

Australian Institute of Architects ACT Chapter
Register of Significant Architecture

RSA No: R032

Name of Place: Rise and Shine Cafe

Other/Former Names: Barton Conference Centre
Associated Chamber of Manufactures of Australia Conference Centre
ACCI Conference and Function Centre

Address/Location: 28 Brisbane Avenue BARTON ACT 2600
Block 1 Section 13 of Barton

Listing Status: Listed 1986
Date of Citation: Feb 1989
Citation Revision No: 1
Citation Revision Date: June 2018

Other Heritage Listings: RNE
Level of Significance: Territory
Category: Commercial
Style: Organic

Date of Design: 1965
Construction: 1967

Designer: Enrico Taglietti
Client/Owner/Lessee: Associated Chamber of Manufactures of Australia
Builder: A.V. Jennings Industries
Structural Engineers: Quigan, Gam and Sellick

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Rise and Shine Cafe has special associations with the life and work of the celebrated Canberra architect Enrico Taglietti, who was awarded the Gold Medal of the RAIA, its highest honour, in 2007. It is as an early and important example of his architecture and it has retained those associations. At the time of its completion in 1967 as a conference centre for the Associated Chamber of Manufactures of Australia it was an exciting and original concept.

The architect solved his brief to design a high quality conference centre while retaining the park-like quality of its site in an innovative manner by locating the bulk of the building underground. The technical problems of waterproofing its tanked construction and the air conditioning system, using the pond and fountain sculpture for cooling and insulation, were solved successfully. The near ground-level ponded roof and the fountain sculpture formed a centre of interest, and the building had considerable aesthetic qualities, external and internally. These heritage values have been considerably depleted, particularly internally, with the building's lack of integrity since being altered for use as a cafe and gymnasium.

The Rise and Shine Cafe is important for demonstrating the principal characteristics of the Late Twentieth-Century Organic style (1960-) of architecture. The key indicators of the style demonstrated are the free asymmetrical massing and the retention of the natural setting. Other indicators of the style are the complex angular geometry, curves complementing nature, horizontal roof planes and highlight windows.

DESCRIPTION

The former conference centre consists of the Rise and Shine Cafe, with a kitchen and toilets, all on the ground floor. The former conference chamber, mostly underground, houses the F45 Training Barton gymnasium. The main entrance to the cafe and gymnasium is from a lobby open from the office building at 10 National Circuit, and through a door from the cafe's rear car park. The lobby can also be approached from Brisbane Avenue along a path up to and across the cafe's outdoor seating area on the roof of the chamber, then up stairs into the office building and downstairs into the lobby. The overall dimensions of the cafe/gymnasium building are 109m x 163m.

In September 1968, the conference centre was described in a construction industry periodical ¹ as follows:

The building has been designed primarily as the conference centre for the Australian Chamber of Manufactures Association, (sic) whose federal headquarters are adjoining. The centre is available for other organisations requiring conference or similar type accommodation. The principal functional requirements were that the building be designed as a separate structure and incorporate the optimum factors necessary for an atmosphere conducive to top level discussions. The kitchen and rest rooms lead directly off the main foyer and form a strip along the rear of the building.

Viewed from the surrounding areas the exposed elements of the building represent strong, forceful profiles of distinct individuality. The two terminal walls at each end of the lobby are either painted white or natural coloured off-the-form shapes which sweep up in an arc to unite with a deep splayed timber fascia. To the front of the building the parapet to the ponded roof of the conference chamber (a few feet above ground level) is a bold sculptured board marked concrete profile. A small courtyard between the conference centre and the headquarters is delightfully landscaped with crushed marble interposed with circular exposed aggregate stepping stones and feature planting.

The underground conference chamber has been designed as a tanked structure of reinforced concrete. Excavation was in clay to a depth of 8 ft below natural grade. Preparation of the sub-base consisted of a 4 in. layer of sand over the clay and covered with a polythene vapour barrier .008 in thick, on to this the 5 in. thick reinforced concrete floor slab was cast. Around the perimeter of the slab separate strip footings were provided to form the base of the retaining walls. The retaining walls vary in thickness from 18 in at bottom and top to 8 in. at midpoint. The change of section takes place on the internal face of the chambers to enhance architectural effects. The areas around the walls are drained to agricultural piping which is directed to a sump located in the floor of the plant room. Other than the agricultural drainage and a P.V.C. water stop at the junction of wall and floor no other steps were taken to prevent water penetration through the walls which have proved to be watertight.

The roof structure (over the chamber) comprises an 8 in. thick reinforced concrete slab spanning between outer walls and a single mid-span beam, stiffened at the perimeter by an integral beam featuring splayed sides to satisfy architectural requirements. The roof slab cantilevers 6 ft beyond the walls affording ample sun protection to the high windows of the chambers below. The roof was ponded with 5 in of water for the following reasons: (a) To improve insulation. (b) To provide pondage to cool water for the air-conditioning plant. (c) To provide the main unifying element. The fountain situated in the roof pool is designed as a series of diminishing tiers with edges shaped to complement the deep surround of the pool proper. The tiers are of precast concrete behind the deep edges of the tiers.

The structure at ground level is of brick construction with a reinforced concrete floor which is suspended over the plant room and storeroom below. Roof construction (of the upper building) is a combination of a steel truss spanning 50 ft over the long windows of the main foyer, rafters spanning between the rear walls and the truss which in turn support metal roof sheeting.

It is clearly evident that every attention has been given to detail and décor. All finishes are attractive and durable. External finishes are a combination of board marked concrete to the pool surround and end walls of the lobby area, white tyrolean render sprayed to retaining walls, and oiled western red cedar fascias to the main foyer structure. The main foyer is characterised by a deep roof beam which forms the spandrel beneath the large glass wall overlooking the roof pool. Other walls in the lobby are either board marked concrete or painted render and are complemented by a boarded timber ceiling. In the conference chamber floor carpeting extends half-way up the sloping walls. Above this the walls and ceiling have been sprayed with a deep blue vermiculite. Around the walls of the chamber are six large timber panels displaying the coats of arms of each State of the Commonwealth. Two of these panels fold out to reveal a screen for film protection. High windows in the chamber are screened by electrically controlled venetian blinds. Furnishings of the chamber feature natural timber finishes and richly coloured fabrics. Internally all public areas are carpeted. Kitchen and amenities areas are enhanced by richly coloured ceramic tiling. The luxuriously appointed foyer exhibits a compatible relationship between concrete and timber finishes.

CONDITION

The link into the conference centre was rebuilt when the 1986 office building replaced the original Industry House. The ground level foyer of the conference centre was altered for cafe use between 1995 and 2006.

The roof of the chamber was drained and paved for outdoor seating, with shade structures. The cooling fountain sculpture was removed. Internally, a glass wall was built across the former foyer, to form a lobby with a doorway to the cafe beyond the stairs down to the gymnasium. The stairs at the east end of the cafe which also led down to the chamber have been built over to provide more floor space in the cafe. All the original internal finishes in the former foyer have been replaced by modern materials. The south wall of the cafe has retained the windows which once provided a view of the ponded roof and fountain sculpture, in a garden setting. The view is now of shrubbery, with glimpses of outdoor seating and surrounding buildings.

It is still possible to appreciate the former conference centre as an example of the Late Twentieth-Century Organic style of architecture. The key indicators of the style demonstrated are the free asymmetrical massing and the retention of the natural setting. Other indicators of the style are the complex angular geometry; curves complementing nature; horizontal roof planes and highlight windows.²

HISTORY

The Associated Chamber of Manufactures was formed in 1904, following debate over free trade versus protectionism. Established to promote protection for infant local industries, the Chamber of Manufactures operated until 1920 when it amalgamated with the Australian Industries Protection League. Retaining the title Associated Chamber of Manufactures of Australia, it continued to operate until a further amalgamation in 1978, this time with the Australian Council of Employers' Federations, created the Confederation of Australian Industry. In 1992 the Confederation of Australian Industry merged with the Australian Chamber of Commerce to form the Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry.³

The original Industry House was built at the intersection of National Circuit and Brisbane Avenue, Barton as the Federal headquarters of the ACMA in 1954.⁴ The architects were S.H. Buchanan and G.M. Felton, of Sydney and the builder was A.V. Jennings. In 1965 the firm Buchanan, Felton and Lovell was engaged to increase the original two storeys to four and the Canberra architect Enrico Taglietti was engaged to design a conference centre to be located behind the office building. The client's requirements were that the centre should enable the ACMA to hold meetings, conferences, lectures etc, yet retain the park-like quality of the site. The following rooms were required: Conference chamber to seat 60, but at no time is any member at the meeting to be seated in front of any other member; lobby and main entrance, kitchen; store; toilets and cloakrooms.

By February 1966 the conference centre, seen as "an exciting and original concept", had been designed. A feature of Taglietti's design was that it would be mostly sunk into the ground. Two things influenced his decision: a desire not to upset the harmony presented by the group of buildings of which Industry House was the centre, and the fact that summer and winter temperatures of the surrounding earth would not vary as much as air temperature. "The entrance lobby will be furnished to serve as a reception and refreshment lounge and the wall overlooking the roof of the semi subterranean conference chamber will be completely of glass to give a good view across the flat roof...which will feature a sculpture, fountain and rock garden".⁵

The decision to build the conference centre was announced in July 1966. The announcement added "only four feet of the conference chamber, the design of which incorporates Department of Defence security requirements to allow its use by service and defence departments for "classified" displays and presentations, will be above ground".⁶ In November 1967 the press reported that "an extensive building programme involving two distinct projects has just been completed at Industry House..." These were the addition of two storeys and "at the rear of the building an unusual conference centre has been built to accommodate many of the meetings and functions organised by the ACMA".⁷ In 1968 the University of Melbourne Department of Architecture reported that the conference centre was "the most successful expression of Taglietti's forms composed of horizontal lines and battered shapes" and "circular lines play counterpoint to each other and give the building a whimsical lightness".⁸ Later in 1968 the conference centre was prominently featured in *Architecture in Australia*.⁹

In 1984 it was decided to demolish Confederation of Australian Industry House, "as it was at the end of its economic life" and replace it with "a \$6.8 million office development" but "the conference centre of the existing building will be retained and the confederation's administrative staff will be temporarily located there."¹⁰ The new building was completed in 1986, with an enclosed passage linking it to the conference centre, which was again used for its original purpose.¹¹

The heritage significance of the conference centre was recognised by the ACT Chapter of the RAI in 1986 when it was entered in its Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture.¹² It was later entered in the Register of the National Estate by the Australian Heritage Commission.¹³ By 1989 it had been nominated for entry in the ACT Heritage Register, and was advertised by the ACT Heritage Committee as having possible heritage significance.¹⁴

In March 1993 the conference centre, owned by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry was superfluous to its needs and disposed of. It was acquired by an estate agent, Susan Auzins, who began operating it as the ACCI Conference and Function Centre. She believed the centre represented a new and exciting business opportunity and offered improved service and cuisine.¹⁵ She later sold the property and by 2006 the foyer had been converted into a cafe. The Rise and Shine Cafe took over in 2016¹⁶ and the F45 Training Barton gymnasium, having moved from the adjoining office building, now utilises the underground chamber.¹⁷

ENRICO TAGLIETTI

Enrico Taglietti (1926-) studied architecture between 1947 and 1953 and graduated with a Laurea (Doctorate) degree from the Milan Polytechnic, where architectural training methods were basically in the Bauhaus tradition, an approach to design whereby art and craft were united. Observers suggest that it was American architect Frank Lloyd Wright's organic architectural style that appears to have most influenced Taglietti's architectural development. He established his architecture practice in Canberra in 1955. With commissions for motels and several houses he was able to demonstrate his design ideas. His stylish buildings used what he called a "calligraphy" of elements, such as long horizontal flat roofs and balconies casting deep shadows, sloping fascias and balustrades, battered walls, often incorporating sloping window reveals, and unpainted surfaces for texture and low maintenance. His desire to provide beautiful forms and satisfy the needs of the people who will use his buildings was always critically important.

After about ten years in Canberra, larger buildings emerged from Taglietti's practice, which gave him the opportunity to show his Italian heritage in the free use of concrete. His domestic work also made use of that material for great dramatic impact. Concrete also enabled his houses to blend beautifully with natural bush settings. Prominent weathered timber fascias and boarding added to that fusion of buildings and landscape. Interiors remained important to his approach to architecture. He maintains that many of his buildings were designed from the inside, but he invariably produced external forms with satisfying complexity and grace. His work in the 1970s shows these attributes, particularly his schools, where his enthusiasm for providing fun and excitement in environments for primary-aged children came to the fore. His concentration on arranging the flow of space, throughout the school at Giralang in particular, extended to many of his later buildings.

As his career progressed, Taglietti began to use more abstract forms and colour imaginatively and some large buildings achieved a monumental scale. At the same time, he provided intimate spaces where necessary for the comfort and aesthetic enjoyment of their inhabitants. Enrico Taglietti is considered a key practitioner of the Late Twentieth-Century Organic style in Australia, as the more dramatic and spectacular aspects of organic architecture were seen in his idiosyncratic designs.

When Enrico Taglietti was belatedly (due to his foreign qualification) admitted to the Royal Australian Institute of Architects in 1968, "the new conference centre in Barton" was mentioned in the press report as being "generally thought one of his best pieces of work".¹⁸ He was made a Life Fellow of the RAI in 2001 and recognition of his career reached a climax when he was awarded the Gold Medal of the RAI in 2007, the highest honour the Institute can bestow.

COMPARISON OF THE CONFERENCE CENTRE TO OTHER BUILDINGS

In 1965 Enrico Taglietti designed the Cinema Center, in Canberra, with its theatre underground to solve the problems of height restrictions and a tight site. This seems to have prompted him to consider locating the conference chamber at Barton under ground level, but the cinema complex with four stories of shops and offices is otherwise dissimilar to the modest conference centre.

Taglietti completed a remarkable arcade at Booroomba Homestead in 1966 of inverted half-circle concrete arches similar to the walls with sweeping quarter-circle profiles at Barton. In April 1967, one year after the conference centre was designed, Taglietti drew the Dickson Library with similarly curved concrete walls, but the curves were changed into splayed pylons at Dickson by 1969.¹⁹ Flat roofs which had the same double-splayed edge profiles as those of the conference centre's ponded roof were also shown on the Dickson drawing and were so built. Flat roofs with splayed fascias like those on the conference centre were on many of Taglietti's other buildings, notably the Town House Motel, Canberra (1961, demolished), Paterson House (1968) and Evans House (1971), both in Aranda.

The way the conference centre foyer provided an outlook over a pond can be compared to similar arrangements for function rooms at the Australian National University's University House (architect Brian Lewis, 1953) and the Shine Dome (Australian Academy of Science, architect Sir Roy Grounds, 1959).

ANALYSIS AGAINST THE CRITERIA ADOPTED IN THE ACT UNDER THE HERITAGE ACT 2004

The Rise and Shine Cafe has been assessed against the heritage significance criteria and been found to have heritage significance when assessed against three criteria, (d) (f) and (h). The building's level of significance is high for criteria (d) and (h), but since its conversion to a cafe it is less for criteria (f).

d. Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or objects.

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f. Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement for a particular period.

The Rise and Shine Cafe demonstrates a creative achievement in the way its architect solved his brief to design a high quality conference centre while retaining the park-like quality of its site. His solution was to locate the bulk of the building underground in a creative manner. The technical problems of waterproofing its tanked construction and the air conditioning system, using the pond and fountain sculpture for cooling and insulation, were solved successfully.

h. Has a special association with the life or work of a person, or people, of important to the history of the ACT.

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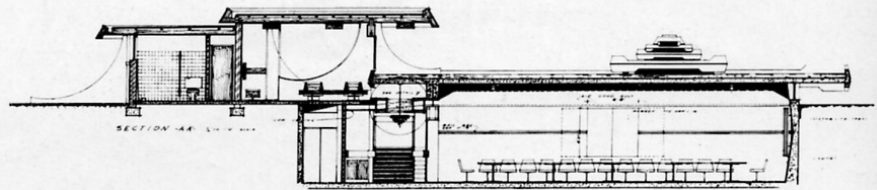
Prior to the building's conversion to a cafe the building had heritage significance against another criterion:

e. Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by the ACT community or a cultural group in the ACT.

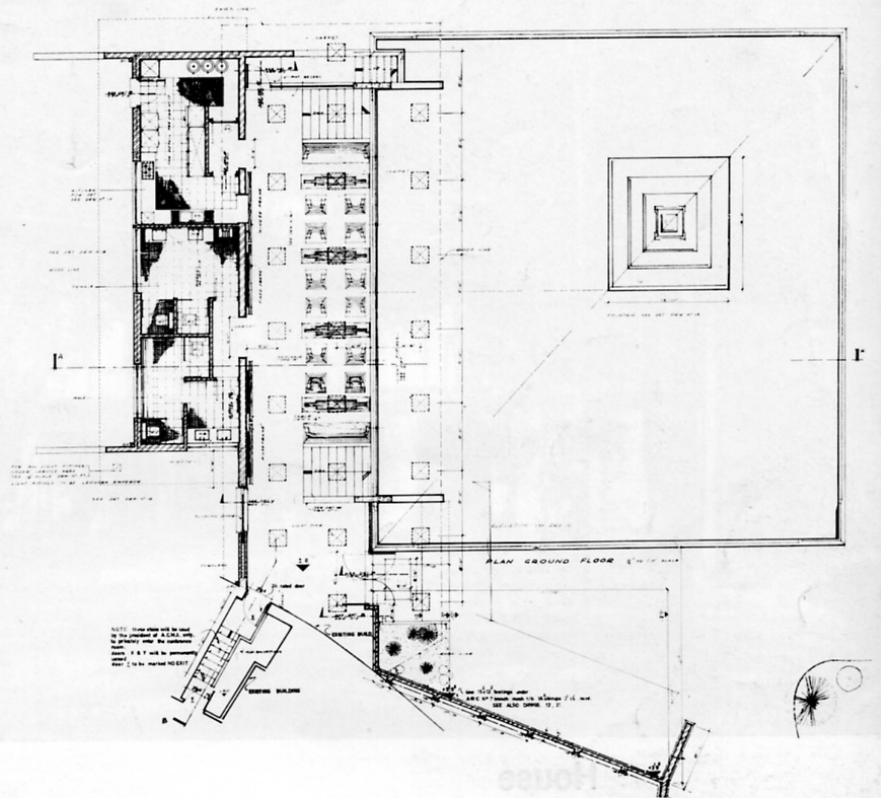
The Associated Chamber of Manufactures of Australia Conference Centre exhibited considerable aesthetic characteristics valued by people with an appreciation of fine architecture. The horizontal roof planes, curved concrete and rendered brick walls, angular edges of the concrete surrounds of the ponded roof (the main unifying element) and the fountain sculpture forming a centre of interest, achieved a building with considerable aesthetic qualities. The architect designed the interiors which had high aesthetic value, due to the proportions, finishes, light fittings and furniture in the foyer, stairs and the conference chamber, including six panels depicting the State coats of arms. The building's heritage value against this criterion has been considerably depleted, particularly internally, due to its present lack of integrity.



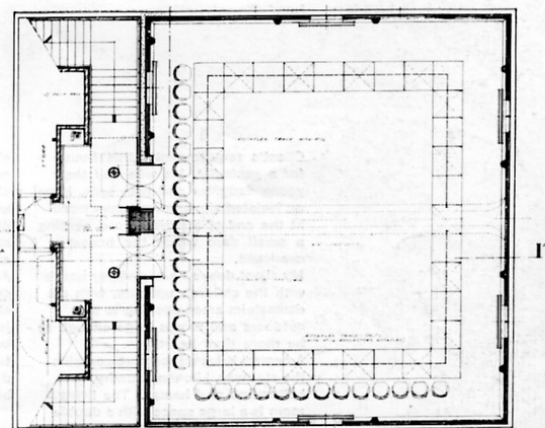
The Rise and Shine Cafe
Photos: Ken Charlton, May 2018



Section AA



Ground floor plan



Basement plan

- ¹ *Constructional Review* No 41/9, September 1968
- ² Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*, A&R, 1989, p236
- ³ Australian Trade Union Archives, aqua.org.au
- ⁴ Industry House Opening, in *The Canberra Times* 4 November 1954, p4
- ⁵ Conference hall in sunken chamber, in *The Canberra Times*, 7 February, 1966 p9
- ⁶ Additions to ACMA House, in *The Canberra Times*, 14 July, 1966, p8
- ⁷ New look for Industry House, in *The Canberra Times*, 21 November, 1967, p15
- ⁸ University of Melbourne Department of Architecture *CROSS-SECTION*, Issue No 185, March, 1968
- ⁹ *Architecture in Australia*, No 57/7, December, 1968, p1108
- ¹⁰ CAI House to go, in *The Canberra Times*, 7 September, 1984, p17
- ¹¹ *The Canberra Times*, 25 March, 1987 p8
- ¹² *Draft Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture*, RAIA ACT Chapter, September 1990
- ¹³ Australian Heritage Database, Register of the National Estate Indicative Place ID 19830
- ¹⁴ Recommendations for Heritage listing, in *The Canberra Times*, 27 August, 1989 p4
- ¹⁵ Conference Centre has location, service and excellent cuisine, in *The Canberra Times*, 14 June, 1993, p13
- ¹⁶ Rise and Shine post on Facebook, First birthday, 15 March 2017
- ¹⁷ Advice from the trainer on site, May 2018
- ¹⁸ Giving Canberra the Taglietti look, in *The Canberra Times*, 31 January, 1968, p4
- ¹⁹ Ken Charlton et al, *The Contribution of Enrico Taglietti to Canberra's Architecture*, RAIA (ACT), 2007, p 43