

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R024

Name of Place: University House

Other/Former Names:

Address/Location: Balmain Crescent ACTON 2601

Block 1 Section 64 of Acton

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	
Date of Listing:	May 1985	Level of Significance:	National
Citation Revision No:	5	Category:	Residential (Institutional)
Citation Revision Date:	May 1985	Style:	International

Date of Design:	1947-48	Designer:	Professor Brian Lewis, administration by Commonwealth Department of Public Works
Construction Period:	c1953	Client/Owner/Lessee:	Australian National University
Date of Additions:		Builder:	Howie, Moffat and Co of Sydney

Statement of Significance

Demonstrates a competent integration of planning and landscape, with simple buildings laid out around a central courtyard, in the Oxford/Cambridge model. Circulation and internal layout, details, water pool and landscape features all contribute to an attractive collegiate environment. All original furniture was specially designed by Frederick Ward to harmonise with the architecture. The Great Hall, its integrated decorative features and embellishments, its mural and other works of art contribute to the merit of the building. Prominent academic architect as designer. An excellent example of a quality university campus building, particularly as it was built during a period of austerity in the construction industry. Won the 1953 Sir John Sulman Award, RAIA NSW Chapter.

Description

Main building consists of a lobby, common room, refectory with adjoining kitchen, bar, lounge and private dining rooms. The three-storey residential blocks of bed-study units arranged around common staircases. The design cleverly encloses and provides environmental protection for the courtyard, creating a pleasant and sheltered place of human scale, with well-related, modulated building elements.

The external envelope is of rendered brickwork with base courses in face brickwork. The eaves are timber lined, the pitched roofs are tiled and standing seam copper roofs. The terraces are concrete. Internally walls are of brick, or generally rendered, and the floors are of parquetry in the public spaces. The fenestration is simple and formal.

Condition and Integrity

Excellent.

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