

# Burnham Beeches

Address 1 Sherbrooke Road, Sherbrooke 3789

Practice Harry A Norris (1888-1966)

Designed 1930

Completed 1933

History & Description Burnham Beeches was constructed in 1930-33 as a rural retreat for the wealthy Aspro king Alfred Nicholas. The property was taken over by the Nicholas Institute for medical and veterinary research in 1955, and in the early 1980's converted to provide guest-house accommodation.

The use of the design analogy of a ship in the sea was particularly appropriate for the retreat. The house sits in a contrived garden landscape with farmlands and outbuildings conveying modernity, reflecting a belief that progress and technology were necessarily good. In contrast, the utilitarian outbuildings suggest confidence in a self-reliant future. Such a successful design analogy is rare in Australian architecture.

Burnham Beeches was designed by Harry Norris, one of the leading commercial architects in Melbourne between the wars.

(extracts from VHR #H0868)

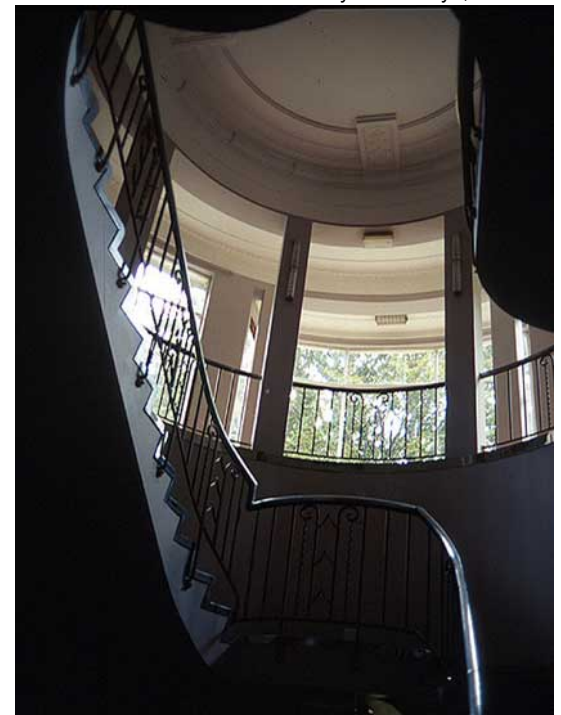


Front entrance. Photo by Brian Lloyd, DEWHA

Statement of Significance The use of the Moderne style at Burnham Beeches is a particularly early example and reflects contemporaneous developments in American architecture. It is a successful synthesis of the ornament and styling of the 1920's Jazz period with Streamlined Moderne which was to become popular in the 1930's in Australia. Burnham Beeches is a rare domestic example of the Moderne genre.

The use of advanced reinforced concrete technology at Burnham Beeches is significant in that it generated the unusual streamlined appearance of the main house and allowed architectural devices such as cantilevered balconies, wide spans and continuous windows to be achieved.

(extract from VHR #H0868)



Main stair 2000. Photo by Doug Evans

Criteria Applicable N1 - Significant Heritage value in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or period of design

N6 - Significant heritage value in demonstrating a high degree of technical achievement of a particular period.



Garden elevation. Photo courtesy of the Art Deco Society



View from driveway, 1947. Photo from VR Collection, SLV