

Heidelberg Municipal Offices & Town Hall

Address 275 Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe 3079

Practice Peck & Kemter and A.C. Leith and Associates

Designed 1935 Completed 1937

History & Description Attracted by its beautiful position up the Yarra valley, the Heidelberg area became a popular destination for the middle classes as Melbourne spread during the inter-war period. The newly formed municipal council had been operating out of temporary offices since the mid twenties and by 1934 had decided to construct a new town hall and administrative centre. Designs were prepared by Peck & Kemter and A.C. Leith & Associates, architects in association. Local contractor, G.S. Gay, was employed as contractor and the building was completed by April 1937, at a final furnished cost of £77,306. As well as offices, the complex consisted of a range of public spaces for use by the local community. At it's centre the town hall featured raised supper rooms overlooking the main space and a substantial stage for the performance of theatrical productions. Reminiscences of the period cite H.E. Bartlett, subsequently a partner of Leith, as the planner of the complex whilst Leith pursued the structural problems in the town hall itself where new welded steel methods were employed to provide a column-free space. Peck and Kemter had shared in design innovation previously in the association with W.B. Griffin in Capitol House (1924), Swanston Street, whilst Leith and Bartlett, an Eltham Shire Councillor, continued as the architects for later works to the building which included a porté cochere, designed by H.E. Bartlett, in 1956-57. T

The complex is noted for its bold massing in the Dudok manner, its restrained Moderne styling and fine level of detailing. The building is substantially intact internally and externally.

Statement of Significance The building is important as a fine example of the inter-War Streamline Moderne style used in the municipal context, and more specifically is an interpretation of the cubist manner associated with the Dutch modernist architect W. M. Dudok.

The Town Hall was designed by prominent architects Peck and Kemter and A. C. Leith and Associates. Peck and Kemter had been joint architects with Griffin in Capitol House (1921). In 1939 the complex won the prestigious RVIA Street Architecture Award.

References:
Butler, G, 1985, Heidelberg Conservation Study.

Criteria Applicable N1 - Significant heritage value in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or period of design.
N2 - Significant heritage value in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.
N3 - Significant heritage value in establishing a high degree of creative achievement.



Municipal Offices entry 2010, photo by Peter Johnson



View of signage & window details 2010, Peter Johnson



Town Hall interior 2007, Chris & Steve [Flickr.com]



Town Hall entrance with modern canopy 2010, Peter Johnson