

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R008

Name of Place: Ainslie Public (Infants) School

Other/Former Names:

Address/Location: Doonkuna Street (within Doonkuna/Elder/Donaldson Streets and Limestone Avenue block) BRADDON 2612

Block 1 Section 31 of Braddon

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	
Date of Listing:	1984	Level of Significance:	Local
Citation Revision No:	4	Category:	Educational
Citation Revision Date:	November 1985	Style:	Stripped Classical

Date of Design:	1926	Designer:	Comm. Dept of Works & Railways
Construction Period:	1927-28	Client/Owner/Lessee:	
Date of Additions:	c1948	Builder:	AM Sweetman (Contract £12,000)

Statement of Significance

An example of a significant Australian architect, J.S. Murdoch, which exhibits unusual and unique features of design and planning, advanced for a school of its time. It was built at a time when few schools buildings were being constructed, in a style particular to the Federal Capital, and responds to the Canberra climate in a manner significant for this period, by incorporating an internal assembly hall and forming a semi-enclosed court to make it more suitable for Canberra's weather. The siting of the building and quality of the design make a significant contribution to its environment, set back from the road in a garden setting, complete with hedges and an extensive circular drive enhanced by conifers and other exotic trees. The building has particular historical and social importance to early Canberra as the first permanent North Side public school (primary school until 1938, then infants' school), and the only one until the early 1950's. It is a significant example characteristic of the early Federal Capital architecture.

Description

The design results from a brief prepared by the FCAC for a school of 400 pupil capacity with 8 large 50 pupil classrooms, catering for kindergarten to 6th class. It was also required to be heated, and painted white. Construction: single-storey rendered brick structure with unglazed terracotta tiled roof obscured behind parapet walls, with long, low wings and banks of small-paned windows, and heavy piers supporting the substantial entry portico. The first stage, completed in 1928, was a strictly symmetrical H-Plan with a king post truss structure supporting the roof over the central common space of the assembly hall. The school became infants only in 1938, following the opening of the adjacent Ainslie School, also located on the 15 acre site. Later north and south wings were completed in 1948, matching the earlier building.

Condition and Integrity

Sound. Repainted 1985.

Background/History

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

References

Other Information Sources