

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R067

Name of Place: West Block Government Offices

Other/Former Names:

Address/Location: Corner Commonwealth Avenue and Queen Victoria Terrace PARKES
2601

Block 2 Section 23 of Parkes

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	
Date of Listing:	December 1983	Level of Significance:	National
Citation Revision No:	2	Category:	Government/ Diplomatic
Citation Revision Date:	November 1987	Style:	Stripped Classical
Date of Design:	1924	Designer:	JS Murdoch (FCAC) Designer, HM ROLLAND (FCC) Administration Commonwealth of Australia
Construction Period:	1925	Client/Owner/Lessee:	
Date of Additions:	1945	Builder:	

Statement of Significance

Camp Hill is part of the Parliamentary Triangle. In his concept for the Parliamentary Triangle, W B Griffin determined that a Camp Hill Parliament should form the climax for a group of Government Buildings. East and West Blocks are located in this area of national significance, although not sited in accordance with W B Griffin's plan. They were designed by J S Murdoch and display the character of Federal Capital architecture of the time. Together with the Provisional Parliament House they form a group of well balanced planning and site layout, completing one another in architectural character. In social and historical terms they housed early Parliamentary functions in Canberra.

Description

The original building, completed in 1927, is of 3 storey construction throughout with a brick finish to the ground floor, and a painted rendered finish to the two upper floors. The fenestration has a strong pattern of vertical proportions and a symmetrical distribution. Arcaded entrance screens to the centre block form a dignified courtyard arrival point to the building. A strong cornice line defines the two storey blocks with parapets above, articulating the separation between the three storey section and the outer wings of the complex. The plan is symmetrical with a long north-south axis. The front and rear sections are additions.

Several Government departments were originally housed in the building.

Condition and Integrity

Good. The building was extensively renovated in 1980-81 for the Department of Administrative Services by architects Fowell Mansfield Jervis and Maclurcan Pty Ltd. Much of the original internal character was lost in the process. The external appearance of the building has been changed

dramatically by the introduction of single pane windows in most openings; and now fashionable atria have been formed in the entrance halls.

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