

RICHARD URE (1913- c1992)

Richard Minchin Ure was born in Toowoomba and educated at the Sydney Technical High School. He completed an Architecture Diploma course at Sydney Technical College in 1937 and became a Registered Architect. In 1939, Ure joined the Department of the Interior as a Senior Draftsman. During World War II he served in the Australian Army as a Lieutenant (1942-46) and designed a 25 pounder anti-recoil weapon (1942) and a self-steering torpedo with sonic control (1943). Ure became an Associate of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects in 1944 and a Fellow in 1961. He resumed his public service career in 1946 as an Architect Grade 3 in the Department of Works and Housing. He was promoted to Designing Architect (1950-54), Principal Architect, Australian Capital Territory (1954-57), Chief Designing Architect (1957-64) and Senior Assistant Director-General (1964-74) in the Department of Works. At the time of his retirement in 1977 he was First Assistant Secretary, Architectural Division in the Department of Construction.

Ure's greatest achievement in Canberra is the competition-winning design for the Australian-American Memorial, on which he spent the last ten days of 1949, when entries were due. The original site in Anzac Parade was changed in 1950 to one near the corner of the Parliamentary triangle in Russell, where it was built in 1953 and unveiled by the Queen in 1954. The 79 metre high aluminium-clad column is topped by a stylised eagle and sphere sculpted by Paul Beadle. The flanking pylons and murals in Ure's design have not been constructed.

When the first Canberra Medallion for meritorious architecture was awarded in 1956 to Robin Boyd's Fenner House, the judges commended the runner-up, Richard Ure's own house at 6 Ord Street Forrest for its skilful plan, taking every advantage of the fall in the site and the beautiful view, and the careful detailing. It contributed much to architectural thinking and contemporary design, they added. Among Ure's major architectural achievements in Canberra are the Allawah (in Reid) and Bega Courts and the adjacent Currong Apartments (1954-6) in Braddon; the Royal Australian Mint (1959-65) and Black Mountain Tower (1970-80). He was created a Member of the British Empire (MBE) in the 1960s and an Officer (OBE) in 1977, the year he retired.

References:

Richard Minchin URE OBE www.naa.gov.au/cgi-bin/Search?Number=CP+132

'Memorial Design Sydney Man Wins', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 February 1950 p 2

'Queen Unveils National Memorial To Americans', *The Canberra Times*, 17 February 1954 p 7

£25,000 Needed To Complete U.S. War Memorial, *The Canberra Times*, 14 June 1954 p 2

'Architects' Award For Two-section Home', *The Canberra Times*, 17 July 1956 p 3



Clockwise: Australian-American Memorial; Royal Australian Mint; 6 Ord Street, Forrest. Black Mountain Tower; Bega Court and Currong Apartments in 1961.

Photos by Ken Charlton.