



# Art Gallery of NSW Extensions

Address Art Gallery Road, The Domain, Sydney, NSW, 2000

Practice NSW Government Architects Branch & (from 1987) the Architectural Division of the Public Works Department

Designed 1968-1988 Completed 1975-1988

History & Description The two extensions to the Art Gallery of NSW overlook Woolloomooloo Bay from The Domain. In 1896 the Art Gallery trustees saw the gallery functioning as a temple to art & this influenced the Ionic colonnaded design of the NSW Government Architect, Walter Liberty Vernon, who designed the portico of the original gallery to face northwest, across The Domain. The original sandstone building known then as the National Gallery stood in front of the early, now demolished, Horbury Hunt building of 1885. Constructed between 1896 & 1909, it is now referred to as the old wing. Vernon's original designs, including plans for a central courtyard, were never completed. By the late 1960s it was decided to extend the building to provide more display space & to house the increase in staff & education departments.

The period from 1968-1975 saw the realisation of Vernon's desire to extend the gallery, with the construction of the Captain Cook Gallery behind the main facade, designed by the NSW Government Architects Branch (the three Government Architects during this period were Edward Herbert Farmer, Geoffrey Phillip Webber & Charles Percy Weatherburn), with project architect Andrew Andersons. This extension doubled the exhibition space & juxtaposed the original classical stone aesthetic with a modern aesthetic including exposed concrete frame. In 1988 the Stage 2 extension, the eastern wing, also designed by the NSW Government Architects Branch (the three Government Architects during this period were John Whyte, Ian Thomson & Lindsay D Kelly), with project architect Andrew Andersons, was constructed in time for the Bicentennial celebrations. This added permanent collection display space, a theatre, administration space & a cafe, & again doubled the size of the gallery in a built form that stepped down the slope of the site to permit direct public access to external spaces. The architecture drew on the earlier materials & finishes.

Each of the extensions to the Art Gallery of NSW received The Sulman Award, in 1975 & jointly in 1989.

Andrew Andersons was appointed Assistant Government Architect in 1984.

Statement of Significance The Art Gallery of NSW 1975 extension dealt with the nineteenth-century fabric with a modern aesthetic in a commendable way. Stepping down the site, the 1989 extension brought the new spaces to the ground level, connecting the outside with intimate art display spaces & enhancing visitor amenity. The architecture of each phase is interwoven with the previous phases to provide a rich & historically effective sequence of spaces which reflect, in form & materials, the changing role of this cultural institution & trends in art museum architecture. The extensions are significant works of the NSW Government Architects branch during the period of the 1968-1988, & in particular the work of Andrew Andersons.

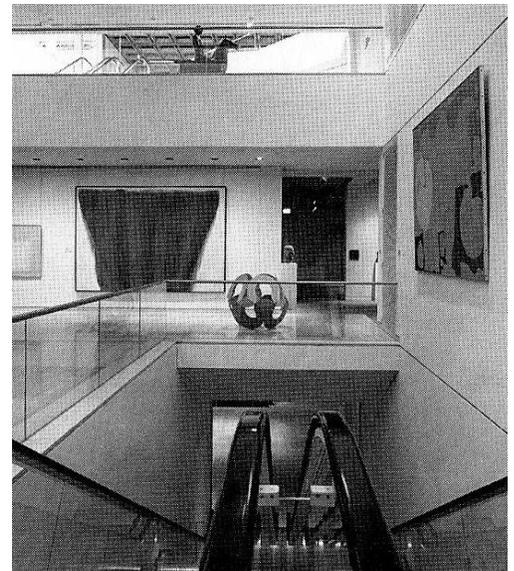
Criteria Applicable **N2.** Significant heritage value in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.



Captain Cook Gallery extension (Photo: M Dupain 1975)



Stage 1 & 2 extensions (Source: J Lugg Dept. of Public Works & Services 1989,



Stage 2. Source Max Dupain. DPWS. Two photos above from Metcalf, A, *Architecture in Transition: The Sulman Award 1932-1996*, 1997)