



# Former Torin Building

Address 23 Coombes Drive, Penrith, NSW, 2750

Practice Marcel Breuer & Herbert Beckhard in association with Harry Seidler & Associates

Designed 1975 Completed 1976

### History & Description

The former Torin Industries building is located to the north of Penrith on a corner site & is the only building in Australian designed by the internationally notable architecture firm of Marcel Breuer. The Torin project was one of nine Torin Corporation buildings Breuer's firm designed worldwide. The steel framed building is clad in sandstone-coloured split-face blockwork & profiled sheet metal. Horizontal bands of glazing to offices & part of the manufacturing areas are shaded by precast concrete units similar to those developed by the architects for a number of their buildings including the Torin Technical Centre in Torrington, Connecticut, USA, 1971. The original corrugated iron cladding was painted white, providing a contrast with the rough textured blockwork. The angling of northern walls contrasts with the horizontal & vertical forms of the building, giving dynamic lines to the composition of the building forms.

Marcel Breuer (1902-81) was one of the seminal architects of the 20<sup>th</sup>-C whose buildings & furniture designs profoundly influenced designers through the world. Before WWII he was a student at & then taught in the Bauhaus, Germany. With the closure of the school he moved to England & then to the USA where he taught at Harvard. Herbert Beckhard joined Breuer as an associate in 1956 & became his partner & design coordinator in 1964. Breuer & Beckhard collaborated on projects in Europe & the United States. Breuer retired in 1979. Harry Seidler had studied under Breuer at Harvard & worked for him from 1946-1948 in New York. Breuer collaborated with Seidler on a number of projects including the design of the Australian Embassy Building in Paris, 1977.

### Statement of Significance

The former Torin Industries building was designed by the firm of one of the 20th-C notable architects. The design has produced an industrial building of integrity, illustrative of modern architecture & demonstrates a theme of modern architecture with planning of strong shapes, boldly composed & expressed in strongly textured blockwork. This is combined with large areas of blank wall & small sections of horizontal glazing with precast concrete sun protection hoods. This approach was innovative at that time in Australia.

### Criteria Applicable

- N2.** Significant heritage value in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics
- N3.** Significant heritage value in establishing a high degree of creative achievement



East facade (the low wall at left has since been demolished). Source: Max Dupain



North facade. Source: Max Dupain 1976



North west view C 2008. Source: Graeme Trickett



View of north facade from the west. Source: Max Dupain