the Late Twentieth-Century Stripped Classical (1960) styles of architecture.

The following characteristics of the Late Twentieth-Century Stripped Classical style (1960) are exemplified at 16 Ryrie St, Campbell:

- the symmetrical facade divided into regular bays with height exceeding width,
- the broad horizontal roof edge and skyline,
- broad horizontal member echoing classical entablature (black painted fascia),
- central entrance.<sup>18</sup>

The following characteristics of the Post-War International style (1940-1960) are exemplified by the building include the following characteristics:

- cubiform overall shape and large sheets of glass:
- texture provided by regular bays of glazing against smooth wall surfaces,
- original detailing and finishes,
- living room fire place
- axial entry aligned with the den.

Of additional significance is the plain smooth wall surfaces, broad horizontal black fascia, the central entrance, the two circular rear garden terraces, the front courtyard wall, the flat roof, the internal proportions of the living room and den, the living room fireplace, the original detailing and finishes. The original scale, overall cubiform shape and fabric of the house, carport and two curvilinear terraces are important features of architectural value to the property.

The setting of the property enhances the scale and form of the property, including the front courtyard wall and open form of the entry path, carport and general view of the house from the street.

**(h) it has strong or special associations with a person, group, event, development or cultural phase in local or national history**

The house at 16 Ryrie St, Campbell has strong and special associations with both the architect, Roy Simpson and with the development phase of Canberra's history in the 1950's.

Architect Roy Simpson played a significant role in Canberra's cultural history. As the design partner in charge of the work in Canberra, Simpson designed many significant buildings in Canberra in the 1960s and 1970s including the Civic Square and Civic Offices (North and South Buildings), 1961; the Law Courts of the ACT, 1963; the Canberra Theatre Centre, 1965; the Canberra Grammar School Science and Administration Wing, 1962; the Canberra Grammar School Chapel, 1965; Canberra Grammar Northside Infants School, 1967; University Union Plaza, ANU, 1975; Cotter River Reserve; aspects of the Prime Minister's precinct and the Governor General's house, and Melba Flats, Melba, 1976, (demolished).<sup>13</sup>

Simpson won the Haddon Travelling Scholarship in 1940 and was awarded the RAI A Gold Medal in 1997 "for his work, as a director of architects Yuncken Freeman, in designing 'kitset' government housing, notable public buildings in Canberra and the master plan of La Trobe University".<sup>10</sup> He was an Officer of the Order of Australia and was awarded a Life Fellow of the RAI A.

The house is also important for its association with the provision of housing for public servants coming in large numbers from other states as government departments were re-located to Canberra during the late 1950s. While much of the housing designed for the NCDC was flats, the house at 16 Ryrie Street, Campbell, was part of this extensive development of housing associated with the large migration of public servants to Canberra. As such, the house is one of only a few reflecting a shift at the time from mainly government designed and built housing to private development where the individual owner commissioned an architect.

16 Ryrie Street, Campbell was one of 18 houses designed by Roy Simpson for the newly formed National Capital Development Commission to house high-ranking defence personnel. John Yuncken believes the design of the houses was the first commission given out by the NCDC. The RAI A believes 16 Ryrie Street is the most important architecturally. In contrast with much of the housing that was provided in blocks of apartments, this is a detached house on its own block seen at the time to be suitable to the high public service role of the owner Captain Buchanan, Commonwealth Director of Civil Defence.

The following criteria were found not to be applicable: (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (i), (j), (k), (l).

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## **SUMMARY OF THE PLACE'S HISTORY AND PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

### **History**

16 Ryrie St, Campbell was designed in 1958 by Roy Simpson of Yuncken Freeman Brothers, Griffiths and Simpson Architects. The house was designed for Captain Alfred Edward Buchanan, who moved to Canberra as the Commonwealth Director of Civil Defence. Construction of the property was completed in 1960.<sup>16</sup>

One of the most urgent issues facing Canberra in the period 1959-60 was housing. The Federal Government decision (1948) to relocate all department headquarters resulted in the near doubling of the public service in Canberra, including more than 2,000 defence personnel; many being transferred to Canberra from Melbourne. The National Capital Development Commission's first Annual Report stated that "A considerable number of housing and flat projects concerned with the Defence transfers in 1959 is in progress".<sup>5</sup>

While much of the housing designed for the NCDC was flats, the house at 16 Ryrie Street, Campbell, was part of this extensive development of housing associated with the large migration of public servants to Canberra. As such, the house is one of only a few reflecting a shift at the time from mainly government designed and built housing to private development where the individual owner commissioned an architect. The building therefore reflects not only the style of the architectural firm, but the result of the interaction between the owner and architect: the conscious choice by the owner of Roy Simpson because of his style and the finished design demonstrating choices and wishes of the owner.

The house at 16 Ryrie Street, Campbell, exhibits elements of Yuncken Freeman Brothers, Griffiths and Simpson's work that combine rational and economic planning with elegant well-proportioned spaces.

### ***Roy Simpson – Architect at Yuncken Freeman Brothers, Griffiths and Simpson Architects.***

The Melbourne based architectural firm of Yuncken Freeman was established in 1933, with Roy Simpson joining in 1938. The firm is considered a key practitioner of both the Late Twentieth-Century International style and the Late Twentieth-Century Stripped Classical style.

As the design partner in charge of the work in Canberra, Simpson designed many significant buildings in Canberra in the 1960s and 1970s including the Civic Square and Civic Offices (North and South Buildings), 1961; the Law Courts of the ACT, 1963; the Canberra Theatre Centre, 1965; the Canberra Grammar School Science and Administration Wing, 1962; the Canberra Grammar School Chapel, 1965; Canberra Grammar Northside Infants School, 1967; University Union Plaza, ANU, 1975; Cotter River Reserve; aspects of the Prime Minister's precinct and the Governor General's house, and Melba Flats, Melba, 1976, (demolished).<sup>13</sup>

The following comment by John Yuncken on Simpson's work can be applied to the design of the house at 16 Ryrie Street.

"Roy's buildings reflect his own character. Quiet, gentle, courteous and immensely sensitive, they tend to be understated and self-effacing...his use of space was masterly: as you walk through his buildings, there are big spaces and small ones, low ones and tall ones; each beautifully detailed...Even the landscape is exactly right: Roy designed paving and planting with the same skill and mood that generated the rooms which look onto them...He was particularly expert in small buildings, where his expertise in detailing and his fine judgement of space and total environment show up most clearly...Roy's buildings are deceptively simple, looking as if they were just sketched quickly on an envelope instead of the long, hard grind which simplicity requires."(2)

Roy Simpson won the Haddon Travelling Scholarship in 1940.<sup>9</sup> He was awarded the RAIA Gold Medal in 1997 "for his work, as a director of architects Yuncken Freeman, in designing 'kitset' government housing, notable public buildings in Canberra and the master plan of La Trobe University".<sup>10</sup>

### **Description**

The four bedroom house at 16 Ryrie St, Campbell exemplifies 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-) with its symmetrical façade and regular bays with height exceeding width.<sup>17</sup>

The original scale, overall cubiform shape and fabric of the house, carport and two curvilinear terraces are important features of architectural value to the property. Additional and significant architectural elements of the Post-War International style exemplified by the building include:

- texture provided by regular bays of glazing against smooth wall surfaces,
- original detailing and finishes,
- living room fire place
- axial entry aligned with the den.

Other architectural elements of the Late Twentieth-Century Stripped Classical style exemplified by the building that relate to the external forms are:

- horizontal skyline,
- broad horizontal member echoing classical entablature (black painted fascia),
- central entrance.<sup>18</sup>

The symmetrical façade 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 treatment of the elevations. 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 setting of the property enhances the scale and form of the property, including the front courtyard wall and open form of the entry path, carport and general view of the house from the street. The rear garden has two circular terraces that were designed by the architect to be integral to and contrast with the cubiform internal formal spaces. The larger stone paved eight metre diameter terrace leads off the lounge room and the smaller six and a half metre diameter grassed lower terrace leads off the dining room. The latter has a central tree and both are retained by stonewalls. The interior spaces flow out through the large glazed doors to the terraces.

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.

## References

Eldridge, 1949 *A History of the Australian Naval College*: There is further information on his record in the National Archives (Series A1209/111 1962/412, Barcode 3044917). His service record is also held by the National Archives.

Johnson, D L , 1980 *Australian Architecture 1901-51 Sources of Modernism*. Sydney University Press.

Apperly, R, R Irving and P Reynolds 1989 *Identifying Australian Architecture Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*. Angus and Robertson.

*Architecture Australia* Jan/Feb 1997. Architecture Media Australia Pty Ltd.

A S Hooker Address Roy Simpson 1997 RAI A Gold Medallist.

Reid, P, 2002 *Canberra following Griffin A Design History of Australia's National Capital* National Archives of Australia.

Canberra Times 7 April 2005.

NCDC 1059 "Government Housing", *First Annual Report*.

Department of the Environment, Land and Planning (DELP). Building File for Block 9 Section 10 Campbell. That Simpson designed the house has been confirmed in a conversation with John Yuncken, the contract administrating architect for the house.

Royal Australian Institute of Architects ACT Chapter RSTCA.

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## PHOTOGRAPHS AND PLANS

**Figure 1. Location of 16 Ryrie St, Campbell.**

