

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R015

Name of Place: Albert Hall

Other/Former Names: Assembly Hall

Address/Location: Commonwealth Avenue YARRALUMLA 2600
Block 1 Section 39 of Yarralumla (formerly Acton)

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	
Date of Listing:	1984	Level of Significance:	Regional
Citation Revision No:		Category:	
Citation Revision Date:	November 1986	Style:	

Date of Design:	1926-27	Designer:	J Hunter Kirkpatrick assisted by Robert Casboulte for the FCC
Construction Period:	1927-29	Client/Owner/Lessee:	Dept Territories (FCC)
Date of Additions:		Builder:	Simmie & Co

Statement of Significance

Designed by prominent government architect J. Hunter Kirkpatrick, assisted by R. Casboulte, for the FCC. A late and rare example of the 1920's Classical Revival, the building provides a splendid internal space, originally designed as an assembly hall. The elegant proportions of the exterior are articulated by Roman Ionic pilasters and arched windows. It was opened in 1929 by Prime Minister Bruce, and is historically and socially important as the first venue for concerts, dances and other occasions for the early residents of Canberra. The building served the Canberra community as its main theatre, exhibition hall, conference and convention centre, ballroom and concert hall until the construction of the Canberra Theatre Centre in 1965. The building contributes significantly to the townscape of Commonwealth Avenue, a boundary to the Parliamentary triangle, and is a fine example of Federal Capital Architecture.

Description

The building is constructed of painted rendered brick, with a terracotta Roman-tiled hipped roof over the main rectangular hall, and flat roofs over the porte-cochere and side wings. External and internal wall surfaces have Roman Ionic pilasters complete with entablatures, simplified in the manner of the period. The volutes of the Ionic capitals are echoed in the roundels above the pilasters and on the rainwater heads. Side elevations have large, semi-circular arched windows, divided into many panes and defined by restrained mouldings. The detailing and design of the interior is even more suggestive of the style of the exterior than the exterior, and is seen today essentially as Kirkpatrick intended it. The hall can seat 580, with an additional 128 seats in the gallery. A subtly moulded proscenium arch frames the stage. There is a tiered gallery, and a shadow panelled ceiling with medallions and simple pressed concrete designs, from which hang the original light fittings, and a fine parquetry floor. The buff stone colour of the exterior walls and the green of the window framed have recently been restored.

Condition and Integrity

Virtually original condition.

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