

# Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

**RSTCA No:** R029

**Name of Place:** Former Forrest Fire Station & Residences

**Other/Former Names:**

**Address/Location:** Empire Circuit, Canberra Avenue, Manuka Circle and Fitzroy Street  
FORREST 2603

Block 1-11 Section 35 of Forrest

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|-------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Listing Status:         | Registered     | Other Heritage Listings: |  |
| Date of Listing:        | September 1984 | Level of Significance:   | planning – national  |
| Citation Revision No:   | 6              | Category:                | Community and Residential  |
| Citation Revision Date: | May 1985       | Style:                   | Functionalist  |
| Date of Design:         | 1938           | Designer:                | EH Henderson, Chief Architect Works & Services Branch, Department of the Interior. Project Architect Further investigation possibly needed – DC Ward or M Moir |
| Construction Period:    | 1939           | Client/Owner/Lessee:     | Commonwealth of Australia & Private  |
| Date of Additions:      |                | Builder:                 |  |

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## Statement of Significance

A well-planned and functionally laid-out group of integrated buildings, is a significant example of early Modern architecture in Canberra. For the first time cars are acknowledged and garages attached to residences, demonstrating the new status of the car. It is a tentative attempt at a new style by a government department, which halted upon the outbreak of war. The designs reflect the extent of influence of overseas magazines, and the Fire Station was designed in a conservative manner as opposed to the more radical approach to the residences which simply and expressively integrate materials and details in a plainer design. The buildings are well-detailed and soundly constructed.

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## Description

The red brick Fire Station and 2-storey cream and red brick residences are typical of the late 1920's European modern movement which was taken up in Australia after 1934. The residences have many typical elements such as flat roofs and parapets, planter boxes, balconies and decks, and attached garages with decks over incorporated into the buildings form and composition. The interlocking compositions of simple and straightforward horizontal and vertical "slab" elements of the brickwork relate strongly to Dudok's work in Holland in the 1920's. The design reflects the developing rational cubic style which culminated with De Stijl. These buildings are a significant Australian example of this early rational international style. The Fire Station is built on the site of

the early Duntroon School 1894 which became the Narrabundah School (1902-1923). The "ACT Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service" occupied the buildings in 1939.

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### **Condition and Integrity**

Fire Station: Good. Residences: Good to fair. Integrity: High. Some additions alterations to residences. Extension to front of Fire Station for extension ladder.

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### **Background/History**

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### **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*

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### **References**

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### **Other Information Sources**