

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R018

Name of Place: Australian Forestry School

Other/Former Names: CSIRO Administration Office

Address/Location: Banks Street YARRALUMLA 2600
Block Section 4 of Yarralumla

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	
Date of Listing:	1984	Level of Significance:	National
Citation Revision No:		Category:	Educational/ Governmental
Citation Revision Date:	August 1987	Style:	Stripped Classical

Date of Design:	June 1926	Designer:	JH Kirkpatrick assisted by HM Rolland for the Federal Capital Commission
Construction Period:		Client/Owner/Lessee:	
Date of Additions:		Builder:	

Statement of Significance

The former Forestry School played a significant role in the development of forestry in Australia and is significant for its architectural design, its contribution to the townscape and its place in the early social history of Canberra Institution of forestry in Australia. The buildings of the simplified classical approach common to Federal Capital Commission designs of the period. The timbers used in the building are examples from every Australian state and an effort has been made in the design to use otherwise common timbers in a decorative way. Significantly, Australian timbers have been used instead of exotic timbers. This was also one of the few institutions for which the Federal Capital Commission provided buildings. The interiors are significant. Socially significant in early Canberra Community.

Description

The former Forestry School buildings have a stripped classical style which is devoid of excessive ornament. Round arched openings form the entrance and accentuate the projecting end bays. The parapet rises in subtle steps over the entrance, encompassing projecting bays with vertical openings, diagonally patterned in wrought iron. Roundels add rhythm to facade. The entrance opens onto a remarkable octagonal domed hall, panelled in Australian timbers, which area also used in the parquetry floor. Even the wide ribs of the dome and the suspended light fittings are fashioned from beautifully grained timber, stained and clear finished. Mountain ash tallowwood, blackwood, Queensland walnut and jarrah can be seen in examples of superb craftsmanship in the memorable interior. Other interiors in the offices, lecture rooms, laboratory, museum and library use such timbers in fittings and finishes as well. The hall was the scene of balls and other social events in the early years of Canberra. The setting of the building is appropriate to the purpose of the school, as it faces a mature avenue of trees across a raised forecourt, and pines form a frame to the vista as one approaches along Schlick Street. A major factor in the decision to locate the Forestry School at what had been named Westridge (now Yarralumla) was the proximity of the major arboretum, Westbourne Woods. The museum and store building behind the school is included in the listing because of the shared architectural style of the building and functional relationship. In 1965 the Forestry School's University, and 1975 the research functions of the

Forestry and Timber Bureau were transferred to the CSIRO, which has since occupied the building, using it for offices (1987).

Condition and Integrity

The building is generally intact and in good 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